

Suzana Blake: My name is Suzana Blake. Today is December 3rd and we're here with...

Captain Lou Baggett: Captain Lou Baggett.

Suzana Blake: Captain Lou Baggett. Lou, Baggett sorry. So, what I would like to ask you initially is a little bit about your, like when did you start fishing in this area and what did you target, if that changed over time and we're going to discuss the red tide events that you have experienced.

Captain Lou Baggett: Okay.

Suzana Blake: How those have changed and how are, you know, what was your experience say, basically with the red tide. So, if you can, kind of tell us a little bit about your business and your experience and the length of time you have spent here --

Captain Lou Baggett: I'm writing some notes, because I have a long history.

Suzana Blake: All right, right.

Captain Lou Baggett: Of course so, it will help me. I was five years old when I first started learning about the resource. My grandfather of course, has been 6th generations of my family fish from Estero to Osprey, Florida. And five generations born here and we are all been fishing. So, I started learning when I could start to comprehend about the resource. We were taught very much about the resource when we were young because, there were so much to know and they started teaching us essentially before we went fishing in the mode of earning a livelihood.

Not so much, just fishing, just having fun and my dad's side of the family were all recreational fishermen and my mother side of the family were all commercial fishermen so, I couldn't have grown up in a better world as a kid, you know. So, and they were all adamant about the maintaining the integrity and the quality of the resource, this come first in our family so, before we were taught too much, [00:02:00] in fact, my grandfather taught me a really valuable lesson when I was about eight years old.

But I, still I can remember standing on the dock at my uncle Steward Anderson, [Phonetic][00:02:08] fish house in Englewood, Florida when I was young. We grew up a little bit so, when I say we were five, six, seven, eight years old, you know, we were old for our age because, you know, we just grew up hard. Being born in Florida with no air conditions, heat of sand and we were tough, you know, and fishing.

So, I started going on the fishing boats, the commercial boats when I was about five and hanging around the fish houses and listening to the different fishermen, listening to my grandfather which was a lifelong commercial fisherman and he wasn't in that, he did all kind of stock netting and gill netting and trammel netting. He had five different boats from a 42 foot or they spent the winners in marathon area, popping on a manacle fishing and then rest of the year they spend up in around Bull Bay, Turtle Bay, Myakka River area, stock netting and things like that.

So, but as I grew up, you know around these people, you started to learn things. You just started to learn about the resource, to learn about the, you know, what it took to be a fisherman and of course, you know, I've been just fell in love with it, it was just to be around the resource first of all and then, to be around people that earn their livelihood, you know, in the fishery was just dynamic, it's when you are a kid.

You know, well I remember when I finally got of the age that I can start making some money of the bay and found my little here at years old. I remember my uncle Stewart Anderson there he told me, he knew that there was a situation with my mom and dad and knew [00:04:00] that if there was any way he could help me help my mother that he would do that so, I went to him one day and asked him, I told him, I said, uncle Stewart, I need to help mom and, you know, I need to make some money and he says well, he said, I'll tell you what, he said, go out there cross the bay over there which was some of the best clamming in the world.

People used to come from all over Melbourne area, different places to dig clams there at pass and Lemon Bay. So, he told me, he said, you know, I need chowder clams, big, big clams he said, I got a market for them right now and he said I'll give a penny and pound if you go out there and dig me a, you know, a big clams and I said, oh that's easy, you know, I knew I could get tons of them. And I said okay, so of course I didn't have a boat and I went to my grandfather and I asked him, I said, grandpa, I said, can I use your skiff, can I use your poling skiff and he, my grandfather was like six-four weighed about 245, he was tough, gruff, hard, I mean, you didn't ask him many questions and when you did you better have to be asking the right questions.

So, I asked him could I borrow his skiff, which was not the right question and he said, no or he asked me and then he said, what you want to use it for. And I said, well uncle Stewart is going to pay me a penny pound per clam, I need to help my mom, I said, I can go across the bay there, dig clams and come right back, you know. He said, no boy, he said, you're not going to use my skiff or anybody else's skiff, he said, you don't know how to give. And he said, until you learn to give you are not going to take anything out of this bay as long as I am alive.

Eight years old, what does that mean, you know, I mean, well what does that mean, so, you didn't ask him that, you know. So, I went to some of the old fishermen that were around there, you know, and then, finally I went to my grandma [00:06:00] and I asked her, I said, grandma what is he talking, you know. So, she set me down and she explained the whole thing to me, you know. So, I went back to him that afternoon, I said, grandpa, can I borrow your skiff. And he says, what are you going to do with it? I said, I'm going to take it, I'm going to pole it all the way around this bay and I'm going to pick up every piece of garbage that I can find in the water along the shore line or anywhere, of course we didn't have plastics and things back then but, there were still some of the old fisherman had pole, run a boat and throw the old cans out and you know, there was more of some old pieces of dock and net spreads and pieces of net and, you know, just jock.

So, I took his skiff, he told me, he said, yeah, he said, go ahead, you can use it full day. So, I went out and spent all that afternoon, which I didn't get a whole lot of stuff. So, I brought the skiff back and I went out. I was there before day light the next morning. And I went out all day and just collect, I mean, I clam the northern end of Lemon bay up, I mean, there was no garbage

I filled that skiff. And so I made sure that I came back when I knew that he would be there which was late in the afternoons, they bring their nets in and back then, it was made out of dacron and nylon and not monofilament and stuff so, they had to hang them on the net spread so, they were dry at night. So, I made sure I brought them back when I knew that he would brought all this garbage in. So, I come pulling in with it, you know, and I pulled up, right after, didn't say none – nobody I just pulled into the burn bed and started unloading and burning, because we used to burn everything we didn't have a garbage pickup back on days so, I started burning everything and I burned and I was probably till about 11, 12 o'clock that night burning all that garbage.

So, I went home, went to bed, come back next morning, I said, grandpa, I said, can I borrow your skiff today and he say's what for boy. And I said, I want to go across the bay over there and I want to get some clams, [00:08:00] uncle Stewart is going to pay me a penny and a pound for it and I want to go over and dig so I can help mom in. He said, yeah, boy go ahead. And that taught me something that lives with me every day of my life on the water, no matter what, if you see a paper bag, I see it, I'll have clams on the boat or I'll just be by myself, I'll see an ice bag floating there, Walmart bag floating there, I just pick it up, you know and that's my little way that day have given back.

Well I grew into bigger and better things and given back, but we'll get into that. So, that started my career in the fishing bed and that's when I was eight years old and that was 1959. So, that was a long time ago. So then, I kind of, moved in, when I was around 10, 11 years old and using some of his nets, gill nets and things and was poling around catching a few sea pen, catching a few this and that and just bringing them and selling to my uncle and so on and then that was end of poling skiff and then I got in to gill netting a little heavier later on when I was around 13, 14 years old trammel netting and then, I had an engine in the boat so, that I can tow a poling skiff and you know, run that out the engine boat and the poling skiff and so, I kept going on, then I involved into gill netting and sanding and then I just continued on.

And then when I was 18 years old, I started stone crabbing when I was 16, then when I was 18 I was working with a guy by the name of Willy Markup, [Phonetic] [00:09:31] and he was the best stone grabber around, that's one thing, I always dido is, whoever was the best that's where who I would go to work for. And I usually work for them a year and then, going out and doing enough and take care of my mom. I work really until I was about 18 and I was still netting, gill netting, I'd started then around, I think I was 17 or 18 I bought my first grouper boat so, I have started a grouper fish [00:10:00] and so now we didn't have to go out far like you do now, I mean, we could catch fish close to shore, grouper, snapper and stuff so.

But anyway I've involved into the stone crabbing and got my own stone crab boat, got my own license when I was 18 which was x123 and then, I just got crabbed until I was, oh gosh well over 40 years. I can be honestly and tell you when they started dumping this person on that oil out there, I sold all my crab traps. Sold my traps, I knew that it was going to be a major problem in the crab industry. So, I sold my crab traps and...

Suzana Blake: You're talking about the 2010 or what –

Captain Lou Baggett: Yeah, when it's, when BP...

Suzana Blake: Yeah, yeah.

Captain Lou Baggett: Dumped all the oil in the Gulf and I started picking this percent, I learnt more about oil but I knew that this person was going to destroy the crab fishing so, you know, I just, I started selling out and the stone crab been, blue crab been – well anyway, then I got into grouper fishing a little heavier, inshore, off shore, then I got into long line in which I tried one time and a long line in group because when I pulled up that first long and I spent a lot of money on it actually. And gearing the boat up and grating it up for long line fishing the snaps, the hooks that, you know, and all that stuff, so, I tried that one time, I was pulling up, sea fans and coral and, you know, all the hooks and didn't have a grouper on and I was pulling bottom up, so, I was done with that part of it.

You know, I went to bandit fishing, hydraulic bandit group for fishing so, I finished that, then I got into blue crabbing, then I got into lots to fishing, then I got into long, and all this time, you know, I was still doing my gill net, still doing my salmon, I'm still doing my -- all that kind of stuff and then, I got into long line for sharks. And shark fishing, when I got into because nobody else was doing it was --

Suzana Blake: And what was that more or less? [00:12:00]

Captain Lou Baggett: I'm going to say that was 30, 30, 35 years ago.

Suzana Blake: Okay.

Captain Lou Baggett: We were getting a phenomenal price for the meat itself, I was getting anywhere from 75 cents to a dollar a pound for the meat and then we were getting \$40 a pound for the fins. I will assure you that not ever did I ever fin a shark, I mean that just was not in our nature, you know. I brought my brother in, we really were doing well. But five years before the monitorial we could actually see the, a major decline in shark from where we had started at and we quit five years, that's the one thing about good commercial fishermen, I'm talking about coz, I neglected to mention that my grand -- my mother's side of the family all the way back to the Mayflower that is Davis, which was my great, great, great, great, great grandfather. He sent his family over on Mayflower and he brought one of the first loads of whale along to this country.

So, that's how far back commercial fishing goes in my family so, if you learn to give more, than you take and if you don't do that, you're not protecting the resource for your family and the future. So, it's always being with good commercial fishing families, a real husbandry oriented business to take care of this resource so let your sons, and his sons and went down, that was just ingrained into your nature, you know.

But anyway, the only reason I'm telling you always so, you know I have an extreme history in being on the water. Then I went into beach sink. I actually learned that from the Fidel Castro, reading his, whatever it is, biography or autobiography whatever it was. He learned from our American Indians how to use weir net. And in Cuba at that time [00:14:00] that's the only net that were allowed to be used which, if you have ever read much about him, you understand that

he was very adamant about protecting his resources probably more so than his people. But he was very adamant about protecting his resources and he learned about this weir netting from the American Indians and he utilized those nets in Cuba. And essential what it is, is a 650 yard fish trap on the beach.

Now we weren't allowed to call at that, we weren't allowed to use fish traps but, bottom line, that's what-what it really was. And what you had was a 100 yards of lead in and you had 550 yards of maintained fish swam into it, they go offshore and they just circle round and round inside, you're out there, you're with the nets. These nets are very expensive I think I paid about 25, 30000 apiece for them. So, they are very expensive and -- but it's the safest way to fish, that you can fish, because the nets are bright, bright for *[indiscernible]* [00:15:02] so nothing never touched, it's just lead in into, and even when you're pulling them down they don't ever touch the net, they finally eventually go into the pocket. But you don't really touch them with the nets so.

And then, you can open the pocket up, you can release whatever fish that you want to and so on and so forth. So, but anyway, I got into that and that was very lucrative, it was very safe for the resource, it was very, that's when I think my greatest intimacy started with dolphins because they were always around, they were always there and they were always a part of the day. And they would just get -- and if you really spend enough time around them, you know, they get to know people. They get to know who they are, what kind of person they are and they get to know that really quickly so, they just loved us and we loved them and we just got along good together, of course that was sneak them [00:16:00] a fish or two, you know, that's before it became a federal offence to feed them or do anything with them, you know. I mean, we would -- they would come out and they just get between our legs and-and we just love on and hug on and rub on and just, you know, be there with you all day and so anyway, it was lot of fun and --

Suzana Blake: This was like 1960 what was the...

Captain Lou Baggett: No, that was a lot later than that, this was in probably in late 80's, early 90's, you know late, right on the end to the later 90's, you know. So, then, we did that for long time and still gill netting because you couldn't use them since, for about three months in the spring, three months in the fall so, the rest of the time, we were stone crabbing, blue crabbing or, you know, net fishing and whatever, which way, you know. And then, gill netting, charter, then, I got into charter fishing. I went and got my Captain's license, I had been doing some charters, you know, with people that knew me, you know, but it got to a point where, you know, people are really wanting to go, you know.

So, I got into charter fishing a long way. So, I went and got my Captain Master's license and became a Captain, you know, did it all the right way. So, and I could start taking people out I really enjoyed sharing what I had learned and what had been a gift to me, you know. I wanted to pass this gift on and I especially still love to fish children because, that day with US you know, they will remember that day the rest of their lives and I've always understood that so, and I knew the net ban was coming. I mean, anybody with any sense could just see what you really mean. I won't go into names on tape but, who was doing it, why they were doing it and what was [00:18:00] going to happen.

Suzana Blake: Can you tell us more about that?

Captain Lou Baggett: Sure.

Suzana Blake: Yeah please. And like what, well first of all why did you know that it was calming like, what were the signs for you and what were, what...

Captain Lou Baggett: Because, they were going from state to state to state...

Suzana Blake: Oh I see.

Captain Lou Baggett: And trying to get gill net stopped. Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, you know, Florida to try to get gill netting stopped, because at that time --

Suzana Blake: Who, who were they, like not necessarily names why...

Captain Lou Baggett: Well let me put it this way, the FCA at that time was one of the board members who was on the directors in board ship of BP Oil. So, at that point, we were a big liability. Things like, hotels, restaurants now, in the last BP Oil Spill was a big liability for them. But they weren't into that at that time when they were trying to get nets ban throughout the Gulf Coast. They hadn't been bad any issues, whereas hotel, motels and things like that, but what they had had issues with, it's not necessarily BP but oil spills in the Bay of Campeche and in Valdez was they were still paying fishing families for destroying the resources.

