

Name of Narrator(s): Darrell Gale (DG)

Interviewers: Samantha Sheppard (SS) and Megan Bull (MB) recorded this interview with the permission of Darrell Gale for the research project “Boat Stories.”

Primary Investigator: Dr. Jennifer Sweeney Tookes, Georgia Southern University

Transcriber: Megan Bull

Date of Interview: November 13, 2021

Place: The Fish Dock, Darien, Georgia

Duration of Interview: Two hours, ten minutes and five seconds (2:10:05)

Repository for the Recording: The audio recording will be uploaded to the website, Voices from the Fisheries (<https://voices.nmfs.noaa.gov/>)

Context for the Interview: The interviewers speak with Darrell Gale, a local commercial fisherman.

General Description of Contents: Darrell Gale sits down and discusses the history of his family’s fishing vessels as well as his own. He talks about what it was like to work with his father and brother on fishing vessels. Mr. Gale shares his thoughts on the future of the commercial fishing industry in Georgia.

00:01

DG: Five years ago, we would cough to cover up the sneaky fart. Now we fart to cover up the cough.

SS: You're not wrong.

Everyone: Laughs

00:15

SS: Alright... there we go. All right um. This is an interview with Darrell Gale on November 13, 2021. The interview is being conducted in Darien, Georgia as part of a research project and interview collection titled Boat Stoies. The interviewers are Samantha Sheppard and Megan Bull. Just to confirm, Dr. Tookes already took your informed consent? All right. And just a reminder, you can stop or take a break at any time. All right. I was wondering if you could tell us about your most recent fishing boat or boats. What is the name? Did they have other names before this?

01:04

DG: Well, the boat that I've just recently acquired again, my brother owned for 10 years. It's been in McIntosh County for many, many years. It was built in 1959. In North Carolina for the Sheriff of McIntosh County. He was the bad sherriff or the crooked Sheriff or however you want to say it, you know. It was back in the day, they even put him in a book called *Praying For Sheetrock*. Um, Sheriff Tom Papa was the guy that said, on every hog in McIntosh County, if you don't believe me, you pick its tail up and if it says "zero" that's my hog. So he was that type of person. Being that way, the boat that he had built, he had it built right, so to speak and it's lasted the stand of time and all that stuff. And under commercial application, wood boats don't last very long. Most wood boats would do it for a 20 year period, that's it. And for one of the year from 1959, it's saying something to say the least. I completely rebuilt the inside of the boat, took all the old ancient gear out. Because you know the motor technology in 1959 was not what it is on par today. I put a newer style engine, newer style gear, everything in it. And even the propeller is state of the art. So my drag coefficient went up and my fuel economy went up astronomically, it went from 100 gallons a day boat to 40. So, that's a wonderful thing, especially with the price of fuel what it is today. It was originally built the Tommy Jr. It was named after his son Tom Papa. It changed hands and another person in town had bought it and he named it the *Kim Sea King*. And then he sold it to another person. It was *The God's Grace*. And then it was sold to my brother and he named it *The Big Cobb*, well my brother had to get off the boat

basically, because my father passed away, and we have “D and D” Seafood. And they, daddy set on the side of the road and sold shrimp. Well, everybody kept wanting us to sell shrimp and he couldn't sell shrimp on the side of the road and run the boat at the same time, so the boat became a liability to him. And he sold it to a young man in North Carolina, and he it took the North Carolina and he tried to work the boat, but it being as old as it is with outdated technology, he didn't understand it. So the boat kind of whipped him so to speak. And he gave up on the boat and the engine was going bad and all this was going bad. So he was going to tear the boat up, right where it sat and be done with it. And he called me and told me what he was going to do. And I said No you're not. I left from Georgia with my wife, and rented a condominium up there, and \$30,000 later brought the boat back here in better shape than it's ever been. I renamed it back *The Big Cob*, but the guy there named it *The Renegade*, which is kind of a foolish name for a boat to start with. I've been fishing for three months now, since I've rebuilt it. Hoping next year is going to be better. Now, within the three months that I've had the boat I've made most of the money back that I put in the boat. So, that's a good thing. But I was still in the hole because I displaced myself from my home, and the economy is not cheap. My wife did not want to stay in a motel room. That's how that worked out. I've got it back and I got some more tuning to do with the trawl gear itself. I'm not the average commercial fisherman. I'm a conservationist and a commercial fisherman. North Carolina has adopted the law where you pull two birds, the fish eyes is the fish excluder device, bird for short, and I pull two birds in my nets two fish eyes, just like they do in North Carolina on the inside of the sound. And I do it here in Georgia, because for one, I don't want to catch the fish, I don't want to kill the fish for nothing, there's literally no reason for me to do that. And for two, I don't want my crew to have to pick up the shrimp through the fish. So the less fish that I catch is better all the way around.

05:55

And like with the turtle shooters, the first shrimp boat that I ever run, was named *Miss Sherry*, Sinky Boone was the owner of that. And he's the man that invented the Turtle TEDs as we know today, it was originally named the Georgia Jumper. And we was tuning it to be a bycatch reduction device not just for the turtles, but for jellyfish, and anything over three inches in diameter is what we was basically doing. And the federal government said, Well, this works good for getting rid of sea turtles out of your nets, so we are gonna make everybody pull it and we will name it the turtle shooter and your pitcher so he lost any of his patents so to speak. But I

don't mind the fact that he lost his patents and all because, the amount of sea life that its saved. Be it or not, our trawlers trawl the ocean floor, correct. Any plastic that doesn't float, where does it go? It goes to the ocean floor. I usually bring in about three metric tons of plastic a year. Whether it be nylon fishing twine, bait cups, plastic bags, all sorts of plastics, that my gear actually lets go in. Because anything bigger than four inches, turtle excluder is going to kick out basically. I'm working on right now, a way to make a pocket in the net to actually collect some of the garbage prior to getting to the shooter. But I also want to not catch a turtle also. So that's turned out to be a daunting task to say the least but I'm working on it. This is work in progress. All the old technology is being used right now. Most of your shrimp trawlers per se, minus a few steel boats here in Georgia, there's probably 25 steel boats in Georgia that was built in 2010 and newer, the rest of the boats are 50 or 60 years old. Okay, technology has come a long, long, long ways, as you all know. Just in my lifetime, the computer that sat on the desk was bigger than your big screen television whenever I first seen a computer, now you carry one in your pocket. So if we can have some kind of way we can update everybody's trawlers. Even if it'd be a 60 year old boat, if you update some of the stuff on it. Your fuel economy goes up, your carbon footprint drops, all that, you know. I got a 1959 off the trawler but my carbon footprint is of a 24th wind boat. So I mean, if you're a farmer, right? You work the land you tilled the land, you nourish the land more so than you do your crops. You look at the ground as if it's a one, if all commercial fishermen done that, look at the ocean as if it was a one and not just a product that they're catching. That's, that's one of the things that we all need to get in together with. I want for each dock to have an approved facility to where your shrimps unloaded at, to have a plastic disposal container placed there. You know, its recyclable materials so the cost would be up to the recycling side of it. But if every trawler instead of just pushing it back overboard when they catch it, would bring it to the dock. How much plastic would we take out of the ocean, If just me with one little small boat is taking out two metric tons? What would the other 57 boats do? You know, we're talking about cleaning up the oceans and getting oceans the way they're supposed to be. And we got a device to do it with. That's just what, what I thrive for, this boat around the corner that just sank. It is actually the oldest boat in the fleet; she was built in 1944, and I'm trying to get it up. I'll save the 1919 Trumphy and the lady that purchased it, she finished it, it was probably one of the prettiest wooden boats you would ever lay your eyes on. I like the old and I like the new. And you could put the two together and have something astronomical.

10:51

I'm not saying we can make a Tesla shrimp boat, but we can get pretty close with the technology today, and in 25 years, what could we have? You know, an all electric hybrid shrimp trawler is feasible now. In 25 years, you're gonna have none of the hybrid and just be all electric. And that's just something that I'm thriving for. Because we have a need as a human to protect our environment. Because this is us, this is where we live, where we take our food from, this is where we... I mean, anything that you eat, or do has something to do with that water out there, it's the ecosystem. We can pile plastic up in it and kill it, we kill our mother. You know, what are our children gonna do, I've got a one year old son out in the car right now waitin' for daddy. That's all, that's all I thrive for, for making this back what it's supposed to be. We've got, we've gotten too far with certain technologies that we need to reverse. We need to do away with a lot of plastics. One-use plastics should be illegal worldwide. I have seen it as a kid, McDonald's used to have the chicken nuggets in a styrofoam box, and if you go within five miles, that'd be down anywhere in a ditch, you'd see one of their styrofoam boxes and it would sit there all year and still be there. So we need to stand up, do our part. Everybody done that, the world would be a better place, whether it takes laws to do it, or if you're shaking somebody by the head and if you mess it you back it up. But is there any question that y'all want to ask?

13:03

SS: Yes. You mentioned that the boat you have now has gone through a lot of names. Is there any ceremony to changing that name?

