Interview with Dave Martins

Narrators: Deb Schrader, Ron Schrader
Interviewer: Millie Rahn
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Project Name: The Working Waterfront Festival Community Documentation Project
Project Description: This project documents the history and culture of the commercial fishing industry and other port trades. The project began in 2004 in conjunction with the Working Waterfront Festival, an annual, educational celebration of commercial fishing culture which takes place in New Bedford, MA. Interviewees have included a wide range of individuals connected to the commercial fishing industry and/or other aspects of the port through work or familial ties. While the majority of interviewees are from the port of New Bedford, the project has also documented numerous individuals from other ports around the country. Folklorist and Festival Director Laura Orleans and Community Scholar and Associate Director Kirsten Bendiksen are project leaders. The original recordings reside at the National Council for the Traditional Arts in Maryland with listening copies housed at the Festival's New Bedford office.
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Abstract
On September 26, 2004, Millie Rahn interviewed Deb and Ron Schrader as part of the Working Waterfront Festival Community Documentation Project. Ron was raised in a fishing family, and knew he wanted to be a fisherman from an early age, and made his way along the coast from North Carolina to New Bedford, MA, where he achieved his goal of becoming a captain. Deb grew up in New Bedford, but it wasn't until she met Ron that she became involved in the local fishing industry. Her growing interest in the fishing community inspired her to become a paralegal, using these skills to found Shore Support, a fishermen's advocacy organization, with the goal to give fishermen a voice in the regulatory process. Deb shares further details about her work, including her work to dismantle the Magnuson Act and the Sustainable Fisheries Act, noting that many other sources of pollution and environmental factors that affect fish populations were ignored in favor of placing most of the blame on the fishing industry. Both acknowledge the importance of collaboration between scientists and fishermen to create accurate and sustainable regulations, with Ron saying, "If they're going to create the rules, they gotta have good data for conservation measures, for the fish, for the people, everyone's gotta come out of this okay, not just the fish or the people. Fishermen don't want it to be in a situation where we're depleting the resource…We're working with these people, and they're working with us."

Millie Rahn: Ok, if you could give me your names and a little bit about what you do, what you want to talk about in this interview, how you came to New Bedford, how you got into fishing, from your families, from your community, from whatever, and we'll go from there.

Ronnie Schrader: My name is Ronnie Schrader. I came from North Carolina. I came up on a boat to New Bedford that was fishing offshore from the Carolinas all the way up. We used to go lobster fishing, and dragging, and scalloping with the different seasons with the Gymboree. I came up here, and started fishing on these boats, because I realized these guys were more advanced, the prices were better, the money was better, and started fishing over at Eastern Fisheries. And I jumped around a little bit after I learned the engine room and I wanted to get in the wheel house and become captain. That was my goal. I fished when I was a kid also so that was kinda like what I've done all my life.

MR: Were your family, were your —?

RS: Well, my grandfather was a fisherman so I used to go fishing with him, yup. Inshore. I'm jumping all over the place here. I've been over at Eastern Fisheries for going on 15 years now as a captain of the Tradition. I've taken other boats out that he owns, and I'm a stay busy scalloper. That's it.

MR: Scalloping. And Deb, how 'bout you?

Deb Schrader: My name is Deb Schrader, and Ronnie and I have been married for 16, 17 years. Actually, I grew up here in New Bedford, but never really paid any attention to the fleet. I sort of fell into the belief that stereotype that crazy people, and drunken people in the fishing industry, and sort of stayed away. And, met Ronnie one afternoon in a local bar, and my sister was working on the waterfront cleaning boats, and we stopped into this local pub thing for a drink before she left, and I wanted to play pool and she told me to go ask that man over there. I said, "I don't know him!" She said, "He's nice, go ask him." And it was Ronnie, and he said no to shooting pool with me. And later on came up behind me and said, "Excuse me, y'all gonna be here for a while? I'm going to go back to the boat for a while, and come back and shoot some pool with you!" And I knew nothing from his accent, so I was like "I guess so, I dunno." And we went dancing that night and the rest is just very romantic history. When I met Ronnie and, well, he is a very gentle, kind man to begin with, I was impressed with that to begin with. But then when he began to explain to me about fishing and that way of life, I was so taken by the man against nature, man against himself, the bravery of it, the freedom of it, wild cowboyness of it, I was just drawn in. And as our relationship developed, I began, I listened a lot to learn more and more about fishing, and we were married and started a family. And I went back to school and became a paralegal so that I could start Shore Support, which is the organization that I run.