So, because there was nothing to catch, there was not going to be anything to catch so, however long 100 year or whatever. So, they were still paying commercial fishing families. So, if you could get all the commercial fishing as much as you could, stocked on the Gulf Coast, then you would limit your liability.

Suzana Blake: Possibly.

Captain Lou Baggett: Because they knew, there was going to be an oil spill, they know that, they know that going in. We all know that, you know, there's going to be another oil spill and we all know that and they know that. Well, now their liability is greater because, every busboy and waiters and, you know, blah, blah, blah, motel, hotel, you know, [00:20:00] luggage carriers so on and so forth, has a liability now. But at that time we were the biggest liability.

Suzana Blake: Okay.

Captain Lou Baggett: So, you could see the deception, that's why FCA became CCA, if you go back and look through the history, is because of the deception the manipulation, the out enough lies that were created, I've seen in the Boca Beacon hot seal on the back page of the Boca Beacon and saying if you don't banned nets in Florida, this is going to continue to happen. Well we all know there's never been hot seal in Florida, but people see that and they believe that. I was amazed, that was my first big lesson --

Suzana Blake: Like campaign, like a PR campaign negative campaign --

Captain Lou Baggett: I know it was very negative and very manipulate and very deceptive and it was working because people believe it. You put one person in a room talking with somebody they may or may not believe it. You put a 100 people in that room and listen to the same situation, they will all believe it. I've learned that from people so, it's -- that was very frustrating and it taught me a lot about people. Even though I don't have a formal education, I've got that education through the source of learning about people and about this resource just by hands on and that was a very hands on, when you had biologist sitting with the state level and Marine Fisheries Commission meeting telling people that, we have managed these nets, we have put this program under a 10 year management program and we've got this by catch down to zero. You know, need to ban net; we don't have a problem with that.

Governor Charles stood up and said, we're not going to allow this to happen. But, through this deceptive negative campaign, people took it to vote and they voted to stop it, and at that time most of the people that registered [00:22:00] to vote in Florida, didn't even live in Florida full time. They didn't even know what's going on and they ballot itself is very deceptive so, it was just a campaign, fisherman didn't have no money, they didn't really have any power. Now, on the other hand at that time, for every one pound of shrimp consumed in Florida, there was, there's also been varying degrees of number from a 100 pounds to 30 pounds of fin fish, juvenile fin fish being killed to gather that one pound of shrimp and everybody knew that, but the shrimp body is big throughout the southeast of United States and they fought and they want, they didn't, nobody went and of course, these very people that voted to ban net they needed those shrimp to eat, they needed those shrimp to fish with and so on and on and on.

They never, you know, horrendous like it. And I go grudge people like the Florida sportsmen that used to say, you know, go right out to the shrimp boats, take them a case of beers, take them 10 bucks and they will give you all the chum you want. Oh, that never was a chum and never will be chum. That is baby juvenile fin fish that are still being killed, they are not as many pounds because they have the fish extruders and so on and so forth.

Suzana Blake: I just want to make sure it's recording so, I don't want to interrupt you.

Captain Lou Baggett: So anyway --

Suzana Blake: So that was in 19...

Captain Lou Baggett: I don't even remember...

Suzana Blake: Two or something, okay it doesn't matter, yeah.

Captain Lou Baggett: You know, first of all, I was, I'm thinking...

Suzana Blake: We can find out that.

Captain Lou Baggett: It's hard for us to, it's hard for fishermen like me, that's been doing this a lot of time to remember date, you know, we know it's time to get out and go fishing and we know it's time to go home or it's time for the tide to come in or it's time for tide but that's about it, you just don't associate, you know --

Suzana Blake: Yeah, I know, I got it.

Captain Lou Baggett: So anyway, I can't even tell you this is the most devastating thing in my life personally that the net ban destroyed [00:24:00] and it wasn't necessary. I would have been the first one to jump up and say, hey this is a good idea, this is destroying the resource or it's destroying the fishery or whatever but it wasn't. In the April the biologists for the state of Florida, they stated that day after day after day after day after day that we have this net and we as fishermen confirming to this 10 year management plan lost hundreds and thousands of dollars with equipments that was no good anymore because of the new regulations and the new -- so, and we were all for this, we need a manager, we need, all fisheries need to be managed, you know, and it was working well in other states like Alaska and different places, yeah, we need it. You know, we were all for the management program and we work hand in hand with the biologist to create it. And they were very happy with, we had a zero by-catch, if you go back and look at the information you'll find it and we didn't have a by-catch, you know, we had met the target and what we fished for and we got that, we didn't run indiscriminant net, we didn't do like Japan and over net, we didn't do that, we struck these fish, you know. And every fish that you caught was a, was a sellable fish so, but anyway.

Then I went, the state offered us an option we could become a truck driver or we could become a aquaculture farmer. So, I was in the very first group that went to 14 months of training which State and Federal government spent millions to train us to become aquaculture farmers. Which our first question is, we knew that it wasn't going to work, I mean, we knew that there was, we did know that it wasn't going to work, we knew that there was a great probability that it wasn't going to work because, first of all of the storm water runoff at that time which was the major issue [00:26:00] you know, we knew that --

Suzana Blake: What time was that like?

Captain Lou Baggett: Mm...

Suzana Blake: More or less, what year?

Captain Lou Baggett: You think that I know all these years, it's been I don't know 20 years ago I guess. It was the first program started gosh; I wish I could give you better date.

Suzana Blake: So like more or less a year or two after the net ban?

Captain Lou Baggett: Yeah, just a few years.

Suzana Blake: Okay.

Captain Lou Baggett: Just a few years after the net ban. Then they gave us the option and they sent us to 14 months of training, you know, we had to go to a Harbor Branch, which was great because, we had hundreds of biologists, essentially in our backing call. I mean, we could call them almost 24 hours a day and talk to and enquire about things, you know, I was more interested and really, I had more questions about what was happening and our resource than I did really about the farming itself, coz that was pretty, you know, they stayed on top of that and taught us that every day. Well I'm not as interested in what you're teaching me, and watch going on out there, you know, because we could start to see the devastation and that in fact, that was my very first question to the director of Harbor Branch, do you know, you know harbor branch?

Suzana Blake: I don't.

Captain Lou Baggett: It's the most sophisticated aquaculture center in the county, it's owned by in Fort Pierce, owned by Mr. Johnson and Johnson and Johnson. So, it's Johnson Sea Link, Bob Ballard and all the, I mean, it's a huge place and it's devoted to aquaculture. Don't quote me on the numbers but I think there was like over 400 biologists, you know, with PHDs and so, the knowledge is not, you know, you could gather to -- unfortunately they didn't know that what the program they were designed and for us it wasn't going to work at all but it did. But anyway the very first question [00:28:00] that I had when I walked in to the first class, even in our orientation, Michael Nuoffer, [Phonetic] [00:28:07] was the director of Harbor Branch at that time and first question I even stopped him right in, probably the middle of the sentence, but I wanted to know, I asked him, I said, does phosphates and nitrate encourage the growth of algae. And he said, certainly an algae is like any other plant, you fertilize and it grows, I said, so, in other words it would bloom more prolific, the more we fertilize it the more it's going to bloom and the more it's going to multiply, absolutely. And I asked him, I said, why aren't you doing anything about this and I never got an answer to that question.

Suzana Blake: And you got what?

Captain Lou Baggett: But all the fertilizers, it's been put into our system here, you know, and they knew that and everybody knew that. In fact, that's another story I'm about, I have a clear view, but anyway we'll go on here. I don't want to keep you guys all day.

Suzana Blake: No, no, no. That's why we're here.

Female Speaker: Yeah, we have plenty of time.

Captain Lou Baggett: Okay. So, I went through the training which helped me to correlate again having all this best data bank of knowledge there with all these biologist, don't hold me to the numbers, but almost when I think it was like 452 biologists working for Harbor Branch all in all other different avenues, you know, all the different programs. So, and again most of the questions, in fact, they use to look at me like, like hey what are you talking about? You know, because I would ask them questions that really didn't have anything to do with what they were teaching us. I was more interested in our resource as it was and as it has been and as its going to be than I was, because none of these aquaculture farming was going to make any difference if we had to have the [00:30:00] functional resource.

So, and I knew it was, it was becoming very dysfunctional very quickly. In fact, before I was born they started the dysfunctionality of this resource and I'll go back and touch on that little bit. That's one of the things that my grandfather, when I was about five or six years old told me. Standing on that dock, part of my learning experience, standing on that dock was, he pointed out they were, they were still doing something at. I know they were doing something, I can't really tell you if they were dredging or they were moving spoiled sands or what they were doing but, you know, they were still working on the Intracoastal Waterway in Lemon Bay in Englewood. And they stood on the dock and I remember because he was so tall and I was little and I remember him saying, he put his hand out and he just waved out there, where all other people were working in the dredges or whatever, he said, that will be the ruination of all these bays up and down this coast.

And I certainly didn't have a clue of what he meant at that time but I certainly do know what he meant now. And in fact, there was a couple major things done that started a deep downward spiral. Even before the water or not before the waterway, but before it was finished in Englewood, way back during the depression they sent thousands of men down here to... this is what started the real downslide in the resource. They sent thousands of men down here to drain the fresh water out of all these out, did mosquito ditches and drained that fresh water. So, the mosquitoes wouldn't, you know, multiply.

Well that was one of the biggest mistakes we ever made because, that's where all these as you know, all these fish that live in this orient system can live in pure [00:32:00] fresh water. Well, as they would come in as little fry fish or lava or whatever depending on the species. That's where they go, a pan on a big, they'd always come in on a big south wind high water where water infiltrated in the areas so that they could get into that fresh water. And this gave them a place where big red fish, big snooker, big tram, big jack, big everything couldn't get in there. They couldn't get in there to feed them, so they could grow up there and become fry fish.

Unless they became fry fish of course, they came out and they started to infiltrate, their story. So, that was our first big mistake. Second big mistake was building that Intracoastal Waterway. All these places have natural channels. God put natural channels in all these places. People, but if it's not marked for them, they don't know how to use them, but all the native fishermen knew how to use it, so they could navigate to all these bays, now you couldn't get from Englewood to Venice because it was bought by Mangroves and Tidal Flats and so on.

But who needed to, if you needed to get there then, you go around and you come in to Venice. But then, anyway, that was the second big mistake when we put in the Intracoastal Waterways. And I didn't really understand that when my grandfather said that that day. But as time went on and I started to understand, now my other grandfather of my dad's side family knew a lot of Indian people. So, I got to hang out in the Everglades and my one grandma was born in the Everglades, the other was born on Estero Island. So, I got to hang out in the Everglades different times with my dad and my granddad. And I maybe have born and blue eyed kid, they didn't really have nothing to do with me but, I knew how to listen and I knew how to pick up on things that, so, I learned a lot from them. And they taught my dad and my granddad a lot and that was passed on to me but, they [00:34:00] they were so real about their resource, you know.

Going back to the waterway, the waterway, one of the things I learned from the Indians down there was that they always talked about that beautiful yellow leaf on that red mangrove plant. That was the beginning, to them that was always the beginning of everything that you see here, that's the beginning of life in the historian system. And here going back to the waterway I'm thinking, you know, as my grandfather said what is it, well what it is, what it really boils down to is, that yellow leaf is where the brine shrimp lay their eggs. And my grandfather was the kind of guy, he was mean, he was tough, he was big and if he caught you going through that bay above an island, He'll tell you once.

But then the second time, I mean it, it's not just him but all the fishermen, they were so protective of these bays. They knew that a bay was not designed to have wave action, it's not designed for that, it's designed to have an irrigated venture. They irrigate and move water around a bit so on and so it takes come of the top of it well above. The beach is designed to have big wave actions, you know. So, they wouldn't allow anybody to come through that bay and making big waves like that, they come warn you maybe once, maybe twice but the third time you know it's just little jungle and nobody know who is he, you know. I mean that's just the kind of thing, the way things went, they were adamant about protecting these resources, because they knew from these Indians that this yellow leaf was so important upon that shore. And when I was a kid when you upon on these islands, there [00:36:00] was millions of these beautiful leaves, some brown some dead, some rotten, but it was always new when it's falling and they weren't going in there.

Suzana Blake: But this yellow leaves are like from the mangrove with the ocean?

Captain Lou Baggett: That's the leaf, yeah, that's on any mangrove you could see them. And it falls off and it's like wax. Well, that's where the brine shrimp will lay their eggs.

Suzana Blake: Okay.

Captain Lou Baggett: Most of these bays nowadays, you can't find any brine shrimp. If you go on Lemon Bay you take a screen out there and you scoop on, that long, you won't find one brine shrimp, because you know, the leaves are on the shoreline for many more, they are all washed out by boat traffic and by the tide. All these narrow bay ways, you know, on 36 footer comes through there, the 105 foot sea it washes from shore to shore. Or what does that do, it brings all the leaves away from the shoreline and puts them out into the tide line and they go in and out with the tide. Brine shrimp can't catch their leaves to lay their eggs on so, these are things, intimate things that biologists don't know. They weren't here to listen and understand and see those things. You know and know why, why did the waterway, what and the silk that it creates on the grass beds and so on, I mean, I could go on all day about boat traffic through these bays, what it's doing and destroying, you know, these bays so, you know, if the state ever really wanted to do anything, which they never have in the law of conservation, I'm really upset about that, because, you know, I used to think that it was important, you know, to this, and it was always important to me and my family but, I used to think it was important to everybody.

You know, that this resource was important to everybody but, the state is probably been the entity, that at least done anything for this resource. And I'm very upset about that and I always have been since, I've been young, because I haven't seen them do anything [00:38:00] in law of conservation for this resource, nothing. You know, when I had some, they tell me one day, you know, well they put up, you know, they protect these manatees no they don't, no they don't, they don't do that. If you go and you drive around and you look where most of the signs are, where you're supposed to idle speed. It's really to protect the seawalls or the docks and the wealth that they live on the base. It's not to protect that manatee. You want to protect that manatee, then you idle all boats.