13:13

DG: Well, that is supposed to be bad juju, so to speak, to change the name on the boat, back in the days of piracy, if you take like Blackbeard. Blackbeard took the boat and named it *The Queen and Revenge*, and it's supposed to be bad luck. Well, they wanted to do that so they look bad or bad or people bad or whatever. I personally don't believe it's bad to change the name of a boat, because if you buy a boat that was built in 1959, and it was named after somebody's wife, what's your wife gonna think? But outside of that, I mean, the name of my boat means something to me, and it's one of the prior names of the boat. My brother, the same man, my granddaddy was named Cob. And they gave him the nickname a Cob. He served under Admiral Halsey in World War Two, between the Battle of Midway and Coral Sea. He served in that campaign. And he got the nickname of Cob because he was so rough. He was rough like a corn

cob and he was a big man and talked harsh, if he was around he'd be barking in the booth. He was just that, that kind of a man. And that's back when boats was made of wood and mens was made of steel. Now it's backwards, boats, boats are made of steel and men are made of [blows raspberry] so to speak. But you know, that name meant something to me and to get the boat back and get the name back on it. Cob Gail's name is synonymous around here. So we got the name back, made it back on the boat. A little bit of family lineage keeps going on. But you know all the other names that was on the boat, really not like a whole bunch of hidden meanings, but it does make a history of the boat. And you can look it up, Tommy Jr, it'll tell you the owner online and all that now and the *Kim Sea King*, there was two of those... Kim is TK's wives name, right. And his last name's King. So he took "Kim" "Sea" "King" and made a boats name, then when he sold that boat, the name changed on the boat so he could change another boat name to the boat, but he replaced it with so there's two different *Kim Sea Kings* you'd have to look up the one that was built in '59 not the one that was built in '79, but the older the boat is the better wood that it was made out of. Most people don't realize it but the backbone of any wooden boat is the keelson or the keel. That's a really thick piece of timber and if it's not solid, the boats no good because that keel stops it from, when you're going to sea from the boat bending and flexing in the middle. Well, if you got a central propshaft like you do all your trawlers, your propshaft has to stay straight because all the torque from your engines going through it moving forward but if you got a broken keelson and the boat flexes in the middle, it flexes the propshaft, breaks and it's \$10,000 to repair so if the boats got a broke back it's really no use to try to rebuild it. All the ribs and planking and stuff can't be replaced. And that's basically what I did to this boat here. When this man had this boat built all your older pilings was made with kerosene, they dipped them in kerosene and they soak the timber and it basically keeps the bugs and the rot away. Well the keelson in this boat was made with kerosene lumber. So the keelson was going to be good right on as long as I keep it, keep it covered with fiberglass and I don't let a lot of the elements get to it. The kerosene won't dry out to be right there, about on and on. With the way that I rebuilt it I kept the keelson intact and removed all the oil soaked timbers that was in it because it's a biohazard, among other things. Whenever the temperature gets up in the boat, the piece of wood's gonna leak oil out and it's going to go to the bilge and I'm gonna be pumping it out of the boat and that's bad. So I removed all the oil soaked timber,

17:57

and all the rotten timber and the rotten planks and replaced all that there and this day and age the price of lumber and grade A lumber is really high because it's not a building lumber to build houses with, its a structural lumber so, now a house is built with a two by four which not two by four its actually smaller. The timber that the boats built with worth three inch by six inch the three by sixes nowadays are not three by sixes, their two somethin by whatever. So I had to go to the next size bigger lumber, which is a little more than what the boat was built with originally. So technically, the boat is tougher than what it was when it was originally built, and that boats been to Mexico, its been all around the United States, you know, so it was doing, doing all that and the multiple hurricanes that its been through with the lighter timber that was in it what is it capable of doing now? I myself, I'm no spring chicken, I'm not gonna test the theory, I'm just gonna say in my mind, yes it's tough. [Laughs] I've went through Hurricane Irene, 88 miles offshore of Georgia. It was 48 hours of hail. The Coast Guard cutter tamarillo rode beside us and I felt more sorry for the crew on the cutter than I did for the crew on the boat that we was on. That being a bigger boat. The bigger swales done way more to it than what it was doing to that smaller trawler that we was on. I knew several times during the daylight hours of this hurricane, you could see you know, about a mile and that was a mile from this I, we were on top of the swale, every third swale you'd be able to see the boat because we would be on top at the same time. Well when every hit come up, well I'd either look down the stack, the exhaust stack where it was laying flat on the side and three or four more swales later you'd look up and one of the federals was out in the water turning so it was literally hilling over 30 degrees to 30 degrees so it's going 60 degrees from this way to this way every 18 minutes, can you imagine riding that ride, and do that for two days? Miserable. So being in a hurricane was nothing new to me so right around the house everybody's going "oh, we're all gonna die", No, keep your head on your shoulders. Keep the generator ready. We had everything that you need. Food, water, lights we're good to go. The average person don't think ahead far enough in a crisis situation that's what gets you in trouble. Alright, just like you right now. What would happen with you, if you went home and had no power? Your cell phone would die. Your computer wasn't work. And you probably wouldn't have no way to contact anyone to say anything. Went back outside your car didn't crank. How far would you have to go? What would you have to do to get in touch with somebody because you need supplements. The average person don't think about that. Any given day the power can go out and power can be shut down. We've got these idiots from overseas

shutting down our pipelines. If they get into our power grid, let's say you drive a Tesla. What are you going to do? You need a contingency plan in your life. Me, I'll never starve all this food right here. I'll never starve, which is rather apparent that I don't starve now to start with.

22:05

What I mean like this restaurant y'all come to this restaurant, "oh they serve seafood". It's appealing in your mind to see the seafood. But when it's cheaper for me to eat shrimp than it is to eat chicken, I start to like chicken. Cause I've eaten enough shrimp and crabs in order to crawl sideways. You know, if you go by the "you are what you eat" thing. But that is what it is. Everybody takes what they do in life and uses that to their advantage. And farmers per se they'll have a grain bin, they can eat grain, they have their cattle, they can eat cattle. You know, and so on and so forth. But the average person in this country don't have a farm, they don't have a river, they don't have... if the basic necessities are shut down... Let's, let's just say that we have a shortage on diesel fuel. Do you know where, how diesel fuel gets you your everyday products? You won't be able to wash your hair. You won't be able to eat, can't go to the grocery store to get anything if we stopped getting diesel fuel. Why? The tractor trailer that brings everything from the porch or where it was made to that store runs off of diesel fuel. And here's the reality of the fact the price of fuel is going up, up, up, up, up, up, up and it's almost to the point that the owner operators not the big company per se that's hurting the big companies also cause the owner operators cannot operate their truck to carry Dollar General their food. It's actually costing them too much to actually carry it point A to point B whenever that table turns, where is everybody gonna be sitting? This world's gonna be in a Hurt Locker quick. I put the moderate equipment in my boat to get the fuel economy up

24:18

and it went from from like I say 100 gallons a day to 40 gallons a day. Let's deal with the price of fuel goes up 30 more pounds what it is now. It would not be feasible, feasible for me to crank that thing up just to go fishin'. That's fact. I'll be out there with a sail boat still trying to catch a shrimp, and I'm not just a shrimper. I've took me a job every winter month, I get a job. I'm a crane operator, I'm a commercial electrician, I'm a truck driver, all that, all balled up and worn. But everything that I've tried to do, I've done something to do with the water, I've built bridges, I drove product from the port, I built you know, all the wiring for docks and stuff of that nature, I wired everything up, where all the stuff works and I always ended up back on the water. Now

I'm laid off from an electrician, I'm laid off from an operator and I'm not gonna be a truck driver 'cause of the price of fuel. So any of the other things that I done to really make money won't make me money. So I have something to fall back on. If I had to be, just work for fishin, it probably wouldn't be workin. If I didn't have the family, now if it was just me, I can survive off of you know, 30,000 a year, I can survive off of that. But if you got little ones, they will eat that 30,000 real quick, pampers are not cheap. [Laughs] But I mean, right? Like, right now this guy's paying me to help get his boat up and I tie my boat up to come help him.

26:27

Not just for the money. I'm doing it because I don't want to see that boat gone. You know, once that boats gone it can never be replaced. If you had to build that boat right now out of wood, from the bottom to the top, like it's built, just guess, a wild guess what it would cost. Three quarters of a million dollars, just the materials. That's not the labored hands that have the knowledge to put wood together where it wont leak, you know. One of the last of the last wood boat builders, he's dead and gone now, but I've tutored under him for three years, just to learn some of the tricks of the trade. And in that three years, I'm a very smart person, I've never got to nowhere near the carpentry skills that he had. He could literally look at a board where it needed to go walk over to a saw, cut it out and put it right in place. I'm over there writing 23 measurements down and 45 minutes later I've gotten the measurements and I cant even stick it in, you know, he walks over he goes... you know just like a hairstylist. She goes up there, done. If you try to do the same thing, you're there 45 minutes, what the, you know, same thing.

28:00

But I took that knowledge and I kept it because the old timers know things and that's one of the things going on with this world now, the people that lived in World War Two, everybody says "oh this pandemic". The people live through World War Two, you got to think about this. They couldn't get food. They had the depression, they had all this. They went to war just to feed their family and their families was starving back home while they was at war. We don't have it bad, everybody says "oh the pandemic this, the pandemic that" it's a walk in the park compared to what our ancestors went through. You know, look at the black plague, no one knew what it was. Entire families was gone. All that knowledge that they pertain to in their lifetime, gone. The rare few people that actually sat down and put what they know on paper is the only ones we know of. But how much knowledge was lost from people that didn't have the pen, the power of the pen so

to speak? How much knowledge is gone? It's astronomical. In y'all's profession, what y'all doing now, if y'all ask questions, and get the answers, it's right there, every bit of it. So keep doing it and think outside the box on your questions. Not why you're a fisherman, why does a fisherman does this, or do that, or why would they even fathom of having a boat? I'm a fisherman because I have a love for boats. Old wood boats, you know. A steel boat to me, it has no heart it has no soul, has no personality, you know. A wood boat, it go on the ocean, it creaks, it squeaks. All that creaking and squeaking it's telling me something about the boat, what the boats doin', how it's doin' and why it's doin'. The steel boats not going to do that. It's not gonna creak, it's not gonna squeak, it's just gonna eventually break.

30:20

You're not gonna know its broke till its broke. That wood boat I can sit there and listen to it and say "ope, yep. I gotta tighten the fasteners up," or "we gotta add to this or change this bulkhead out." You don't have that in a steel boat, I mean, carpentry skills to take wood and hold water out is astronomical to start with. The average person don't know why a wood boat keeps the water out. You know when you get wood wet, it expands, right? So when you build that boat, there's small cracks in it down every plank, every board there will be a fine hair crack. So when you put that brand new boat in the water, it's gonna to try to sink, it's gonna act as a colander, the waters gonna seep in. So we'll put those wood boats in a shallow harbor to where it sets down on the bottom, lower than what the waterline is. We'll let it actually sink. So every wood boat that's been built just about every has sunk when it was first put in the water. But as the board swell up, you go pump it out, the board is already closed up and done its thing. 30 years ago, we'd set up all winter, December was the end of shrimp season. You got three to five months before you go fishing again, right? But the boat would get what they call high seams. Each and every one of the planks that was above the waterline dried out, there wasn't no water constantly hitting them, no ocean hitting them. Well they'd get in their boats and just go fishing. If they didn't know what they was doing, "oh my god, the boats got water in it. Why is it sinking? Well I got a leak." But all the way down that plank, had that little minute crack. And now the boats traveling through the water, the waters come upon the front of it. All those little cracks seep water in. The older fishermen would go down there with a bucket, or garden hose three days before they knew they was going fishin' and wet the inside of the boat so it heals up the high seams. The average person

now if they was to buy a wood boat, they would sink it because they wouldn't know. Any more questions?