In that organization, we advocate for fishermen and their families. So I just took apart the Magnuson Act and the Sustainable Fisheries Act and have been fighting for my husband's right to fish for about 8 years now. Not just my husband's, but the community's.

MR: Right. And did your family fish?

DS: Not at all. There was no one connected to the industry in my family. I used to have a favorite joke where I never dated a fisherman because I didn't want to wait two weeks for a bus, why would I wait two weeks for a man? Then I met this man and it was easy to figure out.

RS: Now she's waiting plenty.

DS: Yeah! He's very worth waiting for though.

MR: And how is Shore Support—is it sort of like the Gloucester Fishermen's Wives?

DS: It's similar, except for the fact that I wanted to create a voice for the fishermen themselves, since permit holders basically are the ones who are recognized by the Council, and by NMFS. And the fishermen are virtually uninformed and left out of the process so I considered that to be my job. To go, what I started doing was going to the docks, talking to the guys, finding out what they knew, giving them information, what they didn't know, finding out how they felt about what was going on, and taking that message back to the Council. So sort of just being a conduit between the docks and bureaucracy.

MR: Uh huh, ok. And that's what you do? And the Council is?

DS: The New England – I can't even think. New England Fisheries Management Council.

MR: Ok, [checking tape]. So we've been talking throughout this whole weekend, I've been talking to some of the old timers, people of various sides of regulations are good, regulations are bad, what's the future? For those of you who are out there all the time, what's happening?

RS: I think interaction between the fishermen and helping the scientists get better data to create new rules. If they're going to create the rules, they gotta have good data for conservation measures, for the fish, for the people, everyone's gotta come out of this okay, not just the fish or the people. Fishermen don't want it to be in a situation where we're depleting the resource. That would be crazy. It's better now than it's ever been. We're working with these people, and they're working with us. And its gotta be like that, more participation by the fishermen in these projects because we know where the fish are, we know where the scallops are, they're learning from us a lot of things. And I think it's beginning to come out in a good situation, where

everybody's coming out ahead. Everyone's realizing that fishermen aren't what we thought they were. A captain's gotta be everything, he's gotta be a psychologist, a diesel mechanic, a doctor, a meteorologist. This isn't something you just learn in any school. Along with that, you just gotta be a market analysis, and a manager of everybody, you gotta please the owner, please the crew, the middleman. There's so many jobs, so many hats. You gotta have a hat for every situation. You gotta be able fix anything on boat just to keep it going, so that you make the owner some money, plus you make the gang some money, and you just happen to come out too. You know what I'm saying? So there's a lot more to it than what anyone thinks, or even imagine what's going on.

MR: What size crews do you have?

RS: We can carry 7 men, including the captain.

MR: Now I asked somebody else this morning. Is it always an odd number or is it frequently an odd number? Most of the people —

RS: That number was just determined by National Marine Fisheries Service as the viable number to dictate the effort that they thought that the boats should be able to participate with, in order to not create overfishing, by their own definition. We used to, when fishing was kind of scrappy, we'd carry 9 guys. Then it got down to 8 guys cause it was getting really bad, then we down to 5 and 6. And then the scalloping starting coming back because the regulations helped us. It was really bad for a while, but now it's really good, but still we're working with 7 men and the amount of men on the boat are getting older, and we're having more injuries because of it. We're doing repetitive motions like 10,000 times a day cutting scallops, each man, at least. And the amount of scallops that we're bringing in is like way more than anybody would ever anticipated 7 men working to do. I covered some trips of 50,000 pounds this summer.

DS: They're literally 3 times the stock with half the men. The crews used to be as large as 11 to 13 men. They would bring in 14, 15, 18,000. Now they're limited to 7, and they're bringing in 35 to 40,000.

MR: See, and that's the issue that—Well, the number of accidents that somebody else has talked about that's correlated with the fewer crews, the older crews, you don't have the luxury of bringing someone new on because you don't have time to train them. So, where's the young blood going to come from? Who's gonna take over?

DS: Actually, I just finished doing — When I met Ronnie, the medium age for scalloper was between 25 and 30 years old. I just completed a socio-economic study with UMD, UMass Dartmouth, with Dan Georgiana, the head of the economics department there, and I, we