And you make them anything over 24, 26, 28 or whatever is determined, go outside. If you want to throw wick you go out on the beach where the beach will accept that wick and it's happy to get it. But don't throw wake in the bay and I learned that when I was real young, real young and the importance of it and then, and I won't go on too much, back because there are lot other things that wakes do in that bay but, and I'm coming to a, you know, a combination of all this and of course that's the red tide. But and anyway, then of course we, you know, had to go to cast netting and cast netting just, the first of couple or three years, it worked pretty good, you know, but then it just hasn't worked so much. I had a couple of clam farms that was complete disaster, the storm water runoff, the red tide, you know, the heat in the water.

Suzana Blake: When was that?

Captain Lou Baggett: Whenever I went to that aquaculture school, I was in...

Suzana Blake: So like a few years after the net ban, you did the school, the training...

Captain Lou Baggett: And then I --

Suzana Blake: And then you started your business in aquaculture resource?

Captain Lou Baggett: I was very aggressive yes. I was very aggressive, I mean, I spent a \$113000 out there in my farms. I planted it, I mean, my farm is only nine foot deep and my wife would tell, I mean there would be mornings I have to wake [00:40:00] up, that's been 13, 14 hours on the water. I'd have somebody up in my boat pouring gas into the hook area, I never come up, just send me down seed and I was planting, I mean it got to where my head would stick to the pillow. My ears was bleeding, because it's only a nine feet of water, but and I got hypothermia three different times and 80 percent to green water in August, that was in August. You know, you're not realizing you are on the water 13 hours and 80, you know, 84 to green water, while you're body temperature is a lot higher than that and you drop more than that, so I got really bad sick. I mean, I was just so intent on making this work, and making a success. You know, but it nothing it did, no amount of money, no amount work, no money anything, it did.

I mean I would wake up in the morning, I'd go and get hot shower to get my eyes open from the bed, just taken my eyes closed you know, and I was that intense and that hard to work and you know, seven days a week try to make the course and I tried to grow plants and that was another, that was probably your second question, what makes you think hybrid clams going to grow

where water clams don't grow. You know, I mean you know, well, of course it never did work and I got out and I mean and again the water quality was becoming starting to close you down for Red Tide, blah, blah, blah, you know that kind of stuff so, I guess my point on that is, is that I have always watched this water quality get worse and worse and worse and worse. I can remember one and I used to think at one time it was just you know, I would tell people like on my charters you know, why you know, like I can remember we got 17 inches of rain one time in 24 hours, it killed every pearl oyster, in Lemon Bay every pearl oyster, not always but pearl oyster, you know the differences between a pearl oyster [00:42:00] and oyster?

Suzana Blake: No.

Captain Lou Baggett: Oyster grows in beds. A pearl oyster is independent it grows by itself. It's a fan shaped the mother pearl, it's got a big muscle in it which is really better, just as good as cobs, it's a pure white muscle and it's a beautiful shell, and they all died in that 117 inch rain and this has been 30 probably close to 30 years ago. So it's always been an issue of stone water runoff, running into the bays, and I could remember what are the boat ramps that they put in you know wanted the engineers --

Suzana Blake: So what storm – do you run with the storm?

Captain Lou Baggett: It was just a big rain, it wasn't even a hurricane --

Suzana Blake: Oh, it wasn't like that.

Captain Lou Baggett: No, it wasn't hurricane, it was just a big on slot of rain for, it just came in and just rained and rained in just buckets you know.

Suzana Blake: Yeah.

Captain Lou Baggett: And it killed every pearl oyster in the bay, but isn't been a long time ago, probably close to 30 years ago, when that happened. And the sad part about it is nobody even knew, but just a few of us that the pearl oysters were even there, so nobody even knew they were missing, nobody even knew that, they didn't know, none about is just working for this state they didn't know, you know, and it's sad you know, even here just the few weeks ago, I met a lady with the aquatic preserve. And they were coming, they were all joking, they were all happy and I was putting my boat in at the same time they were putting their boat in, you know. And Lemon Bay where I live is a disaster and I ask her as what – I said you'd been out on water all day and she said yeah. And I said why you are so happy? I said you should be sad. She said why should I will be sad, said for the devastation.

This is [00:44:00] going on out there. What devastation? I said, she said grass plants are doing great, grass plants are doing great. We got some moistures, I said, you found some oysters? She said yeah, and I said you're hanging, she said no. And I said okay, yeah, they're pure poison, I would tell you, you know, because all the storm water runoff, all the antifreeze, the oil, the you know, everything before they started putting retention ponds in and even then still, they don't have enough, but you got to remember everything back then ran into the bay, everything drained

into the bay. All you had to do is ride around the Bay and you've seen these big pipes, you know, from all the storms running directly into the Bay you know, so all the antifreeze and oil, parasites and flu and asphalt everything that people put on their lawns where there would be phosphates or nitrates or roundup, it doesn't – and it still today doesn't make any difference, it still ends up in that bay.

So you know, it's always been since people have been coming here being poisoned. So it's -- now it's to the point where it's and I know, I'm jumping ahead a little bit, but I can assure you right now that we've tipped the scale too far, it's so sad you know, but it's I know in my heart, that we tipped it so far now, that we're not going to be able to recover, it's people I know people I put together and I got all the photos and different things. I put together a group of 250, I tell you what happened you know, Roy Crabtree State Marine Biologist, well Roy everyday for five years he had barged [00:46:00] down Boca Grande and every day I went there. And I pull up there and I fish -- I was doing two trips, every single day in Boca Grande, I was working 16, 17, 18 hours a day, 7 days a week doing tournaments on weekends, blah, blah, blah. I mean I was doing a 128, 125, 127 trips in nine days.

I would never book me two, four days in a row, she booked me one trip a day, two trips tomorrow, one trip and then fished, I do a trip after the tournament on Saturday, on -- if there was a lady's tournament or whatever on Sunday I do a trip after that, sometimes two, three hour trips, sometimes two, six hours sometimes two, eight, sometimes one, twelve you know, but anyway I was busy. And Roy was there every day and he had four trans users in each home. And so I got to be a really good friend with Roy, because every, no I might not pass all day long fishing. And I got two machines on my dash and I'm looking they're every top in that all day. And I'm catching just fish I have to fish, I have to fish and but every day I put out the motel and I pull my boat out wash it out and then and get it ready. Head down to the beach, I'm trailing boat and I'd pull out there and I walk out there, I do in a Roy --

Suzana Blake: Good.

Captain Lou Baggett: As I make fish at a day a 19,000 give or take 10 percent, so I got aware after talking to him, every day you know, through the seasons for that five year program, I can pull in that pass on a given day to day and tell you have any fisher in there give or take 10%. So, but I learned a lot from Roy, about tarpon and about different things you know, and so I kind of lost much in the thought, I'm sorry, where I was going with that.

Suzana Blake: And the last thing I wrote down that you mentioned was, you know, tipping scale?

Captain Lou Baggett: [00:48:00] Yes. Well that we've done, we've tipped scale too far you know, I've always known that all the chemicals and all the phosphates and nitrates in a new back, when I went to co cultures cooling, the phosphates and nitrates that were put into the water you know, every day, every person, that's why I tell people now you know, is that every one of us, that all 21 millions of us that live in Florida leave a foot print in this resource, whether we live in Orlando, 50 miles, 100 miles away doesn't make any difference, we are all are impacting this resource, every single one of us. It's not one big entity like big shoulder that people want to

buy. And there's one thing I've learned like with the net ban, it's really easy to buying fish and it's easy to buying big groups like big children so and so we were all to buy maybe one of us, so you know, if we all want to buying somebody we can just look at each other, and buying each other.

You know, if we don't want to buying each other, and we want to go and do something about it then you know, but it's like I tell everybody I was in the party the other day and I told everybody I said when this entire state looks like sort of noble. Because what I want to say is I've learned so much about people through this fishing and of course fishing thousands of clients, being with these people through the terrible enigma within that net ban and then through what has happened since and this program that I put together, that's where I wasn't want to go in Boca Grande, I put together 250, because what happened was Roy, when he picked up the cables, [Phonetic] [00:49:52] okay. The Guide Association and I'm going back to where I was talking about Boca Grande. So through Roy, I understood [00:50:00] about the A trans to within these two hopes. Well the Guide Association told Roy, they wanted him to videotape himself and his crew picking up all those cables, because they felt like that they were hanging fish on his cables down there.

Well he knew that it wasn't because he had him down and blah, blah, blah but anyway so he videotaped it, I was one of very few people, they got to be invited, it was just the Guide Association, Roy was there and one other person could be in, but there was one other person there, so the – whatever it is in Boca Grande, we were all invited to Guide Association to witness this video of Roy picking up the cables, so we would all know, that he picked up all the cables, so that we wouldn't be hanging up any fish down or anymore on his cables supposedly and when I seen that video first it took me quite a few minutes, I can't remember exactly how many to even believe that that was Boca Grande Pass. I had fished on it since I was a kid. I had been on the upper side of it in a boat since I was a kid but actually to see it and I didn't even believe it, it was Boca Grande. I thought it was somewhere down in the Caribbean. I'm thinking to myself Roy what are you doing?

This is Boca Grande I'm thinking. I mean I want to say that to him, because I know he's a good up standing guy you know. I'm thinking that in Boca Grande, that's more down in Caribbean or something, you know. I mean that's just too beautiful you know, that's such a beautiful place you know, so, anyway when I begun to realize that it was Boca Grande when I've seen all the garbage on the bottom. Roy had Chris Glenn, [Phonetic] [00:51:50] and I, I don't know if you ever heard about the controversy of the jig in Boca Grande, have you heard about that? Well, it's pretty much [00:52:00] real right news, but anyway Chris and I created that jig. His dad conceived the idea, Chris and I formulated and perfected it and we want right on the front page of the book to begin 97% of the tournaments within the first two years of its development.

Well, net ban is from that tournament, we started around it was such a success they brought us back blah, blah, blah, so it was-it was a great thing but what was happened was, as we were using mono and a lot of that mono's is getting broke off down there. Not just by us, but from the 1000s of people fish that had fished in Boca Grande before. Or in watching this video I'm watching it and all of sudden they came to a place that had monofilament that, the best way I know to describe it is it looked like when we were kids we see these cartoons these are all pirate ships that sails all torn and just flown in the wind, it's just what that looked like. It was

unbelievable and it just rid my heart right up. I just couldn't believe that all that model is down there. And again not just from us now we were losing our left and right, because we were hanging up on stuff down or two just like the *[indiscernible]* [00:53:10] were. And so, but we left a lot and we knew we did.

So I went home after that video that night and I was just decimated, I mean, my head, my sole, right of my sole was just you know, hurt all over to think that I had been a part of making that a lot of that happen not lot of that, but some of them. So I told my wife in bed at night I said I'm going to clean that pass and she said what? And I said I'm going to clean that pass. She said okay, you know, so far a few weeks, she'd have to tell how many, every day when I got home, every night when I went to bed that's all I could think about. And I tell her I'm going to clean that pass up, one morning I woke up about 3 o'clock in the morning [00:54:00] I told her, I said, I had to get this pass cleaned up some way. And she said well as you wish, so you can get some rest and I could get some rest, you know.

So, anyway I took that idea and then evolved very quickly and to 200 person support group and a 50 diver group and we and again it was you know, I can -- I created Boca Grande Pass in hands with phone. I went to a couple people, I can tell you real quick how it started, but probably not, no need to go in all that, but it evolved very quickly into a group of dedicated people to get this pass cleaned up, so went in, now we had commandments from this many people but never that many people showed up you know, but we always had enough people and we fed him for two days and we had all our Alpha Divers which were all really elite extreme divers, which Rich Novak, you know who Rich Novak is? Or Novak reef off, so Rich put in most of the reefs in Charlotte County. Rich was in navy seal awesome guy, I mean he was just and he was one of the lead divers and he's one that dove with Nitrox and we dove and we cleaned up 27,000 pounds so man made garbage out of Boca Grande Pass.

And right here just quickly and I know this is not all of why we're here, but I want you to have a history you know, so that you can kinda give a idea of who I am and what I've done and represented I just brought this, you probably only the 4th and 5th person that's ever seen this. [00:56:00] Well, this was a Boca Grande Pass in hand in front, this was some other garbage that was guy in anchor that we found.

Suzana Blake: Yeah, let me take some pictures. So, this is part of the -- let me start with this. So this is the program right.

Captain Lou Baggett: Real quick and then you can, yeah, this was --

Suzana Blake: I just want to take in order, so I know --

Captain Lou Baggett: Okay. Well, that's not in order.

Suzana Blake: No, I got there but like this is the program that you initiated.

Captain Lou Baggett: Yes.

Female Speaker: Sandra the lights are little better over here.

Suzana Blake: Yeah.

Female Speaker: You have to take it some like the same well.

Captain Lou Baggett: Just a minute, paper clipping and I have never really showed this to many people because it's not my nature to you know, to really what you call it, let's talk about past experiences and we've lifted a lot of stuff.

Female Speaker: Coffin Shadow, [Phonetic] [00:57:09]

Captain Lou Baggett: And there's kind of water?

Female Speaker: Yes.

Captain Lou Baggett: Or do they --

Female Speaker: Yes, there's water right here.

Suzana Blake: Yeah.

Captain Lou Baggett: Oh, good. Thank you. If I'm not taken someone --

Female Speaker: When this is summing up. It's all over there. Yeah.

Suzana Blake: This is like a scanning program and I can put in a PDF.

Female Speaker: Cool.

Suzana Blake: Okay. So this is the program.

Captain Lou Baggett: Yeah.

Suzana Blake: And then...

Captain Lou Baggett: So and why the reason I'm showing you all this is, so you understand my commitment to this resource you know, I've always placed this resource above myself. I mean this resource to me is more important than people are. So you know, as I'm talking you'll understand that there is [00:58:00] dozens of anchors we found down there. I mean we found dozens of anchors with cores and chains and ropes and the thing you want to, kind of understand is every user group it's ever been around that pass, left something.

Female Speaker: It seems better.