32:55

SS: Yes. You talked about how you're making trawls that help with litter...

33:01

DG: Yeah, I'm wantin' to put an extra bag in the bottom of a trawl. Basically underneath it is sacrificial by far. So if I drag across some soft bottom or somethin' and it rips, it'll just lay back and be tore loose and I'd have to repair it later. But I want to put it at the bottom of my trawl, see my trawl actually touch the bottom of the ocean floor, everybody thinks it does. The only thing that really touches the floor is the tickler chain. The webbin part of the net is behind that. Well, we put the chain just to get it close to the bottom, but these are riding about that high off the bottom. I want to put a extra cable underneath with a little small bag just to catch the plastics and I'm going to use a larger mash than what our trawl mashes are. We use anywhere from inch and a half size mash up to two and a quarter to catch shrimp. Well I want to put a three inch mash to catch bottles, it was like a little water bottle we drank out of every day. That bottle would go to the bottom, I put a three inch mash, most of all your smaller fish, shrimp, whatever if they was to go into that part of the net they just... right on through the hole, be gone. But if a bottle goes in it, the bottle stay in there. You're using a trawls, you're always going forward. You never really stop. If you stop, they fall up, get tangled up, whatever. So during my ten hour day that I'm working, the water pressure will hold them, hold whatever gets in it, in it, and in afternoon I'll load em on the boat. And if I catch ten bottles a day, one bottle a day, I'm removing that one bottle. That's all I'm doing with that. That and for all the other fishermen who say "what is that?" Gotta throw 'em a little curve ball. [coughs] But thats one of the things I want to work on.

35:07

SS: Do you think other fishermen will accept this idea?

35:12

DG: The problem that I've talked to with the other fishermen, most docks have a dumpster, right? Well, their daily garbage goes there. And at the end of the week, it stinks to high heaven and there's not enough space to put the last drips of garbage in. So if you started bringing all the extra trash in that you catch there's really no place to put it. That's the only problem that I've talked to, and you know, probably 15% of the fishermen automatically knew that. Now,

aluminum cans, stuff of that nature, aluminum cans and salt water in six months, is back to the elements. The only thing on it that isn't a element is the really thin layer of painting on it, those that say Sprite or Coca Cola or Pepsi or whatever was on the can. The rest of it goes back to the elements, it'd just be aluminum that's literally dispersed into the elements. But plastics don't do that. Should we, get we get the blame for fish getting tangled up in netting. We don't really run netting out there. Right now, the price of a trawl net is five to eight grand. Do you think we will leave five thousand dollars laying around? We retrieve while we if it breaks loose or whatever we retrieve it, repair it, put it back together, put it back on the boat and I repurpose old trawl nets. A lot of people around here has chicken coups. Instead of buying expensive roof, putting on your chicken coup, you can take my old trawl webbing that is tattered and torn and put up there and it stops the chickens all from coming loose. So I kinda repurpose some of the stuff. 90% of it you can't repurpose, uh the steel cables we go back to the scrap yard with those and they get recycled to come back as a Honda. But stuff of that nature. I try to repurpose everything that I use. You know, everybody talks about aliens or whatever. An alien or whatever, on any environment hurts everything that it does. Everything that we do right now as a human being is hurtin' our environment. The less I can do to hurt it is better. So I'm trying leave the least footprint as possible. Everybody wants to build their house with concrete and stone. You build your house with concrete and stone its gonna be there right on, right? You're not thinking about the people that's gonna have to take it away or move it down after you're long gone. I built mine out of wood, steel nails, stuff that the environment's gonna take over. And if they do decide to tear the house down, it won't have much concrete rubble, just wood. Nature will take its course, termites get get a good snack out of it and all that. But they're about everybody puts out baits for termites. I invite them in my yard. One, they're nature's way of cleaning up dead trees. Right. Once they get done, the worms get to do the rest on that particular piece of wood. Everybody cuts down their shrubberies or whatever and they throw that in a trash pile up front that goes to landfill. Don't do that. Take one little corner of your property, mulch it down and let it return back to nature, like the dirt. And when it does that, spread it on your lawn. You got the perfect fertilizer, you don't got to go buy chemical to put in your lawn. I mean if everywhere, everybody would done that look how much landfill space we would save. It goes on and on. The list just goes, its exponential. Everybody says I'm crazy, but I'm not. There's validity behind that. [Laughs]

Another question?

39:37

SS: You've been fishing for a long time. Have you seen a difference in the water? Particularly the litter that you've seen?

39:48

DG: I've seen an astronomical difference from whenever I was a child and where I am now. Whenever I was a child you hardly ever seen a sea turtle. You hardly ever seen a whale. Now, every day I'm on the ocean I see a sea turtle, every year I see a whale. So we're getting that part of the environment back, but I'll see more and more and more plastics and it's belligerent the amount of plastic that I seen. You seen the commercials back in the day with the Indian crying you know, now it's the commercial fishermen crying because we're seeing what is going on. You wouldn't believe it, but after a hurricane goes through, what's the most trash that I would catch? It's not a common knowledge. What would you think would be the most thing that I would catch out there, trash wise? Plastic lawn furniture. The wind picks it up, carries it wherever, and it finds a river and it's washed to the ocean. When Hurricane Hugo hit Charleston we left one up there now we had to take a chainsaw with us to cut trees that was out there we'd catch one, have to cut it out of the net of the tree, whatever. I caught pneumonia, from goin out there and gettin trees out because the water temperature had dropped, but we literally had the top of the pilot house stacked up with 300 plastic lounge chairs, the little Dollar General brand chairs and we still catch them. Bumpers off of cars. I know that somewhere somebody had a fender bender and they left the bumper on the car just hanging over, and they drove over a bridge and it went overboard and it ended up out there, but a plastic bumper off of a car. I catch four or five a year, every year. And one side of it might have life growin' on it, and the other side of it will have nothing. The waxed paint finish it wont hardly grow on it. Several years back they in somebody's infinite wisdom they decided to make a reef and they took toilets, old porcelain toilets and they went out there and dropped them on the spot to make a reef out of. No sea life grows on porcelain, they didn't do the research. Now they got a bunch toilets laying in the bottom of the ocean. I mean artificial reefs are great, it's just what they putin' in 'em that's kind of upsettin' me.

42:51

If you put up steel structure offshore we know steel does in salt water it eats up, corrodes away. Now you have iron oxide, you'll have a pile of that with dead sea life in 20 years So it starts a

place and kills a place all in the same genre. Me being a fisherman being out there, I see it. You know, I see a steel structure, 15 years later that steel structure gone, just a pile of rust or sand so to speak. That element wasn't there, it wasn't ever here. North of Detroit, yeah, there was iron in bays and all that stuff. But off of here there wasn't and being on the ocean all my life, the missing link theory and all that. You're probably gonna think I'm crazy if I tell you this. Since I've been little I've watched the sea level rise without an ice cap and I'm not saying that we didn't speed it up, but it happened before us, period, dinosaurs dealt with it. If you're going to look for people and their inhabitants they have water involved. Our bodies made of mostly water, we have to have water to survive. Well, if you recede the ocean back for where it is right now if you recede it back 100 feet down, where would the coastline of Georgia be? Way, way offshore like the reef that's out here offshore the natural reef that's offshore out here. If you look under the sea life stuff that grewed on it, you're probably gonna find ancient writings and stuff, from man in that. That's where all of our ancestries is at, it's off the beach line, because if we had both complete polar ice caps and iceband around the world, there was 100 foot less water in the ocean. He was out there, we weren't up here. And we would be, what we would call hillbillies.

45:41

You know, the people that run from society would be on this part of land, you know. But, I mean, it would be a fresh water trickle stream coming out of melting ice so many months out of the year when the sun Solstice, turned or whatever. So that's one of my theories of where all that stuffs at. A bunch of people, is like "uh huh, that makes sense." In the Gulf of Mexico, that last hurricane, Ida, that come through, it washed sediment away from a spot that's 80 feet deep. They found a cypress forest that's pre-carbonated. How far back does carbon dating go? Long, long ways. So its pre-carbonated, they can't carbon date it because it's older than the scale that they have. Kinda backs my theory up, doesn't it? But yeah.

46:54

SS: You're very smart. Did you go to college? Did you...

46:58

DG: Well, I did technical schools, stuff of that nature. The general form of college, I didn't want to pertain in because I already had all my mathematics I already had, you know, world history, United States history, I already had all that under my belt. So I really wouldn't need to do a whole bunch of history, or mathematics. The only thing that I was going for was straight

knowledge of how stuff works, why in engineering and stuff of that nature. So I would, vocational schools instead of going to a college per se, which is a college in the same but I went to learn one specific thing not to have a large spectrum of knowledge go in. Was it a bad thing? Probably, I probably should have went to college and stayed longer. I actually went into becoming an RN and I've done all my studies on that and I know more about your body than you do. But I discovered that me being around sick people was bad. I got bit by snake whenever I was younger, and it compromised my immune system. So as I worked around sick people, they coughed, I got it, however, bacteria works wonders on people that have compromised immune system. 20 years ago, I was worse off than I am now I mean, with the weather changed, I was looking for something to get rid of the my sinus problems. Now I'm getting better by the year but I still have compromised immune system because if I get stung by a bee, I go into anaphylactic shock. So the medical field wasn't the one that I wanted to keep going through. But I can draw your blood and I know every blood vessel and muscle group, and bone structure and all that in the human body. Has helped me? Yeah, I've got people to call me from all over the country "Hey, man, my wife doing this what the could it be?" or "my husband has this issue what could it be what the best route of action?" And once you learn the biology of the human body. You know certain medications what they do, how they do it and what not, and I've talked to them and they go to the doctor and say "Hey, this is wrong with me I need this." The doctor goes "How do you know that?" So on and so forth. But me gettin sick was the bad thing because I work three months out of the year and the rest of the time I was sick, no good. The commercial electrician didn't work out for me because they're not building everything right close to me, its every once in a while I get a job. You know so I was laid off most of the time.

49:56

The crane operator, laid off most of time. The Souvenir bridge {?}, you get to see it, beautiful thing, I worked there seven years. Drove the crane, picked the concrete up, fixed it, built it, whatever. By the time the seven years was over, there was no more Souvenir bridge being built. So, again, laid off. But evrybodies got to eat so I do get to go get seafood, and I'm not just a shrimp fisherman I catch shad, I work with the Department of Natural Resources for many, many, many years. Probably as many years as you've been alive. I worked with the Department of Natural Resources, I would catch the fish, then they would put a tag in it and they would track that tag. Not as a beacon of light going through a GPS machine no, they done it with paperwork.