interviewed 56% of the offshore vessels here in New Bedford. And most, rarely, did we meet someone under 30. Now it's 35 to 60. That's, mostly the guys are 35 to 60 years old. If you see a 25 year old – they all used to all be these young stud muffins, little 25, 20, 28, around there. And now it's a much older set of people. There's no one coming into the industry. They're deterred by both the regulatory process and also by the insecurity of it all. We have a biomass for scallops, just for instance, in my husband's fishery, we have a biomass that's proven to be completely rebuilt. However now, the conservationists are coming up with something because of sea turtles, so the guys have changed their gear. I went to a meeting last week where they said that the viscera, or the scallop gut, that's cut out of the scallop, under the boat, is what's attracting the sea turtles. And because of that food being on the bottom of the ocean, that's why the turtles don't move away from the boat when the gear's moving. That's a good theory, however, I also feel that there's elements like global warming, where the waters in the North Atlantic are warmer now, which brings those sea turtles up from the southern waters where they used to stay. Those issues never looked at. Overdevelopment of coastal areas, and the pollution that it causes in our oceans, overdevelopment of coastal areas and the effect it has on estuaries, which feed the small fish, the small fish go out into the bay, the bay goes out into the ocean. That has not been researched or put into analysis. While they're using all these misnomers are being left out, all these mistakes are being left out, or information is not being put into the context.

At the same time, they're just demolishing our groundfish industry. The scallop industry, right now, is doing okay, but we know that tomorrow even though the biomass is completely rebuilt, that the propaganda information that they put out about the effects of the scallop dredge on the ocean floor, combine that with essential fish habitat that they have no data on, that it's all guess work. The essential fish habitat, of particular concern, which is supposed to be the nucleus in this part of the ocean, which is where the cycle of life is supposed to come from, has never been determined but huge pieces of the ocean are closed, rotational closed areas. We know that my husband's done very well last 3 years, very well for the last 3 years. However,
we have 2 kids, one's 16, one's 13, and we know the 16 year old has real good chance of getting through college. But next year, they could just pull the rope out from under my husband and his right to fish will be taken away based on information that's propagandized. I was looking at an ocean's, the Ocean's Campaign, Oceana's pamphlet about sea turtles. And it was this big thing about how the scallop dredgers are killing the sea turtles and —the scallopers refuse to stop! Exclamation point! And when people believe in these organizations that are paid by PEW, a charitable organization supposedly that was started by divested Sun Oil Company money. I find it interesting that all of these problems are being built in even though the resource has been rebuilt. So now let's find other ways to get under the rug and pull the rug out from under them. So my husband works from heart, and he works to complete exhaustion. And there's no respect from the fact that he's making a living, but we're feeding the country healthy food and people forget about that. And what's happening is our regulatory process is crippling what these guys

can and want to do, from their hearts, to the point where we're all going to be eating fish next year or the year after, actually groundfish, we'll be eating fish next year, but it won't be our fishermen's fish, it will be imported from Canada, Mexico, Brazil, all places that are much less regulated than we are, so they're not sustaining any biomass anywhere, and they also are not held to the same restrictions in food inspection as we are here in this country. So yes, we will be eating fish, but it won't be our guys'. So everybody that talks about jobs, jobs, jobs, well just like Dell Computers, fielding them all out of this country. This regulatory process is forcing a market where they can't depend on our guys to land what they need to sell, so they import it from other countries, and our guys are losing their jobs. And it's based on the fact, to me, if CLF, or Oceana, can't prove through their propaganda that there's this horrible, devastating effect to the ocean, even when our guys are throwing over massive amounts of fish because the regulations show that they have to. If they don't prove that to people, then they're not going to get any money from people. If don't prove that there's an emergency, then they're not going to get—the jobs are gonna be gone, because there won't be anything to protect anymore. Even though the fishermen are sacrificing to protect those resources, they keep this fire engine going, you know the red lights spinning, so that the donations keep coming in. People in the middle of this country that see CLF, for example, protecting the spotted white owl in the woods of Oregon or something, and they believe in that cause, and they trust the organization. So when they say the fishermen are decimating the ocean, they trust that to be true. And I can tell you that I spent 8 years researching it, and it's just not true.

MR: I agree. I know as a folklorist, I've worked around fishermen for—I used to live in [inaudible] and lived on the coast all my life. Some families have records going back hundreds of years where the families where fishing, and they know those are fluctuations of climate —

DS: Natural cycle. You know, of course it's going change. July 13th or whatever every year is going to be different for all sorts of reasons. And that's where I think, many times, the fishermen know this, but don't always have the confidence to say because of the regulations—Well look at, just an example yellowtail SAC program, it's a [inaudible] yellowtail Special Access Program that was just given to the groundfishmen this summer. They open that program during, the federal government gave the guys the right to make these trips, and they're struggling for days at sea so everyone took advantage of it. And they sent them out during the spawning season. They opened the fishery during the spawning season! Hello?! When fish are having babies, first of all they're not in the best shape so you're not going to get the best product, and also let 'em have babies! If we're supposed to be worried about juvenile fish, let 'em have babies! No! Open a special access program where these people are so hungry to sustain their families, never mind a biomass, they go out there, everybody derby fishes on yellowtail, during spawning season! And the federal government, backed up by the scientists, planned that. I mean that we did ask for [inaudible] days and these special access program days, to add to the days at sea that these

groundfishermen would have access to. But it was not to be implemented during that time of year, and the federal government just popped it in like that. We do go to table like Ronnie said, that collaborative research and the collaboration between fishermen and regulatory processes increased, but it's still, we need tweak it some more, because they still don't see it.