Captain Lou Baggett: These are some of the airbags that we used and closing a lot of this debris up to the surface, Bob Laus, [Phonetic] [00:58:31] you know, you know Bob, Okay Bob, was the I'd have to read in here, but pretty much the [indiscernible] [00:58:38] Marine Research Institute. He is now a, I understand we've kind of lost contact you know, come on in guys, I get into do the job, I kind of you know, do -- And I got to tell you through this process I probably made more enemies and more, this created more distention, more negativity then the positive that came out of it, because people were upset, that I wouldn't allow to be used to be -- by another user group. People were upset because you wouldn't allow them to use it for sensationalism. People were upset because I wouldn't allow the newspapers and people come in and you know, now someone come in any way you can't 100% stop, but they want to invite it you know, and people didn't like that, this is not about you and I had even that same trouble in my -- within my own cable you know, trying to get people understand. This is for the resource, the same about you or blaming him or using this for political gainer, political user sensational it's not about that. This is about the resource and it's this is why I know, what we're headed for in the future, because I know how people feel [01:00:00] about giving up or not having what they want, and they will take that themselves more of it, before they will take this resource. Well, with me it goes the opposite way. This resource is way more important and I would tell people in the meetings and I would have in less coded out by the police department, by Sheriff's Department. This is more important than you and I really don't care about you. I care a lot more about this resource and people don't like that but I'm that kind of person, that I'm coming going to put you or anybody me or anybody else, above this resource, because it's more important than all and that's what in some respect we have to get these people to understand that this resource is a lot more important than anyone of us. And people are not going to accept that, so I already know that, because I've had and the reason why I can make a statement like that is because of this, because of the net ban, because of the things I've been through with people there were 100's of people involved in this, they were essentially denied access to it, because of their attitude and because their the reason they were doing it. If you're not doing this for the resource, if you're doing this for an ulterior more than you're not welcome here you know, and the people are objecting for that. Well, that's just me, that's the way I am, and that's the way it had to be, because this was my big, and this is going to be that way or just to have the Sheriff and that's what we did. So that's gives you an idea, the commitment I have. I just wanted to bring that -- these things up so that you understand my -- where my heart, not even my heart, where my soul is, you know. I mean it goes deeper than the emotional heart, you know. It's [01:02:00] everything to me. So but anyway this is some of the -- just somewhere, we won't go into all of this, but there's just a lot of stuff here some of the garbage dumpsters for the garbage, now we take care often. 27,000 pounds, it was all waste and we say we used air bullies to pick it up and there is some other probably some other newspaper clippings and stuff in here, here is me even.

Suzana Blake: Yeah, I mean I'm taking --

Captain Lou Baggett: Here's me.

Suzana Blake: Of course.

Captain Lou Baggett: And it's just somewhere in there but I started it all and all that stuff you know.

Female Speaker: No.

Captain Lou Baggett: And did I accomplish it all by myself absolutely not. My wife, my younger son, my good friend, Watta Clangal, [Phonetic] [01:02:53] people that were close to me, Dave Markitt, [Phonetic] [01:02:55] different ones, Bob Blas, [Phonetic] [01:02:58], you know Rich Novak all these people were so much more than I was, all I did was this essentially can see the idea and help to bring up together, you know.

Female Speaker: So then, did you get the inside of the stuff?

Suzana Blake: Yeah.

Captain Lou Baggett: So, it was fun, you know it was fun, it was exciting you know to do, but it was a challenge, to get through the game and people to be able to do this for the real intended purpose and that was for the resource, so and we should understand the value and relationship that I have, and commitment to this resource, my problem is I'm running out of time. And that's the only reason I brought this stuff, so you would understand it.

Suzana Blake: This is excellent.

Captain Lou Baggett: That it's a -- that I've been there, done this and I do understand the problems [01:04:00] they were having much more than you do ...

[Tape paused.]

[00:00:00]

Male Speaker: Giving up or not having what they want. And they will take that themselves, most of them before they will take this resource. Well, with me, it goes the opposite way. This resource is way more important. And I would tell people in the meetings and I'm going to have them escorted out by the police department, by the sheriff's department. This is more important than you and I really don't care about you. I care a lot more about this resource. And people don't like that. But I'm that kind of person that I am not going to put you or anybody, me or anybody else above this resource, because it's more important than all of us.

And that's what, in some respect, we have to get these people to understand that this resource is a lot more important than any one of us. And people are not going to accept that. So, I already know that because I've had -- and the reason why I can make a statement like that is because of this, because of the net ban, because of the things I've been through with people. There were hundreds of people involved in this that were essentially denied access to it, because of their attitude and because of their -- the reason they were doing it. If you're not doing this for the resource, if you're doing this for an ulterior motive, then you're not welcomed here, you know, and the people are objectionable to that.

Well, that's just me, that's the way I am and that's the way it had to be, because this was my baby. It's either going to be that way or just have cheer fest or chatter, and that's what we did. So, that gives you an idea, the comment that I had. I just wanted to bring these things up so that you understand where my heart, not even my heart where my soul is, you know. I mean, it goes deeper than the emotional heart. You know, it's everything to me. [00:02:00] So, but anyway this is just some of it. We won't go into all of this but there's just a lot of stuff where some of the garbage dumpsters or like garbage duty not to count. 27,000 pounds. It was always, like is say, we use [*indiscernible*] [00:02:19] to pick it up. And there's some other probably some other newspaper clippings and stuff in here. Here's me even.

Female Speaker: Yes, let me take a picture of it.

Male Speaker: Here's me.

Female Speaker: Awesome.

Male Speaker: And it says somewhere in there that I started at all and all that stuff, you know. Now, did I accomplish it all by myself? Absolutely not. My wife, my youngest son, my good friend Morrie Clingle and Maddy Tuck (*phonetics*), people that were close to me Dave Morket (*phonetics*), different ones, Bob was no original but all these people were so much more than I was. All I did was essentially conceived the idea and help to bring it together.

Female Speaker: You get the consent of it, so?

Female Speaker: Yes.

Male Speaker: So, it was fun. It was exciting to do this but it was a challenge to get to the gamut of people to be able to do this for the real intended purpose. And that was for resource. So, I want you to understand the value and relationship that I have and commitment to this resource. My problem is I'm running out of time. And that's the only reason I brought this stuff so you would understand that.

Female Speaker: And this is that's on...

Male Speaker: That is -- that I been there, done this. And I do understand the problems that we're having much [00:04:00] more than you do, even with all the data that you get, because there are things I told Casey a while ago that he never even heard. Never even had a clue, never even crossed his mind, you know.

Female Speaker: Yes.

Male Speaker: So, the knowledge is very uplifted. I've not read about it. I haven't read a magazine since I was 16 years old, maybe 17. But I'm going to say 16. I've always been one of them people that sensationalizing and depleting the resource to me as well. Shouldn't be any magazines or any sports writers or any of that kind of stuff as far as I'm concerned.

Female Speaker: So, okay. So, can we talk a little bit now the red tide and your experience, you know, going from the earliest red tide event you can remember till today. So, if you can...

Male Speaker: I can always...

Female Speaker: At least, you know, like years would be ideal. If you remember in years or if not just kind of like side that was tied to that...

Male Speaker: You know, like I say, it's hard for me to remember years, you know, you just go along every day, you go fishing and you live it. You don't think much about the time. I mean it's -- so, it's hard for me to think of years but I can always remember red tide.

Female Speaker: Okay.

Male Speaker: Red tide's always been here. Been here long before people ever got here. You know, I mean, we all know that. It's just a natural phenomenon. But what we've done is superseded the natural phenomena of real time, the natural...

Female Speaker: When do you think it was clear that we superseded the natural phase of the red tide? When more or less, like, [00:06:00] even when you say like a few years like how many years?

Male Speaker: 20 something years ago probably...

Female Speaker: 20 something years ago, we already superseded that natural red tide phenomena? So, well, yes what makes...

Male Speaker: What we would do and was starting to feeding, we were feeding because you could see as now, was it here four months out of the year, like it's been here for what? 15, 16, how many to see 12 I see, August, September, October November, December, so it's been here 17 months right now. I mean, a lot of -- I mean everything I've heard is they're only saying 15 months but it's been 17 months. It started in August.

Female Speaker: Okay.

Male Speaker: I mean they -- I keep hearing in September, October, it started in October but it wasn't. It was in August we were starting to see dead fish. It wasn't noticed until October but we knew about it.

Female Speaker: When did you see in August, dead fish?

Male Speaker: Everywhere up and down the shore there.

Female Speaker: Can we start marking down a little bit like some on the map?

Male Speaker: Venice. It's always up here and I wouldn't just take that away...

Female Speaker: Okay.

Male Speaker: Because that's kind of a treasure...

Female Speaker: And when was that?

Male Speaker: That's the treasure for me. It's, like I say, y'all are probably only the fourth and fifth people that's ever seen this. It's in my my life, half the night last night and find it. It's just something we kept for, you know, just call us. I've never shown it to any groups or people or anything like that so. We started seeing dead fish in -- most of my time is spent up here. I live on Lemon Bay, I live right in here.

Female Speaker: Okay.

Male Speaker: So, Lemon Bay is pretty much my home base but now I want you to understand there is nowhere that I haven't fished. I fished a lot in [00:08:00] Charlotte Harbor. Now, I fished a lot in Pine Island Sound, I fished a lot to Matlacha. I mean I have intimately fished every -- been over and fish pretty much every square mile of the West Coast of Florida. And probably 90% maybe 80% of the East Coast far, so. But where we started noticing the dead fish, it was in Lemon Bay up into -- it's not on your chart here but up into Venice. There were just scattered...

Female Speaker: Just kind of like scaffolding...

Male Speaker: And it wasn't *[overlapping conversation]* [00:08:43] it was just -- it's starting to die.

Female Speaker: But you've noticed it inside here or outside of that?

Male Speaker: Both.

Female Speaker: Both?

Male Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Female Speaker: So, I mean we can base them...

Male Speaker: And around the pass which is the Stump Pass. Most of them probably around Stump Pass and then all the way up in through the waterway. This is a man-made waterway up through here, all the way into Venice.

Female Speaker: Just to make a note on why is this so like scattered...

Male Speaker: Fish dying.

Female Speaker: Big fish or...

Male Speaker: No, catfish, pinfish, you know, not too many, you know, then the other fish started to come, the trout, snook and different species, you know, but it always starts out with catfish. It's predominantly the first fish that you see there. They're the closest to the bottom. So, when that either is deoxygenated because of the growth of the algae and or it's just toxic from the algae. They start to die first because they're closest to the bottom. Pinfish are very close to the bottom so they start to die. You'll see them start to dissect and then it kind of goes on from there. So.

Female Speaker: So, August you noticed this first of the small...

Male Speaker: Not of this year...

Female Speaker: 2017... [00:10:00]

Female Speaker: Yes. And so, you knew it's red tide or...

Male Speaker: Oh, yes. There's no question.

Female Speaker: You knew even meet with...

Male Speaker: Yes. Oh yes.

Female Speaker: Why?

Male Speaker: Just the way the fish act. I mean...

Female Speaker: How do they act?

Male Speaker: Just the way they come to the surface and start laying rolling over on our side. You know, it used to be, it was taught us years ago by motoring laboratory that red tide was the bloom itself look like a sandspur. I've still got picture of that somewhere where they used to teach it where the bloom itself look like a sandspur. And what really killed the fish they used to tell us, now they've of course changed all this, but what they used to tell us was, they just accumulated on the gill, you know, the gills and then suffocated. Really didn't hurt, you can eat them with no burning on, nothing wrong it.

Well, now it's toxin, that's getting into their system. And as they eat little fish that are dying from the toxin, they get it in the gut. See, all that's new to me. That's all changed from what it used to be. So, you know, but toxicity, you can see them that it's like, it is, not like, it's that they've been poisoned. So, they're dying slowly. I used to think they were suffocating. But now we know or they say, I don't know which one's right. But, you know, now it's poisoning. You know, it's toxic poison. So, they start to...

Female Speaker: So, you know is that they're just like...

Male Speaker: They'll spin circles, they'll spin circles on the surface and then catfish generally will just die and float up to the surface. You don't see them moving too much after they've been infected however it is that they're infected, but the pinfish you see them they'll spin around in circles. And, you know, they'll kind of -- sometimes you just see him real like their equilibrium is really off, they can't keep balancing then they'll just roll over on their side, straight back up...

Female Speaker: The [00:12:00] span, I mean what time you noticed that, like how much time from the time they start going in circles or kind of losing I believe were...

Male Speaker: Until they die.

Female Speaker: Until they die? Like, what's the span?

Male Speaker: Sometimes minutes.

Female Speaker: Minutes...

Male Speaker: Depending on the volume of the toxin, you know, that because that can vary from this patch of red tide 200 feet away to that may be a lot more dense, you know, and it will kill fish quick. So, it just depends. Now, when the space first started dying in August, they weren't everywhere. You know, they weren't everywhere. You didn't see them everywhere. But you still know it's red tide after you've been out there for 60 years watching these fish die whether it's, you know, a natural red tide or it's a, you know, I mean, there are many things that are causing it. But one of them, I want to do this up that that radioactive fossil waste that they dumped off of Clearwater Beach and I believe it was 2013, and don't quote me on the numbers but it was millions of pounds. Tons of radioactive phosphate waste. Do you know what radioactive phosphate waste is?

Female Speaker: Well, I can imagine what if it's radioactive...

Male Speaker: It's phosphate that has had acid poured through it to take the phosphorus out of the phosphate and then it becomes radioactive, it's uranium and radon with the acid mixed in with. The phosphorus has been taken out of, 20 million tons dumped. When that happened.

Female Speaker: When is that?

Male Speaker: 2013. When that happened up there, you can see red tide within days. Because the currents [00:14:00] were going south at the time, I remember because I was offshore group of fishing at the time with a client. And we went out there and I never seen anything like that. It

was percolating off the bottom. It was percolating, it was just bubbling, not bubbling, not air bubbles which is just percolating is the best word I know to say off the bottom...

Female Speaker: Like the particulate or the...

Male Speaker: All particulate so dense that you know, if you put them in that bottle you couldn't see through.

Female Speaker: Like my coffee?

Male Speaker: I mean like your coffee. Not quite that bad but pretty bad. So, things like that, you know, and how long does that last? How long does that lay there? And who authorized that to be done? Who dare to do something like that?