They would pay for it all for that tag to be returned if it was caught. So when the shad come in the river I was at the beginning of it. I'd catch the fish, they'd put a tag in it they swim up the river and get caught again. They'd want to know how fast the fish went from the point where I engaged with it and to where it went, and the amount of fish that we caught and tagged would give them a population number. That they can mathematically do and say well there was X amount of fish up the river, and they went this fast up the river to breed. And we still have a fishery here because of that. That particular unit of fishing industry has the lowest bycatch period, because it's the cold month of the year so all your other fish are big enough to actually deal with it and that are not in that particular part of the river. So it's not hurting other fish per se, occasionally you'll catch a sturgeon but a sturgeon is a really hardy fish so it doesn't hurt it. You catch it and release it and it goes on back and goes about its own business and makes its babies. The only other fish that you would catch would be a gar fish and I fought with all the fishermen and I fought with them, "Hey these are a food source lets, let people eat them." "I'm not carrying that stinking thing around on my boat." And they just throw it back overboard and probably a third of them would kill the fish before they throw it back in the water. "Why?" But it is what it is, I mean you can't teach people not to be prejudice because that's the way they were raised. You can't teach people to stop using a plastic water bottle because it's convenient. So we gotta open everybody's eyes in different directions. Say "Hey look, this commercial fishermen caught this bottle that you drunk from the 7-Eleven store, seven years ago that fall out of your car door, it ended up in the ocean." You know how many little fish went inside that thing and died that's not sediment inside there that's dead fish that has degraded inside that bottle. I've actually took a few of those things out, emptied the contents out and which looks like sediment which most of it is, but there's little tiny bones in it. So you know whatever went in there didn't make it back out. Gotta open everybody's eyes about it. Because they're going to keep on doing what they're doing and the governments goin to keep on lettin' everybody make the bottled water with that bottle, because there's no, as they say, a cheaper vessel to put it in, we've had milk cartons made of paper as long as I've been alive and you can recycle it, lets make recycling more, put some money back in your pocket and get rid of that and guess what happens this becomes more feasible to do this, but you can't push legislation on it because everybody's in with the big companies. Do you ever notice whenever a politician gets into office as bad off as me and you. They're scrapin by to make their car payments, makin their house payments and all that stuff and

their just barely getting by. Once they get into office they get a bigger car they get a bigger house, and on the same amount of money they make. How does that work? Big companies are going to “Hey” turn a blind eye, they line their pockets. And they say there's no crooked politicians, right. We cut that out of Congress, we'd have it made. [Laughs] Any other...

55:00

SS: You've had a lot of jobs, where does your heart lie? Is it with fishing?

55:14

DG: Fishing. And you know, the average fisherman would say, Well, my heart lies with the ocean. It don't, it doesn't. I mean I like working on the ocean. I really do. Don't get me wrong, but 90% of time, it's rough. And I go out there and get beat up during the day I come home, my feets going “Hey, you just took up to 12 hours.” It's not affordable to do this. So I like working in the rivers. A for one, like here in Georgia, we don't have a very large population living out on the water. Especially if you go up on Altamaha River Basin, 'cause it floods of course, you don't build that house in the floodplain, but you go up there, up to Altamaha. Let's say close to Jesup, McIntosh county line. That's where my heart lies in that part of the world right there. As you go up there any given day, paddle a kayak, whatever, and you just stop and listen. You hear trickles of water coming out of the swamp. Here the hooda fighting another hooda off in the distance. Here, the turkey curling over there. I mean, you hear nature, you see nature, it's pristine nature. You come down to the salt marshes. And you see that boat sunk, right there. Trash, garbage left, just rubbish. It kills me.

56:40

SS: Have you seen a lot of ships sink? Have you seen a lot of sunken ships?

56:45

DG: Yeah. I mean, through the years I've watched shrimp trawlers go down, I've watched yachts go down. I mean, if you're a boat owner, if you go out, and buy a boat, I think you should have a crash course. If something happens on the boat, you got to know how to fix it, period. Or you don't buy the boat. I mean, it works out just like the Dodge Viper. You had to take a defensive driving course before you bought this car. Why? Because if not, it will kill you. Well I mean if you buy a boat it'll drown you, same thing. Take an offensive boating course. The Coast Guard has its own hand. They call it the unfloatable boat. It has a packing gland which your propshaft goes through, that's going to fail and it's going to leak and you got to fix it. A crack going to form

on the side of the boat its going to leak, you got to fix it. If everybody takes that course, I'm not saying all the boats wouldn't be sunk and left out there. But it was a large amount of them that wouldn't go down because of some common sense. Stuff of that nature right there. I mean, its, its a week course. You can take a week and the knowledge that you pertain from that week, will last you the rest of your life and could save your life. I mean, the Coast Guard are pretty quick, they're right on their toes and they'll come get you if something bad goes wrong. But I've been on boats that something bad goes wrong and you have three minutes to call the Coast Guard and tell them hey, my boat is going down. And then you got to rely on the beeper to go off and wait for that thing to send a satellite signal to the satellite and the Coast Guards gonna wait X amount of time for that thing going off because they don't know if it's went off cause somebody dropped it or it got rained on or whatever. So they're gonna wait an X amount of time before they go investigate. So you're in the water that amount of time, if it's after December, the water temperatures below and you go in the water, how long do you got to live? Hypothermia is gonna take your life long before the Coast Guard says "All right, well, has to be a boats sunk lets check this out." And they got there they find you dead in a life jacket. I'm not, I'm not required to have a immersion suits on my boat but my wife, my one year old son goes on a boat with me. They have immersion suits. That's how I know it works. I'm trained to train them in using them. So we're going to use the best of the best. I mean, you feel like me you have two appendages versus ten. But seventy degree water hypothermia will eventually set in, then you gonna just dissipate fast so right now if you go in that water you got less than a hour. I'd rather have an immersion suit on and last two days, somebody eventually spot an orange gummy out there floating in the ocean. [Laughs] This like thinking ahead like I was telling you earlier, if the average person thinks ahead, how many lives will be saved, how many fish will we save? I mean I'm not throwin it off on rednecks and I'm not droppin it off on pickup truck drivers, but the average person that owns a pickup truck the back of the truck is their trash can. They finish that soda or that bottle a water they just flip that bottle in the back of the truck not putting in their mind that you're going to be going 70 miles an hour down the road with a possibly a 15 mile an hour crosswind so now it's 85 mile an hour winds that at can or that bottles not gonna stay the back of that truck and when you go over a bridge what happens you got to higher crosswind because is a open area, there's no trees around so that higher crosswind picks that trash and throws it right out, rolls on top of the bridge where does it go from there? Right out there where I work at, and I sat at the

bridge one day I went up there pole fishing up there with my wife before we had the little one. I carried her up there, we was fishing by that bridge, and about every 10 or 15 minutes, which it was a windy day, 10 or 15 minutes you'll see somethin' come off the bridge and it's a plastic bag just floating out there and right in the water, soon as it touches the water it disappears. I mean this like I say common sense. Don't put trash in the back of your truck. Don't ride through there with your top down with the bottles in the backseat. Because what's going to happen when you cross over that bridge, the winds gonna be blowin up this direction and it's going to pick it right up overboard it goes.

1:02:14

Everybody is talking about the sea turtle with the straw up his nose like he was a coke head or whatever. No, sea turtles feed different than land turtles. Anything they could catch they'll eat. Whether it's a fish, a jellyfish or seaweed growing on the side of your boat. It tickles me to watch one to go up to the side of one of these old rusty steel hulls and they got the sea lettuce growing on the side of it, and he's an opportunist feeder. He sees that plastic bag as a jellyfish. It's not running from him, he's gonna eat it. How many of them choked to death on a damn plastic bag. You see one with a straw stuck in his nose, he lived because a straw was stuck in his nose. The one that ate the plastic bag didn't live. I mean, some of the stuff that I done when I was younger saved all these turtles. And we actually have a population of them now, lets keep em. I mean their lack of being here and the higher ocean temperatures made it more conducive for the jellyfish. I don't know if y'all seen anything about it on TV at all, but they have jellyfish kills every year, where you get an overpopulation of jellyfish, they wash up on the beach and they die, and it's getting worse and worse by the year. I actually started catching the jellyfish and we was shippin 'em to China, and we would pickle them just like we would pickle a salt and all them. Put it in buckets and ship 'em to China. We was selling something to China, check that out. But I went out there and started catching jellyfish to try to grow the population, well whilst we was doing that we had less of a kill that would wash up. We still had it, don't get me wrong, but it wasn't hurting the beaches as bad as it was prior to us doing that. And if you meter any fishery right now, if you was to stop shrimp fishing, right. The predation that we've done on that shrimp or whatever, over the amount of years that we've done it. They have a life span of months. So unlike us, our evolution is going to go really slow. Our lifespans 60 or 70 years. Well, in one life span of ours, you got 70 lifespans of that shrimp. So they're going to be 70 times faster at

evolution than us so they've built up their immunity which is to breed more and breed more frequently to make their population stand. If we took all the trawlers off and stopped catching those shrimp, what are we gonna have in a few years? An overpopulation of shrimp, which leads to disease and whatever, it's going to kill off whatever right along with the shrimp, if the shrimp gets disease and whatever eats the shrimp, you know what I'm sayin? We got black gill now, one of the reasons why we have black gill, the overseas fish farms, shrimp farms, whatever. They was feeding them hog fecal matter to their shrimp stock. Well, that caused them to get a black gill disease and it killed off their pawn. Well, they couldn't sell that as a food grade shrimp cause it died in the water and turn of course. So they pushed it through over here to us as deadbait. Guess what we did. We went right down to Walmart, bought that dead bait and cast it out in the ocean, unbeknownst to us, the black gill disease was still inside the gills. We would throw it overboard and introduce it, the shrimp are fighting it back faster than I ever thought they would. 10 years ago it decimated the population of shrimp as soon as it showed up. Now you see it periodically through the year, but not shrimp all have it. Just like y'all wearin' that mask right now. Y'all scared to death getting COVID. Here's my thought process, give me the damn COVID that way I can go ahead and get it over with either I'm gonna die from it or I'm going to build immunity to it, one of the two is gonna happen. That type of person is going to live longer than the other type person, because of this: If you don't get out, and you don't get sick, when you do get sick, you're gonna get really sick.