MR: Well, they have the power—

DS: They actually have the—I believe, I don't mean to be paranoid, but I believe that the agenda at the time was to give fishermen the extra [inaudible] days so, the special access day, so they could say that they did that, "Oh, we made this concession to you." But they also knew that what they were doing was creating a situation where those days at sea were not economically viable and I think they were fully aware of it. And the scallop program—

RS: Just so fishermen would have an even worse time because they went out and got 20 cent a pound for that fish, where they would have gotten a dollar and a half or a dollar ten or something which would have made a big difference. Expenses would have overrode them. They didn't make any money!

MR: And aren't you, the scallop—Right now the scallop fishery is, you're not going out, right?

RS: Oh, I have trips, yes.

MR: Oh, you do?

RS: Yes, I took a month off. Plus, I have another boat, another half a boat that I take out. And I stay in a little bit more between trips to try to recuperate, so when I go I can give 100 percent instead of ninety. I'm busy! Oh, it keeps me busy.

MR: What do you think's going to happen then?

DS: I think we're gonna keep fighting.

RS: Fishermen aren't quitters.

MR: This is wearing everyone down!

DS: We're not worn down nearly. We've just begun fighting. One wonderful thing that happened is that here in New Bedford everyone's working together. What we're just begun doing is working with the Northeast Seafood Collation, which is a regional organization. And that's what we need to do. And that's what our goal is to create—instead of fragmenting the

industry by separating ports, separating gear types, have everyone working together because it's one ocean and we're all on same boat. So that's our goal here. And the Festival is a wonderful beginning of that. Everyone to work together because it's all in everyone's best interest. And I have to tell you that I believe in our government, but I also believe that government listens to proletariat. And the larger the proletariat, the louder the voice, the more they want to keep their jobs, and satisfy that proletariat. So the more they may have a tendency to listen to what we have to say.

MR: Well, that's a good way to look at it. What do you think about this whole issue of younger people coming on, yes the insecurity, yes the regulations—?

DS: We're actually trying to get an agreement with NMFS to allow, in the closed area trips for scallopers, we trying to get them to allow an 8th man, and as long as that 8th man be an inexperienced man, specifically to bring so we can bring shakers without sacrificing the production of the guys necessary. And also on a closed area trip, it says right in the Federal Register, you have an 18,000 pound trip limit, and ten days to do that in. So they had allocated scallopers x amount of days, so many of those days as closed area trips, so they have 10 days to make 18,000 pounds. Right in the Federal Register it says that they know that they can harvest that amount of scallops in 7 to 8 days. So in fact, those extra two days are just puff. They knew they weren't actually giving them 10 days cause they knew that they would be able to harvest the limit in less than that. So it's just like sneaky, because if you're gonna give me 16 days, tell me 16 days, don't tell me 20 but then you don't need the extra 4 so it doesn't matter.

RS: Now they take 12 days for closed area trip. It used to be 10, at 10,000 pounds. Then when we went to 18,000 pounds, and they gave us 10 for a year, 2 years they did that at 10,000. No one was taking trip, because there was more scallops in the open areas. So NMFS got mad because we weren't going in the closed areas and using those trips. Why? 18,000 pounds to be charged 10 days, I could do a lot more than that in the open area. I can get 25,000 pounds or more. It was kind of silly.

MR: And what's the difference between the closed area and open area?

RS: Closed area's the blocks are set aside for groundfish, protected issues, small scallops—let 'em grow up to be harvested. Like down in Hudson Canyon, they had this area, and everybody had access to it, but it didn't make any sense, because you could make 25 or 30,000 pounds for ten days in the open areas. And nobody was going in the closed areas because they'd be charged to catch 18 for 10 days. It just didn't make any sense. If they were to give us more pounds, yeah then we would have went. So then they get the notion that well, we'll make them go in there and charge them 12 days. Why? You know? Now we're catching 40,000 pounds in the open area!

You know? And we still gotta go make these stupid trips in the closed area and get 18,000 pounds and get charged 12 days for them now!

DS: It doesn't make sense, does it?