Female Speaker: That's very recent. 2013 and then more recent I mean.

Male Speaker: And then of course you got hundreds of millions of times throughout the entire state stockpile of it everywhere. That's leaching into the aquifer, which the aquifer ultimately to spring boils ends up into the resource into the bay and in the Gulf. Right? It gets into the aquifer, it's going to get out.

Female Speaker: So, 2013, you linked a red tide event 2013 event?

Male Speaker: Absolutely.

Female Speaker: So, in 2013...

Male Speaker: Which spreads South of it...

Female Speaker: So.

Male Speaker: And it didn't affect Clearwater, it spread it southwards.

Female Speaker: So, where did you notice the first flare ups in 2013?

Male Speaker: I was off of Stump Pass out about 60 foot of water. I was north...

Female Speaker: Do we have a map?

Male Speaker: North and west out of Stump Pass. Yes, right here. There's the...

Female Speaker: Yes, these are on the [00:16:00] *[indiscernible]* [00:16:00]

Male Speaker: Here's Stump Pass right here.

Female Speaker: Okay.

Male Speaker: I was out. This is only goes through *[indiscernible]* [00:16:06] This only goes to 35 feet, way about 60 foot of water.

Female Speaker: Oh, it *[overlapping conversation]* [00:16:14] here.

Male Speaker: Yes, I was out...

Female Speaker: 60 feet?

Male Speaker: West and north in 60 foot of water is where I first noticed. And it was just...

Female Speaker: 2013, is that?

Male Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Female Speaker: And what -- so you noticed massive like on discriminate *[overlapping conversation]* [00:16:32]

Male Speaker: Just coming up with that grouper, snapper, everything. It was one of the worst red tide events that we've had that started offshore. So, that actually started offshore. It was nasty. It was bad and I'm sure...

Female Speaker: And so it started in 2013 more or less for months, you remember when was it? How many days after the Clearwater event?

Male Speaker: It wasn't long, you know, I don't remember exactly but it was very recent, you know, probably a week or so maybe 10 days, something like that. Maybe even a couple of weeks *[indiscernible]* [00:17:19] you know, it's hard to pinpoint that.

Female Speaker: So, you notice that that event started like offshore and then what happened?

Male Speaker: And then it just spread right on down south, just kept going. Went on down and, you know.

Female Speaker: How did that affect your fishing?

Male Speaker: Dramatically. Dramatically.

Female Speaker: What does that mean? Like, what did you have to do to...

Male Speaker: I had to leave there because all fish will die, so there wasn't anything on the bottom. What hadn't died and what wasn't dying had left.

Female Speaker: So, where did you go? Where did you move your operation?

Male Speaker: I get on inshore.

Female Speaker: And you start...

Male Speaker: Because most of the fishing I do is inshore.

Female Speaker: Okay.

Male Speaker: [00:18:00] I just have to go out that day because the guy that was with me and wanted to go out and try to catch a grouper. So...

Female Speaker: But basically, it was one day that it affected your...

Male Speaker: My fishing, yes.

Female Speaker: Your personal, yeah and operation.

Male Speaker: Yes.

Female Speaker: So, you just reach on to and didn't go offshore from that?

Male Speaker: No, I didn't go offshore for -- I don't think I've been back up there fishing since.

Female Speaker: So, how often do you -- before that, how often would you go offshore more or less in a month, let's say?

Male Speaker: In a month maybe six times.

Female Speaker: Maybe six times?

Male Speaker: Yes. Because most of my fishing is inshore. I enjoy fishing inshore a lot more than I do offshore. Just a lot more to look at. I fished with lot of kids and, you know, and families, you know, older people just don't like to get out there. There's so much more to see, the birds, the dolphins, the eagles, the ospreys, manatees. I mean, there's just crabs, and you can see the bottom in a lot of places. It's just a lot more to talk about and a lot more to see, particularly the families. I never took families out there. If it's one guy or two guys or something, I take them out there but, you know, families I never took out. We stay close. So, there's things and...

Female Speaker: No. She's not around *[overlapping conversation]* [00:19:16]

Male Speaker: If you move in some spot, you can just look at or you can just, you know, the kids started to see, take pictures there. There's a lot and I enjoy that a lot. And for me, it's a lot more beautiful and a lot more -- I like to fish inshore and I like to see all those crabs, see how they're doing today, you know. And you just got to get to know where -- you get to kind of know them, you know. I know that sounds kind of goofy, but when you're out there with them every day and then you've watched them grow up whether it be dolphins or the baby ospreys and watch them move out of the nest and go start their own nest and things like that, and it just [00:20:00] becomes a part of your life every day just like having lots of pants almost, you know.

And like I said it's always, you know -- but a lot of times red tide starts inside, that's one of the few cases that I've ever seen it start killing fish. Now we all know it's always out there but it doesn't generally kill fish out there. But immediately after there was one of the biggest fish kills that we had. It killed hundreds of thousands of fish. And it just kind of went through the water and just kind of meandering down offshore, which was very unusual. I don't think it ever did that particular about a red tide ever came ashore because it was in the curve. Now, that's the -- of all my years of being out there and all of my years of being on the water, it's the first time I ever seen red tide start to that degree out there. Most of the time it starts inshore, a relatively close to shore where all these storm water run off.

Female Speaker: When did you notice in this area, you know, the most common place where the red tides starts? Can you show us on a map like...

Male Speaker: In any of this entire map?

Female Speaker: Yes, in the whole, yes.

Male Speaker: You really can't pinpoint that. It can start anywhere, anytime. And it depends on what's actually going on in that area. You know, of course for the area around the Caloosahatchee, it depends on the volume of discharge and what time of the year it is. At a certain time of the year you may not get as violent interruption like this...

Female Speaker: Like, what time of the year is not as violent?

Male Speaker: Well, it'd be in the wintertime, there's no raining.

Female Speaker: Okay.

Male Speaker: More rain you have, the more it brings nutrients into Lake Okeechobee. And then of course the more nutrients you have the more discharged you have, the more volume of nutrients [00:22:00] you're going to have. It's like the biologist told me one night, you know, an algae biologist, you know. We don't have a algae problem. We have a nutrient runoff problem, which is true. Algae is natural. Without it, we would all die. It's the top, you know. So, it's the nutrient runoff. That happened to be a case of -- they dumped radioactive phosphate waste that just exploded the red tide.

And like I say, you could see it percolating off the bottom. You know, the rest of the time, it depends on how much rain are they having in Venice this week. That may not come all the way down into Pine Island or Fort Myers, you know, so it may start in Venice, because of that we may have a thunderstorm in Venice that rains a quarter of an inch. We may have a thunderstorm in Lee County that rains four inches. You know, if in fact there's an accumulation of nutrients on the land, then that's where that red tide's going to start right then, where the nutrient flow is the greatest at the time and what releases this nutrient flow, what released it, rain typically does. Fresh water we need it.

Female Speaker: So, besides the 2013 event when you have to kind of like come back inshore, were there other red tide events that made you change the fish or something about...

Male Speaker: I was in Denver. Most of my life has been dictated where I fish and how I fish by red tide. Right now, it's dictating where I fish today. Today, right now. If I was fishing today, it would dictate. Every day it dictates now. Since it's been going on 17 consecutive months in my area, every single [00:24:00] day and night that I fish is dictated by red tide.

Female Speaker: So, can you tell us a little bit about how you change, how it dictates exactly like more specifically?

Male Speaker: Well, I may use it to my advantage sometimes. I may know that red tide came in the past and of course it killed a certain amount of it. The one thing that these fish are starting to kind of pick up on where they never did before is they're just starting to learn to move from it a little bit. Now, are all of them doing it? No.

Female Speaker: Which of them are doing it?

Male Speaker: No. I mean even in the same species...

Female Speaker: Oh, I see.

Male Speaker: ... you may have let's say 100% snook that are in a given area. Maybe 70% of them will move and the other 30% will stay right there and die. The reason we see so many mullet a lot of times is that mullet are spawning during when red tides, a lot of times, at its worst, October, November, December and January. And a mullet is like a pregnant lady. When it's her time, she's got to deliver and a mullet is the same way. When that mullet reaches a certain percentage, I don't care. Now, what they've been doing all summer, because my son fishes for me every single day, and what they've been doing all summer is they come up to the red tide and they turn around and go back. They come up to the red tide, they turn around and go back. They'll go back all the way to the river if they have to. They'll go all -- he fishes all in here, all in these islands.

So, a lot of times these fish will come up. They'll come to these islands, they'll come up, maybe, but then they'll turn around and this is what they did last week. They came and it's what they're

doing today. [00:26:00] They'll come up here to this bridge Bob Graham Bridge, they'll turn around and go back into these woods where there isn't red tide because they see this red tide coming in from Gasparilla Pass, which is Gasparilla Pass. So, that red tide's coming in on -- flood tide and this mullet come through these woods on the flood tide, so they're coming in coming in and they get back where that pass is bringing this water in right down that bridge line and they'll turn around and go right back.

Now when it's their day to go, when it's their time, their percentage of row is out there 19%, 20%, 21%. Right now they're trying to get to the Manatee River. So, they don't have to go to spawn yet. So, they're 15%, 16% row, the females are. So, but once they reach 19, 20, 21, they got to go. And last year, instead of this percentage of fish going on up to where they want to be. They had to go straight out the pass. Now, I've seen in many years in a row that we've had red tide in the fall when these fish are trying to get out of spawn, because they all spawn in the gulf, nothing spawns in the bay, too volatile. But anyway, they will go right to that red tide, and a percentage of all these hundreds of thousands of pounds that are all the way back through here and all the way up into these rivers. Peace River, Mike River, lot of these fish that are all down in the Everglades will come up through here. Mullet have a very unique system, more so than any other fish. Red fish would be the next closest fish to it.

But at any rate if there's red tide here, when that fish has got to go, when that percentage dictates that, she's going to go right into it and die. She'll go run into it and die and I've watched millions, millions of fish die in the red tide, mullet particularly. [00:28:00] And that's what mostly you see on the beaches. And that's what you'll see this season on Fort Myers Beach, Collier County, Lee County, because a lot of them fish come up to Charlotte park to go out and spawn whether it's one pass or another. God has a way of making sure they're not always in the same place at the same time. So, they don't all die. But so some of them go out each one of these passes all the way up to -- they'll go as far as the Manatee River.

The fish right now and October wanted to get into the Manatee River October -- early November before the full moon in November. They wanted to get to the Manatee River. I don't think even 1% of them got to the Manatee River. So, is this red tide changing how these fishes habit? How they have been doing things for thousands and thousands of years? Absolutely. We see it every day, the changes they're having to make. And they're dying because some of them, God kind of is that way about things. He never wants everything to be in one place to die all at one time, you know.

So, you know, we watch million -- but there's always an escape ratio that do get through somehow. And even if they got to come out of here and go straight out Bokeelia. And we think this year, that's probably what they'll do, because they're not going to be -- these fish, 15,000 -- I went up to Lemon Bay the other day on last front, everyone of them got to Venice and died last week, they all die right in Venice. And it's a shame, you know, but...

Female Speaker: So, they went through...

Male Speaker: They came out of these woods and they got through here on a low tide which is unusual for them to go but when the tide's going out, that's the least amount of red tide in that day. So...

Female Speaker: Fascinating. [00:30:00]

Male Speaker: They snuck right on through there and got -- so, there again, their character or nature...

Female Speaker: So, that's fascinating.

Male Speaker: Huh?

Female Speaker: So, that fascinating. I am like a social scientist so I'm like learning about all of these things along...

Male Speaker: When you live with these fish for 60 plus years, you start to revere them. You start to believe that God has a way with creatures, that if we could learn from them, we would be so much better people, because they're extremely smart. These mullets, that's why the Asian revered them. This is the greatest gift, me being an Asian, you being an Asian. The greatest gift I can give you on the Chinese New Year is mullet grove, Mullettys. It's a gift of life. It's the most valuable gift I can give to you. That's why all our mullet here in Southwest Florida go to Taiwan. They're processed in Taiwan, and they're sent all over Asia, because it's the most revered gift that an Asian can give to another Asian.

So, and if you think about that, think about how much they revered that gift. And Asian people aren't like us. They don't just do something because, they do everything through the spirit. They don't do it with the *[indiscernible]* [00:31:22] people, they do it through spirit, spiritual gifts, spiritual ideas, spiritual thinking. And they give that gift because that fish is one of the fish that they revered the most, because this fish will make it through most obstacles where other fish

will not. And I've seen it time and time again with this mullet that they'll make it through. A big percentage of them will make it through this red tide, but a bigger percentage will die.

Female Speaker: So, just to make sure I understand it's a big...

Male Speaker: And that's our fault. That's our fault. That's people's fault. [00:32:00] Go ahead.

Female Speaker: No, I just want to make sure I understood correctly. So, they migrated at the low tide from here and got all the way to...

Male Speaker: Which they should have been going high tide.

Female Speaker: ...to Venice. Where is Venice?

Male Speaker: North of there.

Female Speaker: Like, north of there, right? But they died there because of the red tide there?

Male Speaker: They died right in the Circus Bridge, between the Circus Bridge and Venice. They all die, 15,000 pounds of them. And there'll be hundreds of thousands more pounds die if they continue to try to get up there. And they get trapped, you know, fish get trapped sometimes. How do I use the red tide sometimes to catch fish? You know, I'll know that red tide's coming in the pass 70%, 30% of the trout, 70% of the snook are going to move away from it. They're going to go on up into the bay and I'm going to go on up there where they're at to catch them. You know, so, it's a bad situation. But, you know, if you need to catch clams fish, then you try to use the best of what you have to work with, even though it is a bad situation and I'll let that red tide push them. I'll deliberately go on an incoming tide so that the fish are tightened up more in a group because the red tide pushes them together than they would be if the tide was going out, they were spread out further. So, you know, it's just kind of a...

Female Speaker: So, to understand, so in 2000 -- so since when you've been doing mostly charter fishing?

Male Speaker: I've been doing that about 30 years charter fishing. But my main emphasis is commercial fishing.

Female Speaker: Okay.