1:07:17

All right, the shots, right, great idea. It works. If you didn't catch COVID, could get two shots. Because whenever you actually do catch it, it won't be as bad on you. That's the whole purpose of it. Now, if you've already had COVID it kind of defeats the purpose of going to get the shot right? Remember, I was telling you we sell our jellyballs to China? Well the young man that buys them, and was carrying them back too, guess where his markets at? Wuhan. December, I mean November of 2019, he came back to this country wearing a mask, and he was all like, "Why are you wearing a mask?" We all went to the meeting for this year's thing, and he had like a cold, snuffle, whatever. Eight days later, I was sick as a dog. Worst flu I ever had in my life. Few months later, they talk about this COVID, and I was like, "Wow, I couldn't taste nothin, I felt the same way, same stuff was goin' on with me." And you know, the average person has had a runny nose. Mine was like a faucet that was barely on straight. I've never had that happen in

my life. I mean, I've sniffed pepper and it wouldn't do me that bad you know, and come to find out when I went to travel out the country that I had to do a COVID test, and they found dead COVID cells in my sinuses. Like "You already had COVID. We got to do a blood test on ya." What? Didn't have no damn COVID, and they did the blood test, sure enough I had antibodies. And I had it before everybody come out with the COVID thing. But I was right place, right time, or in that aspect the wrong place at the wrong time. But I didn't catch COVID again until four months ago. And I knew the telltale signs of what it was because I couldn't taste nothing. I looked at my wife says "Oh no. I can't taste. I was freezing to death last night. This aint good. It feels like that mess that we had back then." And she goes "Well I'm feeling the same way." So we went got tested and sure enough we had COVID, and it wasn't nothing. Well, I mean, we did get 18 days at the house together but outside of the unwanted vacation, I mean it wasn't hardly nothing at all, because our bodies already had immunity to it. Just like if you haven't had it, you get the shot. It does the same thing. You'll feel cruddy for a couple of days but I'd rather feel cruddy for a couple of days then fight back what I fought back the first time that I had it. I'm a pretty tough and big resilient guy. I coughed until I blacked out and lost bowel on myself, it was bad. Repugnant to say the least.

1:10:21

SS: I wanted to talk to you about, you're from lots of generations of shrimpers.

1:10:27

DG: Well not just shrimpers, Waterman altogether. The Gale last name. Sir William Gale served for King Arthur, knights of the round table. And he didn't use a sword, he fought with a battle ax, an extremely heavy battle ax. He was a really big man. And he go up to a line of men and fights back then you line up on both sides you come together and it was a clash of swords and shields and whatever. Well William didn't carry a sword, a shield. He just carried that battle ax.

Whenever he went into battle, he'd clear out a line of men with one swing, and he had a force to be reckoned with. It was Gales force. They was crossing the English Channel on, what was ships back then what boats would be now, and a storm come up, and a storm jostled the ships bad and King Arthur said, Man, this storm has Gale's force and to this day we still use strong winds name as Gale force winds, and now some of my family lineage with water and I mean, he basically inherited most of the isle of man in the brigades. So my family come here from the Isle of Man, which they don't have cattle over there, but my grandfather was the one that helped keep the

sheep and the whatever well, he was like the doctor or the whatever for the animals. When he come to this country, he moved south and he married an Indian Squall, which was blasphemy back then, you know. Been like in the 60s, marrying black and white. You know, interracial. Well, he moved north until he found a place that he could settle with his arrangement, you know, that he wasn't chastised so bad. And he got to Darien and settled down here and he done work for King George with the lumber and he went to work at the dairy farm helped take care of the cattle because cattle have similar things to sheep, and he done the same thing kept the cattle healthy and all that mess, and right on through the Civil War and everything. And he was a fisherman, waterman, he helped raft the logs down for King George, that all the lumber went over there. And he'd fish during the off times. He catfish, catch sturgeon and all that stuff out there. They had a hurricane come through one time and granddaddy would go out and catch fish and all that stuff and come back home and grandma would go to the garden that she had and they fed most of Darien, off of what they would go out and get, you know, and my family's been here right on and my granddaddy was a fisherman. He was in the Navy, of course. Great Depression, same thing like I was talking about. He was in the Navy, served under Halsey, come back. Right out to rookie, come back shrimping. My dad, same thing. I was actually, I should be a corporate Republican. I was actually conceived in Key West Florida, but mother made the track back here and I was born in Brunswick. But yeah, I mean, I've been on the waters since fetus. I become a shrimp boat captain since before I had driver's license, I was 14 years old. How many 14 year olds you know today that can drive a shrimp boat and catch a shrimp? I mean much less know how to crank it up, get it off the dock. Not many, that's just because whenever I was little, we used to have the old wood Freeman automatic pilots. And they only done one function.

Whenever you was driving the boat you want it to go straight just turn it on and it would drive the boat straight that's all it would do. It didn't give it a dang what was in front of it, it would run it over. It just drove the boat straight. Well, my dads wood Freeman quit and instead of going out and paying this man X amount of money to come repair it, he went and got the crab boil pot. Dingy little pot you know about that tall at the rim, and I was a little kid, I was just a boy.

1:15:03

He put that crab boil pot in front of the steering wheel and he said "Alright son you seen that off in the distance out there? That tree right there? Well you line it up to that point, you drive towards it." And thats what I did, I drove the boat, and daddy went back there, done what he had

to do with the crew went back, move the pot out a ways and I went on about my business. I've done that everyday. When school let out, I didn't have summer vacation, I didn't have spring break. I had good work. Because I was like any other kid I wanted the \$150 pair of sneakers. And I looked at my dad and said "Hey Daddy, can I get those sneakers?" he goes "You better earn the money and get them your damn self. I'ma buy you these penny loafers and you go wear them and be happy." But I had nice things going through school, I had nice clothes, I had nice things. And I had nice cars because I went out and I worked and I got it. I got off my butt and done something. But I had, I had the opportunity to do that because my father had that boat, and I had a love of the boat. I'd love the water. And I was able to go out there and spend time with my father, which is no longer here. But it is what it is when it comes down to it, to dumb it down some I mean, a farmer's son is going to want to be a farmer, you know. Nurse's son's gonna want to be a nurse and so on and so forth. I grew an affection for boats at a very very very young age. I started taking stuff around the house and making boats and I wanted to know how that boat work and why it worked that way and why the waters sunk and how the waters sunk and how the wave overtakes it and all that stuff. From there I've built my knowledge of boats and now every time a boat sinks they say call the Gale boy, he'll come get it up. And that's what I'm doing right around the corner now I'm trying to get this mans boat up. But a little bit of knowledge goes a long ways. But if you love what you do, and you have a passion for what you do, the sky's the limit. The only limit that you have is if you're happy doing what you're doing right now you'll love your life you love your job but sitting there listening to a dumb old fisherman talk ain't the thing most people want to do. So if you don't like it, you won't be happy at what you do. You got to love your job as if it's something that you want to do every day and I've tried different jobs, I've tried doing different things and always end up right back on the water. I ain't a millionaire, won't ever be a millionaire. My house is paid for, my boat is paid for, my car paid for, but the kids not, so I gotta work. But outside of that, I wouldn't change a thing maybe the first ex wife, but outside of that. [Laughs]

1:18:17

SS: Could you tell us your first memory of fishing?

1:18:21

DG: My first memory of fishing... See, I got sick at school and I couldn't go to school. Well my mother worked at the shoe factory, couldn't go to work with mom. My grandmother worked the

shoe factory, couldn't go to grandma's. My daddy worked on a boat. Well everything rolls down hill, my daddy went to bottom. We was actually shad fishing that time of year and I got on the shad boat with him and it was cold, oh my lord it was cold it was January and I rode in that boat with him that day and the whole time I was in it that boat I was like "Why is my daddy doing this?" And I asked the questions "Dad, Why are you out here in this cold weather doing this?" "To feed you son." And that stuck in my head my entire life, "I'm doing this to feed you son." It don't get no better than that does it? I mean it's a blunt answer, but its the right answer. And he wasn't just feeding me, he was feeding everybody he caught fish for, but he doing it primarily for me. And that's what you do. Your children learn from your mistakes. And I've learned from some of his. Like getting this boat up, getting these boats up. My daddy was synonymous for being rough on a boat. He has sunk dozens of shad boats and stuff of that nature. He built one, one time he said "I'm building an unsinkable boat, it can't be sunk." Two months later it was on the bottom. I mean, he was just that rough on boats and he shot a hole in one of them one night. We was up the river huntin' coons, we would take the meat, sell the meat of the different ones and we would sell the hides elsewhere. And that was one of the ways we'd make a living in the wintertime. Cause shrimp season's over with after December. So daddy was doing trapping and stuff of that nature. But he grabbed a shotgun when he did, he didn't realize that the safety was off and boom shot a hole right in the bottom of the boat. Now, this is the middle of winter, water's cold, I'm in the boat with him, I'm a kid. "What are we going to do?" The first thing that popped into my mind was a little kid with his finger. Well I didn't realize a shotgun hole was that big half my hand went in the hole. But what we ended up doing, was took the life jacket out of the boat box and I stepped on it and held my foot there. That's just gonna stop the water from coming in the boat. Then we went and eased over to a sandbar pulled the boat out the water. Luckily, we had some gaffer tape, duct tape. Whatever you want to call it, in the boat. We just taped over the hole and went on about our day hunting, or night. It's simple memories like that. Who could say they've been in a boat that got shot. It went to sinking and we fixed it with duct tape, that's about the redneckest thing you can possibly do in this world. And one of my first little shad boats that I had, I didn't have nothin but a 9.5 turtle top johnson. I've worked and scraped up to get to the motor but it was an older motor. I cleaned it up got it running perfect and all that stuff. I put it on a bigger boat, it wouldn't move it.