RS: And now we have to take a mandatory observer. We have to give them notice, 3 days notice before we gonna sail. And we take these observers, and we pay them this huge amount of money, just to go. They've jacked it up, way up. You know? Compared to what it started out to be, saying it costs a lot of money to train these people. Half the time the people don't go out and do anything on the deck anyway, they stay inside the boat. It's unbelievable!

DS: In my survey, more than—more than half the boats, the scallopers that we did, I had guys telling me that they have observers on the boat that they were paying big money every day, had to feed them, and these people would get out of the rack for like an hour a day, go out look on deck, and go back to bed. They get seasick; they're not used to being on the boats and stuff, so they just turn in.

MR: Wait, and they're, who?

DS: The federal government puts them on the boat.

MR: And why are you paying them?

DS: Because they say they have to.

RS: We have to pay their salary. And they don't even hardly make any money compared to what NOAA collects from us. It's like 750 dollars a day for this person. And at the end of the trip the crew has to pay for—See we get an extra poundage, like 300 pounds a day extra to make up for that, but it doesn't cover it, by far.

MR: It just doesn't make sense.

DS: No it doesn't.

RS: It's just another way to aggravate the fishermen, really. Half the time these people who don't get out of bed. I've had one observer that really did her job, and the rest of the them have been pains in the butts. That's it. They wanna sit around and read a novel all damn day. Seriously!

DS: Can I mention something about—I mentioned the socioeconomic study that we did with UMass Dartmouth. Since 1976, when the original Magnuson Act was written, there was something called National Standard 8. The national standards are bulleted items sort of that preface the act itself. Standard 8 stated that the regulatory process cannot, or the regulations that are put into place should not devastate fishing dependent communities. So I read that and I latched right on to it, and I started studying the Act because to me, it's like they were counting every single fish and every single scallop, but I saw people out of work all over the place and families suffering. So then in 1996, when the Sustainable Fisheries Act, it was like a rewriting of the Magnuson, what they did was they reworded it so that the regulations cannot devastate fishing communities, except, except! They have to be careful of fishery-dependent communities except when it affects the biomass. So like save the fish, sacrifice the fishermen to quote Susan Playfair's phrase. But that's exactly what it's like. And I've gone to council meetings, and stood there and told them, you know, that the science, you know, that the biomass of groundfish, the levels of biomass necessary for sustainability had been pumped up 3 times. That sustainable biomass level that they're looking for in codfish is, would be greater, would be a greater biomass than since what, the early 1900s. But yet they expect it to go back up to that. Again, let's look at global warming, let's look at pollutants, the cruise ships emptying port-o-potties out in middle of ocean.

RS: Conditions are completely different.

DS: None of that considered. And they have—But from 1976 to 1996, when that National Standard was diluted as result of the lobbying efforts of the conservationists, 20 years passed and not one bit of social or economic information was collected. Still now to this day, I go to council meetings, and they put up on screen, what motion they're messing up this time. And it always says, — "social and economic analysis incomplete." Still to this day, they make use count every fish, and scallop. But my family, my husband's livelihood, my husband's heart, doesn't count. Ronnie is very intelligent, he's very capable, as he said, he could be a mechanic, he could be a marketing person in fisheries, he could manage other people's boats. But his heart is at sea. I don't worry about other women, it's the boat. That's the competition in life, is the boat because it really is in his heart. These people don't care, they just don't care that what they're doing is wrong. I've tried being nice about it, and I find that that doesn't work. So that's why again I go back to the fact that we're just going to have to band our communities together so that it's an undeniable voice that they'll just have to listen. Because it doesn't make sense to put people out of business. It's the same thing as the farmers. I think it's very analogous to what happened in the farming industry. Our government bought wheat from Russia, told our farmers not to plant. But at least they subsidized them. But look what's happened to free farming in America. Now we buy our fruit from Chile instead of from California, and instead of from the central states. It's obscene. And I see the same thing happening in the fishery. Our government is gonna regulate us until people just have to give up, and until there's fewer boats owned by large