Male Speaker: I would never have started charter fishing if they hadn't ban that. I would have never started that. That isn't my first love although I enjoy taking people out and sharing knowledge and I've always planted millions of seeds with these people about this resource. What we need to do to take care of, what we need to do to maintain the quality and integrity of it and so on so forth. So, it gives me an opportunity. They give me an opportunity [00:34:00] and a platform to be able to talk about how fragile and how important and how beneficial is resources to all of us. So, that does give me a way to do that. But is that my first love? Absolutely not. Commercial hunting fish, I don't hunt birds, I don't hunt animals and I don't hunt people, I hunt fish.

Female Speaker: And so what do you target commercially?

Male Speaker: Pompano, macro which is radically this year, affected by the red tide, radically last year effected by it.

Female Speaker: Pompano?

Male Speaker: Oh, yes. They only want to come ashore. Macro go away offshore. King Fish go away offshore.

Female Speaker: Do you go -- you said did mostly inshore and that's...

Male Speaker: Inshore, so if they don't come ashore because of red tide, I don't know catch them.

Female Speaker: So right now what are you catching mostly?

Male Speaker: I'm not catching much nothing.

Female Speaker: Much of nothing...

Male Speaker: There ain't nothing to catch. Red tides got mullet pushed up in the trees so far you can't catch them and they can't move half the time, you know. We're going to see what this front does to, you know. That's when they move, when the barometric pressure drops. And I used to tell people, you know, when you see that big black line coming in and the lightning is cracking out of it and the winds blowing 40 knots out of Northwest, that's when we go, that's when we catch the most fish. But we're not getting that kind of weather either. So, barometric drops are stimulating that movement. It's taken -- now it's taking all the way to their eggs, reach a great enough maturity to force them to go spawn. So, and they're not getting to do -- none of these fish are getting to be fish anymore. Their habits have totally changed, their whole psyche has changed and their whole mannerism. Everything about them is changing. You know.

Female Speaker: Can you give us more examples what you mean?

Male Speaker: I've been giving you examples.

Female Speaker: Right. Besides...

Male Speaker: You know. I mean, [00:36:00] that's one of the greatest examples because that's one of the most abundant fishes in the [indiscernible] [00:36:05] system is a mullet. So and to take him fish that's revered and believed to be one of the most sacred of fish out there and to be one of the most durable as far as obstacles, whether that be man-made or natural-made to survive that, you know. But he's having to do all kinds of things and I've never seen him have to do, in order to be able to survive because of the water quality and not just red tide. There's other problems out there.

And I related this to Casey earlier that there is nobody, I'm sure, in the entire state from biologists to fishermen that even have recognized this problem other than my son and I, because very few people have the past history and experience to go back on and say, well, this is the way it used to be, this is the way it used to be, this is the way it's not anymore. And that's phosphorus. We've always -- back when we Pompano and macro fish or deepwater fish. And when I say our nets used to touch 50 foot of bottom. And so when we finish out there we only

finish during the new moon, which is the dark moon which allows fire to be present in a way which is phosphorus.

So, this is how you identify them fish 30, 40, 50 feet down is by the fire trail they leave. Every fish has an identifying fire trail. So, when you're running along at 8, 10, 12 knots out there and looking for Pompano, you'll see them firing down in the bottom. You know, 50 foot of water, they don't skip like they do in 4 foot of water so you see that fire trail of them. Pompano and the permit even fire different even though they're very close together [00:38:00] so then you strike them and then you catch them. So, we've always acknowledged and used fire in the water because jackfish, mackerel, all of them leave a different fire trail. And that means when they take off in the water, the fire that they leave behind, which is phosphorus, is different. Jack's different than a blue fish, blue fish different than lady fish, lady fish is different than macro.

So, but what we're seeing now in the base is that there's so much phosphorus in the water that it's like taking a fluorescent light and turning it on and taking a bright LED light and turn it on. There's so much phosphorus in the water now. And what that is, is a residual element of too much phosphate. And what we're seeing also is a brown slime on the bottom that we never used to have. And people, I don't think of associated yet with why is brown slime? This stuff is nasty. I mean...

Female Speaker: Do you see it all over -- you said it is everywhere...

Male Speaker: Oh, you'll see it. It's not out there right now but as soon as the water starts to warm up, you'll see with the amount of phosphorus that's in the water right now, you're going to see that...

Female Speaker: So, you've noticed that in past year, when did you first notice?

Male Speaker: Just the past few years, you know, 12 years maybe, something like that 15 years. You know, this brown, nasty slime that gets on the bottom. And what that's from is too much phosphorus in the water. And if you look it up, you'll find that too much phosphorus in an aquarium, too much phosphates will turn everything brown and algae will start growing, brown algae. And that's exactly what started grow in these bays. This stuff de-oxygen makes the grass and de-oxygen makes the oysters, the clams, anything it's down there. That's why you can go for miles and miles and miles.

And by the way, I want to make this [00:40:00] understood real clear. I don't care what anybody's saying. Red tide kills seagrass beds, it kills seagrass. It is definitely killing seagrass because I think is deoxygenating the realm. I think it's so much volume of algae toxic and that it's deoxygenating the bottom. And of course, even like right now, Lemon Bay and other bays should have a lot of rolling moss. The only rolling moss we can find right now is dead rolling moss. Because the red tide has been so prolific for so many consecutive months in a row.

And people wouldn't know about this phosphorous unless they really understood. You know. And in fact, you probably never even been out at night, so you wouldn't know. And you ain't been out, never will you be out as many nights as I've been out there hunting fish and watching fish by their phosphorus trail. You can use if there's no moon and it's dark enough and there's enough phosphorus in the water. You know, you don't even need a fish finder, you can see fish without that, you know. So, by the fire again you can identify that fish by the fire trail easily.

So, and right now, there's a color in the water that none of us have ever seen, except for the last maybe five or six years. And it's a green color. And you can almost see this phosphorus in the daytime. That's what's making this water this fluorescent green color. There's things out there that nobody seeing but us that are out there all the time. You know what I'm saying? There's no biologist that has spent enough time out there to see these kinds of things. And this is all a residual of phosphates.

Phosphate are naturally occurring. Yes. Can we overdo it with it? [00:42:00] No. You start a fire on a on a roadway, it's got a petroleum product, you know, the asphalt, it'll probably that fire will die out. But if you take that same fire on that roadway and you keep pouring gas on it, that fire is going to keep right on blazing. And that's exactly what we're doing. We're just putting as much fuel on this problem as we can get on and now it's starting to change not just the red tide, it's not just the issue. That's not just the problem. This excessive amount of phosphorus, this excessive algae that's growing, these new cultures of algae that I'm sure biologists haven't checked, because they don't even see it. There's all kinds of colors going on out there that, you know, finally after last few years, we're starting to hear about brown tide and green tide, but we've been seeing this for years and years and years.

Female Speaker: Is there way that you can mark some of these areas that are most...

Male Speaker: It's all...

Female Speaker: It's all over?

Male Speaker: It was all relative to that day, you know...

Female Speaker: It changes all the time?

Male Speaker: Exactly. And that's what I want to say, you know. I told Casey I was going to tell you all this. It can just go up in smoke as far as, you know, I would like to be a part of that. Being able to, you know, I can tell you this, if things continue on the way it is, I'm going to have to go in about 30 days and get a job. And the only job I get making any kind of money is to go to Texas to do it. I'm going to try to get a job with y'all somehow that I can show you these things, that I can take people out at night, take biologists out at night and take people out.

When there's a problem zone, I got friends that are all up and down both coasts, that would call me and say, Hey, I got an issue. I got something I'm seeing. [00:44:00] Then we need to get there and we need to investigate that right then and there. We don't need to, you know, I mean, this is not going to do any good. I could mark all over this map and tell you I've seen it here, here, here, here. And I have, but it's not going to do any good today. Because you can go out there today or I can go out there today and it's not there today. When it's there, we need to be on top of that. You know what I'm saying?

Female Speaker: What we're trying to understand more than anything...

Male Speaker: You're not going to understand and I'm going to tell you right now...

Female Speaker: No. No. What I'm trying was -- we want to understand and you've talked about it a lot. It's sort of like a progression from something natural to something bad. Something really bad right now...

Male Speaker: Something that is worse today and going to get worse in the future.

Female Speaker: Right.

Male Speaker: Every day this is going to get worse.

Female Speaker: Right.

Male Speaker: Because nobody, nobody is doing anything about it. There is nobody that's doing anything. I don't care what smokescreen you've seen...

Female Speaker: What do you think should be done? Like, in your opinion, right now, what do you think should change?

Male Speaker: Well, that is the underlying problem because people are not -- I know in my heart of hearts that people are not going to accept what's got to be changed in order to reclaim this resource. I know that. Having dealt with those other two programs, I understand people. But I can tell you what we need. It doesn't mean people are going to accept it.

Female Speaker: Right.

Male Speaker: The one thing that I -- the only thing that I think we can really do is to gather, and we're not going to gather like this, y'all are not. You're not going to gather it like this. You're going to gather information, but you're not going to see this or understand this or be able to test these things unless you're on call, on duty to go where the problem in that moment. [00:46:00] And that needs somebody to take you there or beyond that, beyond this problem all the time. And I need a job and I need that job because I don't think there's anybody more qualified than I am to do it. And I mean that, and I'm not -- but anyway, back to your question, what would it take? The first thing we need in this state is a build a moratorium. We got to stop the building, every building new building we put up as a problem.

Now, is people going to like that or contractors going to like that or pavers going to like that or concrete people going to like that? No, they're not going to like that. They're not going to like that. Government officials are not going to like that, because they've predicated our system on a 20-year plan. Everything's 20 years. They're buying property in Lee County now, they're buying property in Collier County, they're buying property in Monroe County for the future growth of this state. They're doing it every day. They're not going to like this. They're not going to like the things that it's going to take to need be change.

We've got to stop this phosphate mining because they don't know how and what to do with the waste. There is no place to put the waste, stop the mining. You can't keep putting poison out

there and poison in this. They're not only poisoning the entire bays and estuary and systems and gulf and ocean waters. They're poisoning the aquifer and all the things that are important. Not just the salt water that we're worried about, they're poisoning the freshwater that we're going to be drinking soon. We're going to be all on the island nation if it exists long enough to get us to that point.

So, you know, those are two things. And we've got to stop the sale of all fertilizers in the state. You just can't fertilize nothing. You can't fertilize anything unless it's in an entirely closed system, [00:48:00] some type of hydroponic system or something. We've got to stop all of this. We've got to eliminate the septic tanks. We've got to eliminate this, you know, it's like when they were going to put in the big hole down there by Lake Okeechobee, the reservoir to collect water, that's not going to do any good. Then we're going to have two big cesspools, you know.

And it's certainly not Okeechobee 's fault, what it is, is all the stormwater runoff that's running from carrying all these nutrients, whether it be human, whether it be animal, whether it be artificial such as phosphates and nitrates that we are creating, then it's all ending up in Lake Okeechobee. So, Lake Okeechobee was God's way of making sure that Kissimmee River basin, when it did rain too much it would overflow into that big hole and then drizzle on down to the Everglades. Of course, the Everglades are dysfunctional like most everything else and the state is dysfunctional.

But they -- so there's a lot of things that we could do. You know, and I'm telling you right now if we stopped everything today, and it's like, I feel about this entire situation being involved and being here today is that, I told my son yesterday, I'm going to the Alamo. I know we're going to lose this battle. But you still got to fight. You still got to go to the fight. It's just like them and that they knew they were going to die. But they still went to the fight. And that's the way I feel now, because of what we could do today, if we could stop all this today, it would take 30 to 50 years for this to naturally cleanse itself. Because of all the residual everywhere out there [00:50:00] on the seagrass beds, where the silt is layered after layer after layer. There's layers of phosphates and nitrates in between those layers. All of them big boats going through that waterway washing into that shoreline, bringing that silt back onto the grass beds. It's covering up that phosphates and nitrates. Then you got another layer next week and another layer. You got more runoff, you got more phosphates, you got nitrates, you got more silt and you just keep layering it, layering it, layering it. So, for that to clean itself up, it would take 30 to 50 years.

So, what I'm hoping is, is that science will prove but you have to have something to work with. You have to have real testing and real on call, you know, you have to be there to really -- when this problem start right here, it doesn't matter heard that it was there. The fact is it's just going to be there again. And when it is there, we need to test that. We need to test that bright orange colored water. What is this that nobody knows anything about? What is this algae, this

fluorescent green that's very dense? What is that stuff? Nobody's addressed that. What is that yellow water? I already know what the black water is.

Female Speaker: This is why we're doing that. We want to document something that hasn't been measured in the past or even now. But your knowledge and the other fishermen's knowledge is valued, very valuable, a valuable testament to the fact that there's something very wrong happening there and that, like you said, that might happen again.

Male Speaker: It's going to happen. Yes.

Female Speaker: And it's been there 10 years ago, 20 years ago...

Male Speaker: A year ago.

Female Speaker: Five months ago, [00:52:00] it's probably going to occur or whatever we discover when we start testing for it, we'll be able to link it to whatever you told us about what happened here or what was noticed here. When we noticed the orange patch here, we can go back and say, oh, see this fisherman saw this orange patch here five years ago and that was what was what we look...

Male Speaker: Fishermen that are out there that don't even care.

Female Speaker: Mm-hmm.

Male Speaker: Do you know how many fishermen that are out there that don't even know? It's always been one of my problems with the state. Part-time fishermen don't blow in and play with resource. Most of the fishermen that are upcoming for this season will be part-time fishermen. You don't put a part timer to play with the resource, period. But state's always done it. So, how many fishermen do you think can be on call for you 24/7 to be available, to be in these places when you're needed?

Female Speaker 2: Finding how to get that data is definitely one of the next steps and then this phase that we're at now just really helps us develop the hypotheses to strategize how we can

maximize our efforts towards further investigating things. And you got *[overlapping conversation]* [00:53:31] recently too so we're starting to...