1:22:04

So I had to find a smaller boat for a smaller motor, and I've always been a big guy. Well, needless to say, the motor wasn't big enough to perform the duties that it was asked for. So I ended up getting a bigger motor and a bigger boat. Well I still have the little boat that I got. Well they stopped Gator hunting in rivers and all, and gator population got more and more and more and encroached on everybody's household. Everybody's got a pond in their backyard or a pool in their yard. The gators started looking for food sources because we eat up all the food so they would go to somebody's pond and they eat their chihuahua or a swan would get eaten. They'd call the Department of Natural Resources and say "Hey, we got a problem. We got this nuisance alligator." Well they put out because we was tagging the shad and all they put out to us said "Hey man, we need somebody that go out and catch alligators." Well my granddaddy in the depression, that's what he done, he went alligator hunting. So he knew just how to alligator hunt, he was a profession at it. Well, we all get out of the truck and we go on these calls to get a nuisance alligator out of somebody's backyard, which is pretty fun by the way. It doesn't sound that way but it is. Lo and behold I have my little boat well it was a V bow, fin hull, fiberglass boat. I'm in the back row running the trolling motor, my daddy's in the middle to catch the gator to pull it in the boat to tie it up, right? My uncle was in the front with the cane pole with a snare just like you would use to get a rabid dog or whatever, you know the little snare thing. But we go get a 20 foot cane pole off the side of the interstate, the cane breaks and that puts the pole we use but we get 20 foot to the gator and we can put the noose over

1:24:01

its neck and catch it. Me being a little kid then I was just slowly easing closer and closer to the gator and my uncle was shorted up on the cane pole the whole time. And when he did actually get the snare on him, the boat was on top of him, it was a V bow boat so the boat was shaped like this [motions with hands]. That gator just spun right around and grab the first thing that was close to him, and bit the whole front of that boat out. It was about that wide and that far onto the boat. I told Lester, I said "Do like I did, stick your hand over it!" He stuck his hand right on through the boat. Now we had four live gators in the boat that was tied up, I wasn't worried about them. It was the eight foot one on the end of that cable that we just snared that bit the bow of the boat out that wasn't tied. Now the boats sinking, gator tied to the boat, I'm in the boat, daddy's in the boat, he's in the boat. Go to the lifejacket, thank God it held it off long enough for us to get the boat in the bank with the gator trying to get away from the boat still attached to the

boat, that was not fun. We duct taped that one again we went back and got the gator and called it a night. Everybody's wet from bailin' the water out of the boat and all that good malarky. But yeah there's another time that duct tape saved the boat, save the day matter of fact. But an alligator gives off a scent when they're distressed, just like a bee gives off a scent if you, catch one honeybee and squish it and hurt it. It puts a scent on you and all the other honey bees will come sting you. Well a gator does the same thing, its got musk glands. You catch an alligator it gives off a musk, it kinda smells like chlorine to us. It's a pungent smell. A Georgia State Patrol officer calls us on an emergency call. There's 11 foot alligator on the side of the interstate. We pulled up and it wasn't but 10 foot to start with. But he was like "Oh God its 15, 16 foot its going to eat a car." There's a dinosaur and thats what most of the calls was you know, "There's a 20 foot alligator in the backyard." We get up there and it's like six foot. Well, we pull up in this pickup truck on the side of the interstate and this State Patrol Officer's holding the gator at gunpoint like the gator knows to be scared of the gun to start with. Well, we pull up that scent in the back of truck, hits that gator. It goes "Oh shit there's a gator in trouble." He steps right out in traffic, an eighteen wheeler squishes his head. No, need to hold the gun on him no more, but the state patrol officer is still holding the gun on him. And about the time we opened the door up he done that. And the state patrol officer says "I don't know what kind of people y'all are but I've been here three hours and that alligator with that alligator. Y'all pulled up and it scared him to death, he committed suicide." And he just knew that the fact that we pulled up scared that gator into that road, but it was the scent from the other gator we had caught, he's probably tells his grand kids that he's met some people from Darien, Georgia that scared an alligator to commit suicide. There's a bunch of those tales, oh my lord. You know a six foot alligator can turn around in a 24 foot, 24 inch culvert. Most of your culvert pipes that drain the water from one side of ninety five to the other is 24 inch pipes. We pulled over to catch this gator, he's gonna hide, he smells a smell and he runs inside this culvert pipe. And I watched him go in this side, I said "All right daddy I'll spook him out the other side. And you just hook him with the thing when he comes out and we'll have him." He said "alright!", We wait for traffic to get right he gets across and crawls through their. I crawl into that 24 inch pipe because I was little. I have a flashlight in my hand and I look and I see both of the alligators' eyes. Like I should be looking at the other end of this thing and it hisses and it opens its mouth and I can see right inside of its mouth. I back out of the tunnel, on the other side I say " The gator turned around." "There ain't no damn

way in hell the gator turned around.” I say “Well you crawl in that end of the pipe you tell me which end of the gator you see.” Sure enough it turned around. We ended up taking four of those cane poles and duct taping them together and taken a shrimp basket and tie to the one end of it, we pushed cane poles through that pipe past the alligator and pulled the basket through to get ‘em out.

1:28:54

Had to do what we had to do, but some of the stories, my brother, y’all haven’t met him. But he’s got a squeaky voice, he’s bigger than me. He’s about this much shorter but he weighs 315 plus, big grown man and he talk like this in a little squeaky voice. He’s four years older than me, I had to get him some kind of way, don’t ask no questions. Well, we were going around the pond catching the little small alligators, right? When we go to get the gators out of the pond we had to get all of them. Whether it was a female alligator, which they’re obnoxious to start with. You don’t mess with a mom or her babies, of course. We had to mean mama out first. Then we had to get the babies. Guess who got the job for that? Boys, go get little baby alligators. We come out the water, one hanging off of each ear, like little lizard you know whatever. Well we was in and out of the pond, I was holding the light for my brother, and he was like “jump on this little gator.” Well, here in Georgia we got what we call a shepherd frog, it’s like a bullfrog but it don’t get very big, but if you spook that thing it’s got a loud squeal [imitates noise], he lets out a loud squeal. Well it’s pitch black dark. We’re in the middle of the swamp, by somebody’s house. One house in the whole neighborhood they live out in the sticks couldn’t hear the road, interstate, no car, no traffic, no nothing just the middle of the night. All we here is a frog just croaking. That’s it. I’m holding that flash light, my brother eases up, eases up, and he spooks one of those shepherd frogs and is [imitates croaking noise]... but I’m still holding the light but he’s behind me. “He said you scared of that bullfrog?” and we started fighting right there. [Laughs]

1:30:53

There a lot of comical stories behind gator hunting also. There’s a saying around this town here “If it swims or if its in water or the marsh them Gale boys will catch it.” They released feral hogs out here way back when and that was one of the fun things that we done for fun. Everybody else sees a boar hog, they run like hell. Well we go out there bare handed, catch it, bring it back, kicking and squealing, ahh! Everybody else go hog huntin’ they get 100 yards from it, shoot the hell out of it. That wasn’t no fun. I mean, what’s fun in that? Bring it back kicking and

screaming. You watch swamp people, right? Some of them people is my cousin's, But you hear 'em, "shoot em!" Before that show come out they didn't shoot them alligators. They had a ball-peen hammer and they pulled him up, knock him in the head, done. The hide buyers don't want you to shoot them because it puts a bullet hole in the gator. Every hole in the gator you lose money in the hide. Well we couldn't kill them on site where we was doing it because there's still the moratorium on alligators. Now we carry it to a gator farm or a processor or we can process 'em ourselves once we got to a facility, but while we was in the wild catching that thing we had to bring 'em back alive. We went to Riceboro which is right close to here and caught 9 alligators. The littlest one was about five foot on up to eight foot long. An eight foot alligator's three hundred and something pound. We had an old 84 model Ford pickup truck. Regular cab long wheelbase bed, eight foot bed and that one gator filled the back of the truck. We have them all tied up back there hog tied with legs behind their back and their tail tied to the head so they couldn't flop around or whatever. They could still wiggle and move and all that mess. Well by the time we got all them gators in the truck and got done, got everything loaded back up that we caught them with, it's two o'clock in the morning. So we were coming back, so there wasn't but one gas station open and this was before you had to go in and prepay for gas cause we still had honestly back then. We pull up in the gas station and there's two young jitterbugs standing out there. Colored boys, and curiosity kills the cat. We got a symbol on the side of the truck with the Ghostbusters thing with a gator in the middle of it you know the state of Georgia with the gator, and they see a gators tail hanging outside the truck, the and the curiosity got the best of somebody they're going to come over and see what it is. Well the two boys started arguing amongst themselves while Daddy was pumping gas... "Them thing dead", "No, I see one moving, them thing aint dead", "Them thing dead!", "They aint dead", "They dead", "They aint dead." Daddy finally had enough and reached over there and socked one of the gators in the side. They all started [makes noise], wiggling around. Well it scared those boys so badly they ran off in the bushes and down the road and wherever they would've took off they just took off. Well the little girl inside the store seen all that. She goes up there and locks the door. We got \$20 worth of gas, we wasn't gonna drive off without paying for it. She made me stick the \$20 bill under the door, she wouldn't even let me in the door, "y'all crazy. Y'all ain't coming in here." I mean, just stuff like that there, just the average person never gets to do and I done it as fun as a kid. So fishing is wonderful to me. My wife, God help her, she's gotta put up with me. She looks

at me at least two or three times a week going “You're gonna kill yourself.” She asked me not to do a lot of stuff that I do for fun, but she looks at it “I seen this stuff on emergency 911 and this guy didn't make it you know.” Per se and I do stuff for fun like that she's younger, she's half my age. So the generational difference between what I think is fun and what I've done for fun, well talk to them “Hey, you do that and you'll die.” It just makes a hell of a difference in generational aspect but at the end of the day, she looks at me goes “you know how much money you made off of doing that?” “Yeah, that's why I done it.” Kinda like daddy said, “I do it to feed you.” and were still doing it to feed each other, and [whispers] pay my bills.

1:35:56

SS: Can you talk about your best memory on a boat?

1:35:59

DG: Best memory on a boat... um, when I got out of the hurricane. [Laughs] 48 hours in Hurricane Irene offshore here, 88 miles offshore. We got so close to the eye of the hurricane that it comes so close to going across us that it actually calm, got calmer in the middle of the hurricane I knew from watching TV shows or whatever that's what it was. And I was kind of enlightened, because we was it was getting calm but I knew the rest of the storm was coming. Whenever that storm got off of us I actually made a pact with God that if I made it out of that storm and he let me get back to the hill I wouldn't ever go back out there on a shrimp boat again, and I haven't. The other side of the gulf stream is where you go to catch crawdads and tilefish, it wasn't tilefish we was fishin it was crawdads but I aint went back, and I got that pact with that man up stairs and I'm keeping to my word. Now a speed boat that runs 70 mile an hour , akes you an hour an a half to get out there yeah, I'll take that ride like a ride back, but a shrimp trawler that makes 8 knots, I'll never do it again. And I've been on the water my entire life and I won't, you can't make me do it. I don't know if you remember Hurricane Irene, but she made up off the floor. It wasn't that much tropical depression, more tropical storm.