corporations. Fishermen like my husband—You know, the captain of the boat used to be the master of vessel. He called the shots, when it was the day to leave, when it was the day to come home. What happened on his boat. That's no longer the case. The boat owner has much more control, because there's a lot less opportunity out there. And what the government wants I believe is for the smallest single boat owners to just go away. Cause then it will be nice, large corporations which they love to deal with, and less humanity, less human beings, and just as much money. But it will be regulated, and there will be certain, select people making the money. The clam industry, for example, went to a quota system. Now there's three people I think in the Northeast Corridor. From the mid-Atlantic, up north to Maine, three people that own the bulk of the clam licenses for deep sea clams. So as a result of that, that person has absolute control over how those men operate those boats, and if they don't like it, they can go. And where are they gonna go? So, the same thing is going to happen in these fisheries where fleet owners are gonna be in control of large amounts of the permits, which will take away the right for the guys on deck, for the guys in the wheel house, for my husband, to be the master of that vessel. Because in order to protect his job, you have to comply. You don't have, you know? I really think it has a lot—it's got money and lobbying in Washington and stuff like that. Because reason is reason. And we're telling the truth, and no one is listening. And when people turn you off when you're right, and we have science to back it up, and suddenly the Albatross, their science, which I think is so aptly named by the way, but they went out last year, in 2002. They were doing samplings for groundfish. We found that one of our boats fished, fishing side by side, same gear, same day, same everything. Our boat caught three times as much as fish as the government's boat. So, ooh, scratch their heads, check the gear, the trawl lines were crooked! They had one side, one cable going out—

RS: One was shorter yeah.

DS: With a shorter wire than this side, so when you're opening the net and it's like this, it's going to collapse. When they're even, it opens up like this and catches fish. Ooh! Maybe they need fishermen to help them learn to catch fish. Just the thought!

RS: Yeah. Yeah. Pardon my adamancy. I just can't help it!

MR: It's here for the ages. So, what's next?

DS: We're just going to keep going. Because my husband and other fishermen in the city—this is our heritage and there's nothing else in New Bedford. It's the cornerstone of our economy. Every boat, when my husband's boat goes out to sea, I used to—Actually, I had a grub business where I'd buy groceries for 5 or 6 different boats. My husband's boat carries about 1,800 dollars in groceries. Last trip he spent sixteen THOUSAND dollars on fuel. All of that comes back to this community. Not to mention the fact that last year the city harvested 164 million dollars in

stock. Because we have a fleet fishery here, 82 million dollars went to fishermen and their families, and that's not counting the share that went to company that owns the boat. We know that that money's spent differently in the community, than the corporate money. So if you take away 84 million dollars from a city like New Bedford, it will be the last straw. I mean we lost textile, we lost shoes, we've lost every other industry that's here. We can't all be CNAs. Home healthcare aides. Certified nurse's aides. Sorry, being a smart alec.

RS: What's the ratio, like, for every dollar that comes in from a fishing boat, what does it equate to? Four dollars or something, 6 dollars?

DS: I think it's, there's four dollars into the fishery, and 8 dollars into the general community. There's like an eight dollar multiplier into the community. And if they plan on—As I said, both of our people who are up for election for president, talk about jobs, jobs, jobs! Well, I've called both of their offices and asked what their plan was for the fisheries, and neither one of them returned my call, so I guess that tells me where they stand. It's not really high on the agenda as we struggle to survive. I get really angry, I just go to meetings, and invite them. Why don't you get away from the conference tables, and come talk to the people down the docks and see the families you're devastating.

MR: What about at other levels? At the state—Congress?

DS: Actually we're blessed, right. After got out of school, to become a paralegal to do all this, I interned with Congressman Frank who is an incredibly fair person. I don't think that he supports the fisheries just because it's part of the constituency. I believe that because we are really small compared to the rest of the constituency in the district, but he's been a godsend. He's taken to Washington for us. Actually, I've—even little Deb Schrader's gone to Washington! I've pounded on the door of senators. That's what I plan to do. Go after the reauthorization of the Magnuson Act, because it's up for reauthorization again. I'd like to see a redefining of overfishing. You know there's issues—and that's actually, the Council's one level, but the Council's governed by National Marine Fisheries Service, which is governed by NOAA, which governed by Department of Commerce. That's why it takes an act of Congress to get anything done. So I think that as we build more of a constituency by banding all of our communities together in the whole northeast region, then we will create a constituency that they'll have to deal with. And also, I do things like speak at Lion's Clubs' meeting, Rotary Clubs' meetings, to explain to bankers and lawyers, and proprietors of businesses, that yes! I know that you think this is our problem, but it really is your problem too! Because if we don't, if the families in this industry don't put their money that they're earned in such a hard way of life back in. Every fishing family, the first day, we do have a tendency to splurge on goodies, on going out to dinner, because it's like a celebration that he's come home safe again. I don't know if they, what would happen to our economy if that money wasn't spent in the local restaurants, and just on our

lifestyles. We have mortgages, we pay taxes, we pay water bills, we send our kids to schools, and when all that money disappears because of a regulatory process that's based on mistruths, I think that's it's going to be, no pun intended, but a crying shame.