Male Speaker: One of the only ways you're going to be able to accomplish this, we all are going to be able to accomplish for this resource is to gather accurate scientific data and then bring it to the people. It's got to be brought to the people through whatever means that has to be used, whatever media that needs to be used. And I'm talking about the masses of people so that they understand in a few years from now that they're real estate is going to be worth nothing. [00:54:00] It ain't going to be worth nothing, because these people are already quitting coming here. I got clients that won't even come to Florida. I know people that won't even come to Florida from Britain and Great Britain and from Germany and different place. They don't want nothing to do with this toxic carrier. And it's not even toxic yet.

If we continue to allow this to continue on, I promise you, in 5, 10, 15 years, if this is not stopped, real estate won't be worth a dime. This will look like Chernobyl. People won't be allowed to live here because it's too toxic. Because when you mix what we're mixing with this natural element out here, you're creating a toxic soup that people aren't going to -- I've already heard doctors on the news say it, nobody in Florida should be living within a mile of coastline. And you can go back on the internet and look that up on news. She said it. She said you don't understand. She said this is my forte, you don't understand the kidney cancers and the liver cancers and the brain cancers and brain lesions and the lung cancers that you're going to get in 5 to 10 years living on this coastline breathing this toxic soup. And this is what's going to happen.

Frankly, if I don't see something done pretty quickly to start to get this back, it's been generational and loving Florida and always having felt that I would do anything for this resource, I'm selling out and moving out of state before my real estate goes to nothing, because I know it's headed that way. There's no question about it.

Economic impact, you ain't seen nothing to what you're going to see. This is going to be a disaster [00:56:00] because when these doctors and it's one thing you might noticed, you may have, you may not. All of us have to care about this resource is that, nobody would tell you what's in the air, nobody. Even Gulf Coast University and independent source that said, we will have this documentation in September. But then they come out and says, well, we need to realize this again. And then a week or so ago, they said well, you know, we're still not sure, we're still not really -- they don't want nobody to know what you're breathing.

Female Speaker: Did you notice...

Male Speaker: The CDC.

Female Speaker: ...health effects on you?

Male Speaker: Absolutely.

Female Speaker: When did you start noticing?

Male Speaker: I mean, it's hard for a doctor to maybe diagnose but you feel it in your person. You feel it in your lungs, in your sinuses, in your ears, in your eyes but mostly in your lungs. Your lungs are burned if you're out in it too much, your lungs will burn. And some days, you just have to be in it too much. So, you know, I've gotten where, you know, at my age, I try to stay out of it as much as I can. I put my boats are on trailer so I'll run up to Venice and fish a day or, you know, I'm not doing as much fishing as I always have in my life, because I can't be out there in it.

The older you get, the more your lungs are, you know, and my lungs are -- I've been really, really sick from it. Not recently, but a few years ago, I don't remember when. I think it was 2005 when we had a really bad. I was out every day in it and breathing. I've had pneumonia a couple times and it felt like I had pneumonia. I mean, you would cough up this white liquid. It was kind of like pneumonia and your lungs would burn. Even now at my home, I live just [00:58:00] a block away from the water. There'll be days that I'll go out and work in the yard for three or four hours and I got to go in and my lungs are just -- feels like somebody poured lead down my throat laying it at the bottom of my lungs. And you can't get a deep breath and it burns. It just burns down in your lungs, not in your esophagus but down in your lungs. So, you feel that, you know, and the more you're in it, the more susceptible you are to it. So, if you've never been in it, it may not affect you like that today.

Now, if you're in it more and more and more and more, I heard, I think it was Eddie Barnhill say through another source that he had never been sick from the red tide. At one point in my life, I had never either. But he said now, you know, he is just extremely sick from it. And it's something that doesn't just go away. I can remember being in the Lazy Flamingo one day, and I was so sick from the red tide. And I had clients there with me, and it was just the worst -- I was trying to explain to them how, you know, it's like your bronchial tubes are just, you know, once they get inside your lungs, they're not so much in your throat and stuff. I mean, that burns, but it goes away. But once it gets down inside your lungs, down in there in the tubes and down in the lungs themselves, that's where you start to really feel it. It's just a burning, heavy, dense. I mean, it's not hard to breathe but it's harder to breathe than it would be on me.

So, I try to -- if I have to fish I go fishing, where it's not. And this is one of the things that's going to make me get away from here if I have to. If I don't start to see something, because, like I say, [01:00:00] I have not seen anybody. You can't give me an organization or a group or a governmental agency that has done anything about this. Nothing, they've done nothing. So, you know, in seeing that and living this, what should I expect? I'm here today kind of as a last ditch effort because there's no point else to go.

The only way I know to do this is bring it to people. Do I have faith in the people? Did they all give up? What they need to give up in order to reclaim this resource? And again, I'm not here because we can do this tomorrow. I'm here so that hopefully we can gather enough data some way or another that 10, 15, 20 years down the road, when this all looks like Chernobyl and it's all gone. And real estate has no value and there's no more people here, and no more people coming here. And somebody be able to walk in and say, hey, here's a plan right here. They did this 15 years ago. This is what we need to do today, if we're going to in there and wear our gas mask and start to reclaim this.

Female Speaker: So, there's one thing that it's not 100% clear to me, you said like, about 20 years ago you would say, approximately that it started to go downhill, like we passed this threshold in terms of, you know, making the red tide from a natural event to a manmade event or disaster at this point. And so before that 20 year mark so let's say 30 years ago, you would see the red tide occurrence every year and more or less how much did it last? Like was it like a week...

Male Speaker: Weeks, days.

Female Speaker: ...weeks or days? And then [01:02:00] starting around 20 years ago...

Male Speaker: It maybe just *[indiscernible]* [01:02:02] beach and nothing in Venice, nothing in Englewood, nothing in Lee County, nothing in Charlotte or maybe in you know, Lee County and not in Sarasota County and nothing in Pinellas County, and nothing in Collier County, just to patch, you know, it killed few fish. Now, there were times that we had devastating amounts of it. I mean, even way back, when I was a kid there was times, it come in the whole lake, killed everything, killed everything up two, three miles. Not everything but a lot of fish, a lot of fish. But then it just go away and it used to be, we would...

Female Speaker: And even that kind of massive event, it'll go away in like matter of weeks or?

Male Speaker: Yeah, weeks maybe.

Female Speaker: So the most, it was like two weeks, three weeks?

Male Speaker: Yeah, it could be up in two- or three-month frame. If it was really, you know, a long-lasting thing but that wasn't very often.

Female Speaker: Maximum two, three months?

Male Speaker: Yeah.

Female Speaker: You know, like you would say like what, 40 years ago, there was like one event that you remember in particular?

Male Speaker: Yeah.

Female Speaker: Like, that was like natural occurring red tide that was like longer lasting?

Male Speaker: Well when I really begun to start realizing it was when -- that it was really, that we were encouraging it of course is when I went to the Aquaculture School, I wished I knew when that was.

Female Speaker: After the net event, so we can figure out like a few -- a couple of years you said after the net event that you said that...

Male Speaker: Yes. Because what had happened is, as soon as Mike Hannoff (*phonetics*) had told me that phosphates and nitrates were encouraging -- could encourage the growth of algae. I happen to bump into the Director of Mote Marine laboratory. I used to put in my boat right there at the causeway there at the Mote Marine Laboratory, when I was finishing up in Sarasota. And he just happened to be there one day, and he gave me [01:04:00] his card, he said, I'm the

Director of Mote Marine Laboratory. He said, you know, and we just got to talking about the resource.

And I talked to him, it was almost like he would see my boat come in and he would walk over there, because it was right across the street. And he'd come over to talk to me because he thought probably that I kind of had a feeling about what was going on out there. And so, we were talking and, you know, I finally hit him with it, I finally told him. I said look, I said, you're a powerful entity in this city. And I said a lot of people -- we admire you and respect what you guys do, and so on.

And I said, did you know that there's more millionaires under the age of 34 years old in Sarasota than there is anywhere in the country? He said, really? And I said, yeah. I said we need them to be more. I said they have a high value of life's worth. I said most of them have made this money actually. And I said they have an extreme value of their life is really, what's valuable to them. I said, you need to go to the county commissioners and you need to tell them that during the rainy season, we need to stop fertilizing. There needs to be a ban on fertilizers during the rainy season, because one thing I knew in the back of my head, if you could get a city like Sarasota to do that, respected throughout other cities within the state, everybody would do this.

It took 17 years for him to make that public in order for the commissioners to make a decision. But once they did, and every day I see him, every day, and I'll probably see him, I'm going to say 15 or 18 different times. And through that process, every day I'd say you've been to the county commissioners yet? No and I said, if you talked to them about put a ban on fertilizers so that we can quit encouraging this [01:06:00] algae growth and increasing the volume of this red tide and blah, blah, blah.

No, I haven't been there but he said, you know, we just had to take -- we have to kind of run its course and you know, there's processes and evaluation, same thing, a lot of biologists tell me. And so I said, okay, I said just reminding you. And he said, okay. And he always was pleasant but it took 17 years for him to actually -- but once he did, then Collier County jumped on and then Lake County jumped on, and then this county jumped on. Now, at that time, 20 years ago, 20 years in that timeframe, that would have been a great thing to do because it would have helped tremendously at that time.

Today, it would help but it was probably 1/10 of the value today than it was then. Then it would have been 80 or 90% helpful, now it's about 10%. So, you know, because of all the other volume of, you know, golf courses and ranches and farming and all the things that have developed through far, whether it be through the Kissimmee river basin or the coastline where most [indiscernible] [01:07:11] so...

Female Speaker 2: I have a question about the 2005 red tide, how bad was that one?

Male Speaker: That was a bad one.

Female Speaker 2: How many months?

Male Speaker: You know, it's so hard -- I wish that, you know, I've always hated the fact that my grandfather, somewhere my aunt has his journal when he was on whaler boat with the captain of a whaler. And every day he wrote down, every day he wrote a journal, wrote down everything every day that was going on. And I wish to God I would have done that, that's my greatest regret, that's my greatest regret.

Female Speaker 2: But you -- because you remember that the health effects were fairly serious on you?

Male Speaker: That was the one health effects I have.

Female Speaker 2: [01:08:00] Oh, even worse than the 2017, 18, like this one?

Male Speaker: Oh yeah, a lot worse, lot worse. I was a lot sicker then.

Female Speaker 2: You wonder why?

Male Speaker: I don't know, maybe it was just, you know where I was and...

Female Speaker 2: You are still in this area, fishing at that time?

Male Speaker: No, I was mostly in the Pine Island Sound and Charlotte Harbor. I wasn't even fishing at all of that...

Female Speaker 2: And that's where you notice the red tide? Can we draw that?

Male Speaker: Yeah.

Female Speaker 2: Why don't you draw, like where you notice, like all the red tide, like if you can make a circle around it.

Male Speaker: That's where I was fishing.

Female Speaker 2: And that's where it was red tide, everywhere?

Male Speaker: Yes, it was bad. Because I remember going into the Lazy Flamingo and my lungs were hurting me so bad, they were just almost aching, you know. It was almost like an ache inside your lungs. And you were coughing up this white liquid, it's like pneumonia almost. It didn't have no nasal drip or none of that kind of stuff. It was just what was in your lungs and it was like you couldn't get it out like pneumonia. You know, you just can't get it out. But it wasn't pneumonia, it was a derivative of the red tide, there was no question about that, you know, no question.

Female Speaker 2: And in this event...

Male Speaker: It's like fire was in your lungs. Now, this is where I was fishing.

Female Speaker 2: Right. And that's where...

Male Speaker: But there was red tide all up through there and all down through here.

Female Speaker 2: Do you know -- can you draw that? You don't have to if you're not certain...

Male Speaker: No, because I was just, you know...

Female Speaker 2: You know this area? Okay.

Male Speaker: I know that area...

Female Speaker 2: So in this area, what did you notice? What were the species that were most affected?

Male Speaker: Everything, trout, snook, reds, angelfish, sheepshead, pinfish, catfish.

Female Speaker 2: And those were the species you are targeting as well?

Male Speaker: Tarpon, even tarpon were dying, even tarpon. And it takes a lot to kill a tarpon.

Female Speaker 2: And...

Male Speaker: Grouper.

Female Speaker 2: And we were doing [01:10:00] both commercial and chartering in this area?

Male Speaker: Yeah. So, it had to be in the spring and summer because I would have been chartering.

Female Speaker 2: How long?

Male Speaker: Used to be -- I used to not charter anybody after September the 15th. So, it had to be -- because then I am just commercial fish rounds through until February.

Female Speaker 2: Were you able to keep your business kind of to the same level, economic level as with...

Male Speaker: My business has been going down every single year.

Female Speaker 2: Every single year, it's going down?

Male Speaker: Oh absolutely.

Female Speaker 2: Since when?

Male Speaker: 20 years, I guess.

Female Speaker 2: And so you would...

Male Speaker: Back the time when red tide started be becoming a major factor.

Female Speaker 2: And so, you attribute this decline to the red tide?

Male Speaker: Oh yeah, a lot of it, you know, a lot of its attrition. A lot of, you know, with clients. I mean, some of them passed away, moved away.

Female Speaker 2: Right. I mean, in that sense, do you like...

Male Speaker: They don't come fishing anymore and stuff like that. But oh yeah, it's been a definite, definitive. In fact, I haven't been able to make a living at it in quite some time, really. And just I've had to go to work in 2014 for three months and then I had to go to work again in 2017 for three months. And now I'm getting ready to – if something doesn't change business wise, by January the 10th, then I'd got to go back to work again, without question because...

Female Speaker 2: So what like, you switch like completely from being a fisherman in those months to something else...

Male Speaker: You have to. You can't do anything relative to fishing if you going to have to go work on the land. I got far away from it as I could. I went to Eastern Montana to work for three months. And then the second time I went to Denver, Colorado to work for three months.

Female Speaker 2: So, how is your household coping with this?

Male Speaker: Well, that's the reason that I have to work. My wife is extremely ill to the ratio of \$50,000 worth of medications [01:12:00] a month, medications, pumps, all the things that I need to infuse a high dollar medication in to her directly in to her heart. So, that's why I have to go work. Because economically efficient, I can't make it anymore. I've drained my savings. I've drained everything. I've sold properties. I've have done everything to try to survive, stay fishing or stay on the water somehow, you know. But it's coming to that point where I'm not going to have a choice, I don't have a choice, I have to go back.