1:37:45

Tropical Storm on a boat, is like an afternoon thunder squall to us. I mean it's nothing, way off shore out there the swells will be big, but the rollers the boat'll just bob up and down like a cork, its gonna shake you around, gonna beat you up. Sure enough you get wet whatever, this is a rainy day on a boat. But when we got the next morning, looked at the weather forecast, I was like... its getting bad. I said alright we'll go ahead and start steaming. We was 90 miles in, and

by the time that we got closer it was catching us. We was on this side of the storm just barely and I'll say barely. If you look at the way they rotate, it was holding us there. We couldn't get out of it, it was drawing us in, more and more and more and more, and we couldn't run fast. The harder you try to push it, we was heading into it, so just beat the boat pieces. So we just, once it caught us it just drew us right in. Now once it past us north of us, it was pushing us out. So the first part was worse than the latter part. But in my mind, I didn't know that. I just knew what I went through to get to that eye, and I was like, we gotta do that again. When I say I got beat up, you know, you would think about the boat moving around jostling around. Well, when the swells get that big and it gets that rough, you can't lay down in the bunk. Can't sleep, you can't stand still. You just got to hold on and grin and bear it. Well if you up 24 hour, your body's fatigued, you can't really eat nothing, cant really drink nothing. If you drink something you gotta drink it quick or you'll wear it, whether being a soda pop can or whatever. Or you'll cut your lip off with a soda pop can cause its sharp. Yeah, whenever that storm was over, and I seen a rainbow, Gods promise. I seen Gods Promise go across the sky, that was probably my happiest moment on a boat. Second happiest moments whenever I had that really big drag of shrimp, that was pretty awesome too. Seein' that rainbow when that storm was over I was a happy man, to say the least.

1:40:25

SS: Could you name some of the boats that you were on when you were younger?

1:40:31

DG: My father had the *Alligator* for 22 years. That's what I cut my teeth on. I got pictures of it all through the house. Most people have a childhood memory of a bicycle or Power Wheels car or something of that nature, I have in shrimp boat as my childhood memory. My first boat ever, big boat I ever drove, first big boat I ever spent the night on. Went all down the coast on it. And uh, I miss the boat. Not quite as bad as I miss my father, but I miss that boat bad.

1:41:11

Me and my father thought alot alike and you can't put two captains on one boat. And as I progressed in my knowledge of the boats and shrimpin, I seen where my father was doing something different and I didn't enjoy it. My fathers credo was grits makes groceries. So smaller shrimp is one of the things that he enjoyed working on. Now, if you put this in aspect in your mind, it takes 40 to 50 of them shrimp to make a pound of shrimp. Right? And there were half the money of a shrimp that takes 25 to make a pound. But you got to pick all these things up with

these right here. And I was the picker upper guy. Well I know the guy right over here is catching bigger shrimp, and he's gettin' more money for 'em and havin' to pick up less of them, and it ate at my mind every time daddy would go out there and get a 18 baskets of these small shrimp. I know we could have had five baskets over there and had the same amount of money. Why? But that's just the way my daddy worked. He think 18 baskets I did a good job today, I got 18 baskets of shrimp. He didn't put in a factor that his son was back there killing his fingers picking up these little things that got needles on both ends, prodin' and pricking me, picking them up putting them in the basket. He didn't process that, he just processed the amount of weight that he was bringing to the dock. Money wise at the end of the day the boat over there, might've made less money than us. But the amount of labor that I went through to make the same amount of money is astronomically different. Because you got to ice twice the amount of shrimp, pick up twice the amount of weight in four times the amount of shrimp to do just the same thing that he did. Well through the years it bothered me more and more and more and more and more. I didn't want to leave my dad, I really didn't. But I told dad I said "you need to hire somebody other than me because I'm going to work on another boat." and he said "Well, what boat are you going to work on?" I said "I've been talking to Mr. Boone about running his boat." He said "Well, son if that's what you want to do, do it." And then my father backed me on that decision. But ripe age of 14, Mr. Boone was crazy enough to turn me aloose with the boat, which he knew I knew the knowledge in and I drove his boat around with him in it for a month. He says well if you're gonna carry the boat out you're so young I got to go out there and audit, basically. He didn't say that word. But he wanted to audit me so he went out with me for four weeks he was on a boat with me every time I went in and it got less and less and less and less so he decided to go to the dock and drink beer and make turtle shooters. I ran his boat. So that was my start of my captain. The next year rolled around, Blessing of the Fleet, it was the first Blessing of the Fleet I ever put a boat in as a captain. Now I'm 15 at this point and I'm driving the boat through the Blessing of the Fleet and they give out my name as Captain over that intercom and you know it didn't really register to me that I was a captain, I was just doing my job. And then it registers whenever that preacher man says "I bless the such as such and Captain Darrell and his crew." I said "Damn, I'm a captain." and then it registered "I'm actually a captain." And we got boarded opening day that year by the Department of Natural Resources. They boarded the boat and the boarding officer went back their talkin' to Johnny we called him Bones, he was a skinny little fella, but he

worked hard and he drank, that's why he was skinny. I don't get into his personal life, he didn't get into mine, keep drinking, you do what you gotta do. He's not here no more, I'm still here so hey. Well Bones was a little older than me by about 20 years difference. Being our guy coming in here says "Why is the captain on the back of the boat and you in here driving?"

1:45:49

I said "I'm the captain." He looked at my license. I didn't have a driver's license, I just had a commercial fisher license. He says "you was born in '77 that don't make you 15 years old. You don't even have a driver's license." "No sir I don't yet, but I will in November." You know, he held me up for four hours trying to figure out how and why he could get me off of that boat because I wasn't but 15 years driving a shrimp boat, and there wasn't no law stating it back then. Next year there was you had to be 16 years old and have a driver's license to drive a boat. I'm one of the reasons why that law was made. I got in the cast net, laws was made up for me, because of me, a bunch of them. You couldn't put duct tape around the bottom of the cast net or webbing because it helped it open up to catch shrimp on the inside and they never made it a law, they made a bylaw. You know the difference between the two? Alright, they made a bylaw outlawing duct tape and the laws surrounding the webbing around the bottom of the net. Me being a little smarter than the average cookie, I sat down looking at that net "How can I make it do the same thing without having that?" So I got out the pen and paper and done some math. I was like well, the further out you go on that net, the less of a planing surface you'd have to have. So I got some yardsticks and I put them together and made a flat leadline. Put the leads inside the line and made a flat tapered kind of like an airplane wing so fold up and up. Next year they came out with the bylaw, you can't have modified leadline neither, but I done really good that one year with it [laughs], but there's four or five laws that were made because of stuff that I'd done. I mean in, you know in hindsight the laws was a good idea because the average 15 year old should not be driving a shrimp boat, you know. Not even then, but you know on my end I had the knowledge and I had the experience and it didn't hurt nothing by me doing that. The boat went out, it came back every time both seasons at 14 and 15 years old. Well I turned 16 and I wanted to get my own boat and I went out and got my own boat. I been a boat owner off and on ever since. The first boat that I bought was one called *The Mystic Seas*, its part of the old cedar creek right now, but it was a little small boat. I made decent money with it for one person. At the time that I had it I met my first wife. We had a kid, Christmas come around, Christmas locked down

my bank account and I was like “I’m not making enough money in this little small boat, I need a bigger boat for a bigger family.” And I went and got a bigger boat. Just so happened my father had went and bought another boat and *The Gator* was there. The boat that I grew up on, I knew the boat inside and out. I jumped on it with both teeth. I had it about a year and the engine load up with me, so I tied it up so I could make the money to put an engine in it. I ended up losing my butt because the boat sunk before I got finished with the engine that I bought. It was bad, lost the boat was bad for me on a whole lot of levels, you know. It was a member of the family basically. And the fact that I cashed in my 401k to get the engine that went down in the boat that was never recovered.

1:50:21

Bad decisions. I think God was like, “Hey, we just done enough, lets close this chapter of your life. Go on about your business and do something else.” And then I got a little bigger boat and I realized when I got to a certain point, I got *The Wait and See*, which is the perfect name for a boat. Everybody says “Your not gonna make no money with that thing.” “You just wait and see.” And I love the boat, it road like a cadillac. It was a big boat but I had to have so much help. The average captain, I'm not saying that I'm a really good captain, I catch a lot of shrimp. But the average captain goes out shrimping on a big boat, they are just predominantly big shrimp. They work with big shrimp. But being raised by my father with the ideology in my mind of grits make groceries. When I wasn't catching very many big shrimp I dive off on the pasture on the other side, still make the day. Which is a great thing because I'll go fishing to catch shrimp regardless. If I go shrimping and I dont catch shrimp its bad, really bad. So I can work on the small shrimp, I can work on a big shrimp, I can work offshore, I can work inshore. And I started doing a little diving inshore with this really big boat and I couldn't put enough help back there. I just about wanted to write on the side of it, Darrell's crew training boat, you know, this is the school for training new people. Well I went through 25 crew men in six months. They get on a boat, they start out and then they just couldn't hack it, they couldn't take it. Probably because they didn't have a father like I did that, “get your ass back to work”, you know. I was just raised different, cut out of a different cloth, however you want to say it. I had expectations of what somebody should doing back there. And of course, they wasn't raised that way that I was so their expectations of work is different. They're not going to get out there and plow a field with one mule like a farmer did back then. And they wasn't gonna pick up little shrimp just like I thought

as a kid “I ain't doing that.” Same thing. So I realized that a big boat and me and what I do is bad. So I come to the conclusion that I really needed a medium size boat about 50 foot, two nets, there's plenty enough for me and my family. And I resorted back to that until my son got old enough said “Daddy, we need a big boat.” And he talked me into selling my boat and I hated it, God I hated selling that thing. I went got a big boat and I still got the boat its up in North Carolina right now, its 80 friggin' foot long, all kind of horsepower. But it takes 10 people working the back of it and you can't find 10 people right now that wants to work to start with. So it's tied up, up there and I've still got little 50 foot boat doing my thing. I literally can take this little 50 foot boat, right. Me, my one year old son, and my wife go fishing, fish all day and come home and I've done all the work that's including picking the shrimp up and knowing where the shrimp go and and all that stuff. My wife does the drove the boat a little bit and hold the baby bottle in the other hand. And we take turns, I'm holding the baby and whatever, little man's just as cute as he wants to be on that boat because he thinks he's the captain but he's big enough to hold the steering wheel. He thinks it's funny to do that right there too. But I mean I'm happy I got a wife with me, I got my family with me. Yes, I go out there by myself, I come back here in the afternoon, beat down, worn out, but I put in a day's work. Average man gets up in the morning and jogs two miles to keep his body going. I go out there, I pull on the nets and all that stuff. Still get my exercise in. I broke my back 2010, I should be on the disabled list. I can't feel that leg. But the doctor had everything filled out, all I had to do was sign the paperwork and he was gonna put me on the disabled list. And I look at the doctor I go “I'm not disabled” he goes “yeah you are, your legs bad...” I said “I can still talk, I can still walk, I can still work.”