RS: The bank people should realize that they should start going to fisheries meetings, and stand up for the fishermen too. Because they're going to lose a lot if the fishermen can't pay their mortgages, or their car payments, or loans that they taken out, or second mortgages to fix their houses up, or whatever, or boats.

MR: That's a good strategy; just keep saying it over and over until people hear it.

DS: And the thing is, I've met with farming groups, I've met with—like I said Rotary Clubs, stuff like that. At first they kind of look at me like, Mmhmm! Then when I explain it, they really do see the point, and that's why I think the Festival has been so incredible. Because I've been talking to people about fish for eight years, but I can see in the faces of the people. I can see it in the faces of people that they were mesmerized. When my husband and other guys were up there talking what they go through out there, and how it is, even me, I was up there in a couple of panels with women of the fisheries and stuff, and we were able to reach an audience here. And I could tell they didn't just open their ears, that they embraced us, that they opened their hearts too. So I think that support here at home is gonna be different as a result of this event. I'm very grateful.

MR: I was at session this morning on superstitions. [Inaudible]

RS: Yeah, now I'm all messed up. I didn't know, some of these, you know. I don't know how many times I've taken brand new boots on the boat and all these things.

DS: He lets me on the boat the day it sails.

RS: I'm not thinking about none of that. I'm thinking about getting my act together, and getting out there, and doing good, coming home and being done with it, and get another trip under my belt.

MR: Well, and also superstitions is not everybody—I happen to think Friday the Thirteenth is very lucky, and black cats and things like that. It depends on the tradition you come from, it depends on—there's lots and lots of superstitions about shoes. I also worked at the Lowell festival. There's a lot of shoe superstitions in different traditions, you don't put shoes on the table. One actually about wearing the boots first, I hadn't heard that one. I wish I had! But every occupation had, you know, baseball players, they love publicity about their things. But it's

also a way of perpetuating the culture. The old timers tended to be, more perceived to be more superstitious. I would bet [inaudible].

DS: I can tell you that when we were doing our interviews, that was one stipulation with my surveyors, cause I did interviews and I had a small staff, and it was—the rule was do not step on the boat. Stand on the wooden pier, do not step on that boat, even just to lean in. You ask someone to bring the captain or mate to you before you step on the boat because if the person feels that way, and if the poor thing went out and had a horrible trip, I would feel so badly! I told them, I do not want that on my conscience, so stay off the boat until you're invited. Ronnie doesn't feel that way. I don't do grub anymore because I'm busy with other things. But the woman that does the grub for him, we just go on the boat, he just doesn't feel that way. But I do respect others that do feel that way. Whatever keeps them warm when out there, whatever makes them feel strongest, whatever we can do to fortify them is what I'm most interested in doing.

RS: You know, situation like a captain who's superstitious about stuff, it kind of messes the gang up too, because then they start thinking, "Oh geeze, this guy is thinking this, all kinds of crazy stuff, like this is going to control the trip." I'm such a black and white kind of person that the guys all know, whatever it is, it doesn't matter. We're still going to do good. And that gives them all confidence, I think. That's my frame of mind, that's the way I think. And I'm thinking confident right from the get-go. I'm not going to let something like that stop me.

MR: Yeah. Even a hatch cover?

RS: I've never really had a guy do that.

MR: It's interesting because that came up in every interview I did yesterday. It just came up. And pig did, too. But I also did a lot of older timers yesterday.

RS: I've sent pig on the boat before myself. And everybody look at me like, how's he doing that? We're all in trouble now. But I don't let stuff like that bother me.

MR: That's good. You know, because you have to believe it for it to have power.

RS: You make your own luck. That's the way I feel. If you do everything correctly, you're not going to have a problem. If you do it with confidence, and you're thinking straight. You just got confidence, that's the way I look at it. You got to be confident to take the wheel, and take the boat out, and come back in again with a trip. If you don't have any confidence in yourself, and you're worrying about stuff that you've been superstitious for years, and thinking about it's gonna screw you up, take your thoughts away from what you're doing.

MR: Do you think your children are going to follow into something with the fishery, or go in the opposite direction?