The only other thing I can do is when I was a kid, I drove truck from my dad, part time. I fished, I worked 24 hours a day when I was a kid. Everybody used to say that, you know, how I could get so many hours out of a day, you know. I would fish at night, drive truck during the day, fish during the day, drive truck at night for him. So, I learned to drive a truck. So, in 2014, I went to get my commercial, because back then, he owned a business with trucks and you didn't have -- if you're family, you didn't have to have a CDO or chauffeur's license. So, now you do. This cough right now is derivative of not red tide here but what I've been breathing. Even though -- even if I'm not out fishing today, I live on these ricolas (*phonetics*) because it just gets to a point, and it is not from the talking because I talk all the time.

Female Speaker 2: Is this your water?

Male Speaker: No that's me.

Female Speaker 2: Oh, that's me.

Male Speaker: Waters gets to a point where it doesn't really help with this outfit.

Female Speaker 2: I love those things.

Male Speaker: Yeah. You want one?

Female Speaker 2: No, it's okay. I haven't been doing so much stomach movement.

Male Speaker: So, I knew how to drive trucks. I went and got my CDO in 2014 and went to Eastern Montana because, you know, I can make fabulous money out there in the oil fields. And coming January the 10th, my last [01:14:00] doctor's appointment for the new healthcare with my new healthcare or new – where are we going? Primary physician, I have in January the 10th. And if something hadn't changed by then, then I'm heading to Texas because I don't have any choice. And if I have to go to Texas to go to work, then every bit of fishing equipment I got going up for sale. My home is going up for sale, everything. And then I'll probably move out far because I just can't live here.

Female Speaker 2: What do you expect to change?

Male Speaker: I can't fish here, you know, be a part of this resource in some way. I can't live here. It's too sad for me. Get the bill in the morning, couple mornings ago, when I was going out, the Porpoises were right around my boat. It's almost like they were begging me to do something. I mean, it's sad. And you see the birds, I don't see nowhere near the percentage of birds I used to see. Every year there's less and less birds, a lot more buzzards. In fact, I didn't even know, if there's any buzzards in the West at all. I think they're all in Florida right now.

Female Speaker 2: So it seems to, you know, like 20 years ago, when it started to be worse, you notice the red tide every year, every year?

Male Speaker: Yeah.

Female Speaker 2: And before that 20 years mark, it would be like every other year or how was it? Was like here...

Male Speaker: You might have it in Pinellas County this year and, you know, I mean, it wouldn't be in our zone every year.

Female Speaker 2: Every year?

Male Speaker: Right, it wouldn't be in our zone.

Female Speaker 2: But 20 years, you see it every year, at least a little bit of it or?

Male Speaker: Yes. And the dense in the volume...

Female Speaker 2: And you've seen a progressive from, like worse and worse every year? I mean, longer and longer in that sense?

Male Speaker: Yes.

Female Speaker 2: And more intense, and spatially more expansive? And now this year is like, what the whole area is effect?

Male Speaker: 17 months.

Female Speaker 2: [01:16:00] Yes, for 17 months, yes.

Male Speaker: From Tarpon Springs to Marco Island.

Female Speaker 2: Yeah.

Male Speaker: And if you look at the discharge, major discharge, you know, the rivers, Tampa Bay, Charlotte Harbor, if you look at these, if you look at the map and look at these major distribution areas were runoff for nutrient runoff, you can see why that it's spreading. And if you look at and the study the currents, you'll find out why it's from Tarpon Springs to Marco with the discharge here is that we have here. It's like the Everglades, you don't see it down in Everglades. And there's a lot of fresh water runs in the Everglades. You don't see it down there because you don't have the nutrient runoff down there.

You didn't see it much up in North Florida. But now you're starting to see it up there because of the population growth up there, because of their housing. Now they're talking about putting seven houses into the acre so people can afford houses. I mean, that's all they're talking about. There's tens of thousands of new building permits issued in the state. It's -- sadly you know, I could really sit here and say, we're not doing them. We as people today aren't going to do anything about this. But if we can gather the data and bring out the truth and show people why this is happening, they're not going to change, they're not going to give up that beautiful green wall. They're not going to give the money that revenue, that phosphate pays \$100, 000 to Moth Green Laboratory, 100, 000. They're going to do stupid things like Mosaic (*phonetics*) is getting ready to plant a million or [01:18:00] billion or whatever it is, clams in the Peace River, to filter the water.

Well, that's fine. And they'll probably start to grow and they'll probably start filter water but if you continually make the water bad that kill the original clams that was filtering in the water there, what's going to happen to the new ones. So, you get smokescreens, you get things that -- look what we're doing, Mosaic. Look what we're doing, we're planting million clams or billion whatever it is. We're planting seagrass. We're trying to do our part - yes, we're part of the problem but we're trying to do our part. Anybody who would have brain knows that that's a waste of money, it's a waste of time. Put the money and the effort into closing your business down and paying the new people severance pays, you know, that's where the real help would come from but they're not going do that.

And that's why I say, people aren't going to sacrifice their livelihoods, their incomes, their children's education, all these things. They're not going to give it up. They're not going to quit -- they don't want to quit working for Mosaic. They don't want to quit working for golf courses. They don't want to quit working for fertilizer manufacturing companies. They don't want to quit working for builders. Contractors don't want to go out of business. It's how they feed their families. They're not going to give that up for this resource, that's the sad part of it.

But like I say, when it looks like Chernobyl and the bass, ocean and gulf and rivers look like the Bayacamp Beach (*phonetics*) or Valdez, Alaska, where there's nothing grows, there's nothing grows on the bottom, there's no fish. Then 31 years later, back in [01:20:00] 30, about 35 years later in Bayacamp Beach, there's still aren't 116,000 square miles that are desolate. There's

nothing there. People have no way to make an education and they're still paying them fishermen. They're still paying their families because they've taking their livelihood away.

Well, maybe if we get the oil companies and all these big fertilizer companies to pay all these families to stop, you know, then we might get something done but people aren't going to give up. And I know people. You can have one person in this room and they'll give it up. But you put 100 people in this room and ain't none of them going to give it up. But the only thing I'm in hopes of, that possibly we can gather this information scientifically. Because what fishermen have to say, I appreciate the fact that finally somebody starting to listen to people that are out there more than they are, and really see the true semantics about what's going on out there, I appreciate that. Because no other group -- there's nobody from the state that will do that. There's nobody from the state of Florida that will actually sit down and listen to a fisherman that has had 60 years out there or more, 62 years, 63 years, whatever it is. They don't listen, they don't want it and they don't care.

And that's the problem with the state is, is that everything that they do from the top of the ladder, all the way to the lower end of the ladder, I don't want to say the bottom. But the lower end of the ladder, which are the dedicated people that really would like to do something. They can't do anything. Because everything is politically agendized and everything is politically manipulated from the top, all the way to the bottom by the disallowance of allowing the people that really could care and want to do something. They're not allowed to do anything.

And I learned that with the biologist up the state of Florida. I've been around a lot of them. I've taken a lot of mountain boat. I've listened to them and I understand that they are manipulated just like everybody else, all the way to the top, to not to do anything. And I've seen that my whole life, I've seen that. And if you go back and you analyze what has the state of Florida done for this resource out there? There's nothing.

Now, they've done a lot for people. They've done a lot to appease people but you have to. That's why when I say this I have to be careful in the company, I say to them but I always respected and admire Fidel Castro. Because that's one thing that man knew, above all else, is that his natural resources were more important than the people because that's all he had. He could replace people but he's an island out there in the middle of nowhere with nobody else until Russia and China become involved with later on. But in the beginning, the most important asset he had was his natural resources. To hell with people, natural resources are more important. Do you think people in America will accept that? They won't, they won't.

So in my opinion, you know, I would fight to the death to do what I could do for this resource, and I mean that from all of my heart. But is it going to accomplish anything? The only thing

that it might accomplish is when, like I say when this place is worth nothing anymore, nobody can live here, nobody will. Then somebody may be able to take that and say, hey, this is the blueprint for reclaiming this resource. This is where we got to start. They tried it 15 years ago, they tried it 20 years ago, people weren't really accepted. Now there's no people, [01:24:00] now we can get it done.

And that's what it's going to be if something doesn't change. Because we are pouring gasoline on the biggest fire that Florida has ever seen. It is no different than if a wildfire came through here and burn everything that we can see to the ground. Because that's happening but people just don't see it. Is it sad? It just makes me -- when I was with the dolphins and the birds, they asked because I had tears run down my eyes. I kept looking and see the birds looking at me. It just makes you cry, it really does to think that you can't do nothing about it.

When I see all that garbage in Boca Grande Pass, I want to clean it up. I've been losing sleep for months trying to figure out a way to access an avenue that I can work through to be able to bring this problem under control. But unless God chose me a way, you know, I don't have a way. And I don't certainly have the where for all of the finances to be able to hang on long enough to be able to see it through that, that one just -- when people don't understand too now, about you guys here. Do you got somebody else?

Female Speaker 2: No.

Male Speaker: Okay. Is the human talk. I just had a friend of mine about three weeks ago. This guy was one of the strongest man. He's a little guy, thin and short nature, *[indiscernible]* [01:25:53] I guess. But then he's so mature but tough. I mean tough as nails. [01:26:00] He'd go fishing like me his whole life. It was his whole life. It was me, it's my God and my family, and my wife might already be in the state. You know, the resource comes first but I'm going to say that it's my God, my family and my resource.

With him it was his resource first period. I mean, there was no -- if ands or buts, his family didn't come first, his God didn't come first. The resource was first to him, which is probably too for most of us. But he just got through this summer but his boat then took it to his brothers or cousins, waves pull his boat out that he had had since he was 16 years old, 31 more than me. Stone crab, he stone crab. And he used to kingfish and he had a 51 stock out and sat in there in his place *[indiscernible]* [01:27:07] and so on.

But anyway, so he's done a lot all kinds of fishing. But he settled in on stone crabbing and just put his focus on that, all his money on that. So he's got his boat up in the waves up here this

summer. He claimed it, repowered it, rebuilt the transmission, clean the entire boat, sanded it all down, repainted it, which was about three months of work. Got his 2500 grand track trait (*phonetics*), put in a brand new \$20,000 ice machine.

He has a place among the water where it pull his boat and he's [*indiscernible*] [01:27:41] and he got everything ready. And he set some test drives out. He already had been watching. He and I had talked about it a few times about the blue crabs that were dying and the box crabs that were dying and the queen crabs that were dying and [01:28:00] calico crabs that were dying. See, we place a lot of emphasis on, you know, blue crabs and stone crabs, but there is a lot of other crabs out there.

I'd seen spider crab at my own home. Since his dispersants were put out there and which to me, in my opinion, has accelerated red tide because I don't know what was in them. And I believe that possibly phosphates or some other thing that was in there is happening, encourage that red tide, this red tide phenomena. So but anyway, he got all this done. Everything done, he's got grandkids, got kids, mom. He's just totally dedicated to it. And I went next door, took a kayak, pulled out to the mangroves. This was after checking a few test drives, and hung himself. It was all of that, I can promise you as God is my witness, that was direct -- his death can be directly attributed to this red tide.

Female Speaker 2: 2017, like this one, this year?

Male Speaker: Yeah, this was just three weeks ago when he hung himself.

Female Speaker 2: Oh wow, that's horrible.

Male Speaker: 17 months, of course that would been 16 months of consecutive red tide, kill a lot of fish, fish floating up in his back, you know, where we keeps boat or he has his place and where sell this crabs. Rotten fish all the time, stinking all the time. And he knew it, there wasn't going to be any crabs. He knew that there wasn't going to be any fish to catch. He knew and he just couldn't take no more. And he had everything to live for. But this red tide, I often want to try to tell people as many as I can, he is one death, human death that I know is directly attributed to this red tide, without a doubt. [01:30:00] So, it's taken its toll more than, you know...

Female Speaker 2: Would you say that...

Male Speaker: That's like me, I have to leave. If I can't find something to do to where I can keep my wife going and keep my home going and so on, so forth. Then I have got to leave the state, because I'm not going to say I would do the same thing but I'm going to say that, because I don't drink, I don't smoke, I don't do anything and I love the Lord, you know. So I wouldn't. But has the thought crossed my mind? When you live -- because that's the thing that I think people don't understand. This is not a livelihood, you know, it is a true way of life. And when that way of life, and I'm not talking about it as a comfortable life or it's an easy life or any of those kinds of things. It's just a way of life. Here every day is, this is your way of life.

So, when that's taken away from you, like his was, and I think you'll see more of that. I think you'll see more of that. More people that have that type of valued, that feel that deeply about it. Like I say, and I'm for one who would never do it because it's totally against everything that I believe in. But would it be -- can I understand what he did? Absolutely. I mean, absolutely. Was it the right thing to do? No. But can I understand why he did it, whereas his family couldn't understand, his kids couldn't understand, his grandkids can't understand? They can't understand why he did it but I can understand why he did it. [01:32:00] Because of the intimacy and the relationship that we've developed with this resource over all these years, of being a part of, because you become a part of it when you stay in it long enough. You're not an outsider looking in, you're an insider looking out.

And when you are that and you lose that, it's like -- and the one thing that I thought about the other one when I was on a walk. I walk three miles a lot of mornings. And I thought you know, why did Nick do that? Why did he really, you know, and I thought, emotionally -- I mean, physically, he's one of the strongest guys I know, hardest working man you ever meet in life. Emotionally, he was pretty damn gone soft. I mean he wasn't -- there was no notice of this. There was no whining or complaining or emotional distraught or emotional despondency or anything like that, but a spirit man. And then I got to thinking about it that it just rotted his soul. It went below that emotional man and that physical man into his soul and it just rotted his soul to the point where he did what he did. And so for me, I understand. I haven't given you a lot of data today, I've tried...

Female Speaker 2: But you have...

Male Speaker: Give you a lot of information and I'll give you my phone number.

Female Speaker 1: I think we have it.

Male Speaker: Oh, okay.

Female Speaker 2: Well, thank you so much. I'm going to stop the...