1:55:01

He goes “Well your not gonna be able to not gonna be able to do it in 10 years.” Haha, its 2021, guess who's doin it? I just like to prove people wrong. But I mean the average person wouldn't go out there and do what I do. For one, it's labor intensive you know, most people don't do manual labor no more. They wanna pick up a smartphone and scroll through it. For two for the labor that you do, you don't make the money that you should, because of a lot of, like I can go through a list. The shorter part of the list, the bigger part of it is the overhead which is the fuel and the parts and the stuff for the basic shrimp boat has tripled in the last few years and you're still selling shrimp for the same amount of money. So we're having to triple the amount of shrimp, we have to triple the price of the shrimp, and we triple the price of everything else, we're not gettin rich.

We're actually just barely holding our head above water if you was doin' it full time. But like I say, I've got other genres of making a living that I do but my primary is shrimping. I do make money at it and if I didn't have my boat as economical as it is, I couldn't make money. People using these old Detroit engines that are two stroke. You know, weed eater motors are two stroke, right?. If you ever watched somebody cut grass with a weed eater it's got a gas can, on it, about this big. But he's got to fill that thing up twice just to trim around his house and around the fence, and it's got a motor this big. Can you imagine a 10 liter, five car engine size motor? Two stroke, what kind of fuel that's going to consume. 15 gallons an hour. 12 gallons an hour. Just can't make it.

1:57:22

SS: Do you have anything else you wanted to ask?

MB: I don't think so?

SS: Do you have any questions for us?

1:57:33

DG: Not really. But you know one thing you hadn't asked. Like, what would retirement for fishermen be?

1:57:39

SS: Oh, that is a good question. I know you talked about your 401k earlier.

1:57:44

DG: Yeah, and I pretty much give up on the idea of that, but I do have a savings account. I'm not dumb. But you know I love my job so much I believe my retirement is gonna be me falling out behind the wheel. If I can keep going and the economy don't crush me to the point that I can't, but that's gonna be my retirement falling out behind the wheel. My son'll have to drive the boat in or the wife. But yeah, the average commercial fishermen don't have a retirement, and you can ask any of them that. "What you gonna do when you retire?" "I'm not gonna retire." And the ones that actually retire go to the dock, sit at the dock and watch the boats come in and out and wish they was on 'em. Old school guy, old school captain at the dock that pulled up in an old beat up pickup truck in the morning, he watch them leave out, watch em come in the afternoon. They talk to them about how the day went. That's the highlight of his life just bein' down there in the afternoon knowing he's talking/living his life vicariously through somebody half his age, because he can't get out there and do it no more. Me, I'm resourceful and very articulate and

smart. Hell, if I lost my leg I'ma make me a peg some kinda way just so I can get out there and keep doin it, you know.

1:59:16

The pain I've endured just going out there working during the day. With my back, that pain right there'll kill the average person. I'm not saying that cause I'm trying to act tough, Im just sayin it because I've put off of it so much. But the good thing is it's getting better by the year. The first two years of me trying to get out there and fish with my back the way it was. I worked two days, two days I couldn't get out of bed. Whenever I'd go home at night, I'd lay down, If I tried laying flat, I couldnt breath. The pain was that bad, I've lost teeth. My wisdom teeth wasn't seriously impacted but they was just a little. Well the pain, you know the average person grits their teeth when they're in pain. But gritted my teeth so much I busted them. I nearly busted my wisdom teeth and my tooth at the top. I lost teeth from breaking my back, and I don't like taking medication. They gave me pain medication, they gave me enough to tranquilize a horse.

2:00:31

And I was taking those things and I was like "Well I can't drive." 'Cause it says do not operate heavy machinery on the bottle. I don't think that's illegal so I wasn't gonna drive the boat and take pain medicine, so I would only take it at night before I go to bed. By the time I got done in the afternoon, I mean, you get up at four in the morning. 4:30 you're on the boat, you're out fishing. You don't get back till 7 or 8 o'clock at night. So you're literally put 15, 16 hours on your feet. By the time you get to the point where you get home and you can take the pain medicine, by the time it takes effect, you're up going again so it don't do me a bit of good to take it. And the doctor got mad at me said "What are you doing selling them?" I said "No I got them right here in the bag." and I had two bottles of them. Said "What do you want me to do with them?" He said "I can't have them, you can't give them to me, that's illegal." "So what the hell you want me to do with them? I don't want them! Stop prescribing them to me, I'm not gonna take them, it does no good." I mean, if you take a medication, it's got a function, right? Antibiotic. It helps your body get over whatever, uh insulin your body's not making it so you need it. That's a medication. An opioid that you take that makes you feel drunk and still have pain, it's not a medication, cause I don't give a damn what they give you, all the medicines they tried for me, it never took that sciatica pain away. And that's what hurts you so bad, I mean its just miserable, but I took all that medicine, tried it, it just makes you drunk. Hell I can go buy a fifth of tequila, do the same thing,

but I'm killing my liver in the process. I don't know what it kills inside your body by taking that stuff but it's got to mess something up. I just don't take pain medication. Now that I gotten older, I mean 44 years old. Yeah, I'll take supplements, centrum silver, need some for my hair, take that. Take vitamin C, zinc, you know stuff like that. I'll take that every day. That and the claritin cause of the snake bite. Whenever I was younger before I got bit by that snake I wasn't allergic to nothing. I could get bit by wasp, I could crawl in wasp nest and it wouldn't bother me at all. I could go outside, snort pollen. When I was a kid you would blow your nose and it was just yellow pollen, and I'd never have a stopped up nose from it. Now the pine tree next door sheds a little bit here I go [makes coughing noises], coughin', snuffle, sneezin', yay its pollen season! The worst thing about that snake bite, I've been messing with snakes and critters and catching gators and all that my entire life

2:03:42

and a cottonmouth moccasin and my boat bumped the bank and he fell out the dang tree and he grabbed me and I grabbed it. Shortest possible way you can say it. Well I got it out of my knee, pulled his little fangs out and whatever and held up my hand and cranked the boat up, drove over to my pickup truck. Well actually I didn't just drive the pickup truck. I kind of run the boat out on the hill so I wouldn't have to tied it up with one hand cause I still holdin the snake. I got the standard shift truck and I drove with the snake hanging out the window flapping in the breeze to the hospital. I figure if I got pulled over cause I was speeding, it was 55 mile an hour most of the way and I was doing 65 or 70. Driving with one hand changing gears. I didn't run no red lights or nothing like that, but I could feel the venom going up though me and doing my schooling for medicine I knew what was going on, I needed an antivenom and I needed it right then and right now. So I was trying to get there faster and I knew by what was going on that they needed to know what kind of snake, preferably so they couldn't give me the wrong antivenom because they give you the wrong anti venom, it'll kill you just as fast as a snake bite would. But I know now if you pull up to a hospital and you're holding the live snake and you say this bit me here, you get all kind of help. I mean, most waiting room you sit there three hours, you got a bad cough or something or you got a broke finger or whatever you sit there half a day waiting to get seen. Just for them to say "Hey, you got a broke finger." But if you walk in there with a live snake and say "This bit me here." You got it, the mans coming be there in just a second and the lady behind the desk aint gonna sit their neither, she'll get moving. But they took that snake, they put it in a

pillowcase and went off with it. I kept asking “Where’s my snake?” ‘Cause I want to taxidermy it, keep it because it's the only damn thing that ever hurt me. Wild boar hogs and whatever. Nothing. They put it in an incinerator and incinerated it. I wasn't mad that my leg was about to rot off because a snake bit the damn thing. I was mad cause they took the damn snake that did it. [Laughs] But yeah, it was rough. Like to lost my leg, ain't got no cartilage or nothin to eat because of it. Just some knee failure, yay. But I’m still here. What don’t kill you makes you stronger. Just like wearing those masks. [Laughs]

2:06:29

You gotta take a lot of me with a grain of salt. I mean, I've been in nature my entire life and I'll see what stuff does to nature. We're part of nature of course. The only the downfall with us, we don't build immunity the same, as fast as nature does, because we have a longer life cycle. Shorter life cycle, the faster immunities’ll build. So I’m gonna get as much of the bad ending to overcome it before I get old enough that my body's gonna say hey, you can’t overcome. I'm probably going up dying from the new influenza when I'm 75 years old, because of that. “I can still do it.” There he went.

2:07:28

If I die tomorrow, I've lived more life because of the way that I live, than people will ever do in their lifetime if they live to be 80. Because the average person goes to work at a convenient store. Worst thing that happens in a day to them is somebody cusses them out because they didn't give them change fast enough. See I’m out here, mother nature kickin’ my tail, it tells me everybody that runs from a hurricane I get on my social media platform and say “Uh, you need to take that salt life sticker off your truck” or your car because that's not salt life, you're not doing it right. Our storm comes up is not real bad Gale force, like my last name is, if my last name is in any type of storm I try not to go in the ocean with it. But outside of that I get to work, it don’t bother me. You know while my wife, pregnant I took a lot of time off because if you got sea sickness and morning sickness, it’s not good. But she don't get seasick as much as the average Joe. But she does get seasick if it gets good and nasty and rough. So I've been taking it easy on the boat and me and my crew. Some of the weather and storms that's been going through because of mom and little man. Little man, I ain’t got him seasick yet he just thinks its funny as hell. I got the bunk set up in the back, it's got basically childproof. I childproof the back bed and he gets in there and he’ll jump when the boat rolls just right just to flop around, you know. It's pretty neat

when you watch your one year old move just right for the zero gravity effect and when he hits the pillow, [makes noise with his hand], ahh! So he's gonna grow up a little tougher than the average cookie too. [Laughs] Anything else?

2:09:48

SS: I think we're all set. Thank you so much for telling us so much.

MB: Yeah, that was really amazing.

2:09:57

DG: Now you see why I'm so damn crazy. [Laughs]