DS: Our daughter is—she's got her eyes on Broadway, so I doubt she'll fish. Our son, Dylan, one minute he talks about it, well he talks being a marine biologist. He talks about—He's very interested in ecology, in the environment, and he's really interested in fish and scallops. From the time he was a little boy, Ronnie would bring home the lobsters from his trip. I have pictures of him with his yellow Tonka truck giving the lobsters rides around the kitchen floor. And so we don't really know. But at one protest, Dylan held a sign with Ronnie's picture on it that said "When I grow up, I want to be a fisherman like my dad but the government's not going to let me." We're kind of—the kids see me working with Ronnie on his behalf, and the rest of community, and I think they had have respect for it. I think that they—From the time that they were babies, every morning we had a Colorform calendar on the side of the kitchen wall, right near high chair seat, and from the time—They're three years apart. From the time that Ronnie would leave there'd be mark on that day, and a heart on the day he was coming in. And every morning at breakfast we would talk about dad first thing and move that mark a little closer to heart, so it was like this huge celebration waiting for him to come in. When my daughter got older, she used to sit up at night, sleep with 14 pillows behind her so that we could race for first kiss as he was coming up the stairs in the middle of the night. I remember being pregnant with Samantha, and being at a birthing class, and I had a friend, a girlfriend, that was coming when Ronnie wasn't home so in case he wasn't home, because we had planned a natural birth, in case he wasn't there, this woman could take his place. And this other lady was sitting next to me, she goes, "Oh you're husband's a fisherman, oh, you poor thing." I said, "Excuse me? Poor thing?" I said, "To tell you the truth, I have no regrets." I said, "I love my husband and he loves me and I have a wonderful life. Do I look silly somehow? Or if it was a horrible situation, never mind with the man, that I'm having his child?" I was totally offended. People have such misconceptions about our families. I remember—He was home for the baby's birth by the way. Home for both our babies' births.

RS: I took trips off just to make sure.

DS: People don't understand that we have, our families go through same problems and tribulations. I had cancer 7 years ago. Ronnie was able to stay home for about a month during I had two surgeries. He was able to stay home during my major surgery. The day I was in the doctor's office and they said it was invasive cancer, cancer proper, not all of the different stages, I think it was Stage II or III or something. I was standing in the doctor's office alone, and I drove home kind of shaken and stuff. He came home and from that day, he stayed home, slept in the hospital for 14 days. But eventually he had to go back to sea, we had to keep our insurance. So people came in, we hired people to come in during the day, to help with the kids, get them

ready for school and stuff, but it was really difficult based on those kind of challenges. But he had to go fishing, and it was, it's like he had to keep doing what he's doing, and I was like, "Go, I'll be fine," inside I'm going, "No! Don't go! No! Don't go!" But that's what we do, we stand by each other. My ship is the house and having an oasis for him to come home to, to restore himself. And his is to go out and catch fish and scallops and provide for us. And I think we both have great joy in our jobs.

RS: You're helping me now.

MR: Is there anything you want to add? That's kind of a great way to end. [Inaudible]

RS: I don't know. I guess, if anything I would hope that we can continue this way of life, and not have the rug yanked out from underneath us. People got to eat seafood, business has got to do business and men have got to work. That's it. Mortgages have got to be paid.

DS: And my husband needs to be happy.

RS: Since I was a kid I wanted to be a fisherman. I wanted to be a captain. And getting to do what I want to do which is important. People don't enjoy their work, they become crazy, like postal workers or something. People that are beat on by the government, and taking their livelihood away from them, they're going to become crazy. And I hope it doesn't come to that. Very angry. Because when there's tons of fish, and tons scallops out there, can't go catch 'em, because of something like a turtle or something like that. We've taken steps to prevent the turtles from getting in our drags. We've done that! But yet they still say that we're not even trying to keep the turtles out of the drags. What do you want us to do?

DS: Keeps them in business.

RS: They want us to bring the scallop guts home with us now.

DS: That's what they're talking about, the viscera. It's called viscera. They're saying instead of cutting out the [inaudible] out of these little holes, so that the shell and guts go out. They're saying that that attracts the sea turtles. So now bring home all your guts and some guy's gonna make a million of dollars a year handling the guts from the scallops. So that's another expense for them. But the turtles are still gonna be coming up here, cause it's the warm temperatures that are bringing it up.

RS: How come 10 years ago we didn't have the turtles? It's because we protected the turtles

so well that they've become overabundant. They've got to go somewhere. They're migrating, they're moving around. There's food in the water. Give us a break! We're protecting the fish, they're eating the fish too. What did the turtles eat before there was scallop guts?

DS: I'd just like to say that I really think this Festival—I've been working with this committee since the very first meeting. And I think that this Festival, that we've done more for our cause in these last three days, than all of the outreach in the last 8 years that I've done. We're reached more people, with a better perspective, and I could tell the people received us—as I said, they opened their ears but they opened their hearts more importantly. And I think that's an incredible, incredible accomplishment. So I hope we can be here again next year.

RS: I hope that everybody participates—

MR: And that's why festivals are good. Music and food, and a way of life. You don't see this on television, you don't see this elsewhere.

RS: I hope there's some kind of film or documentary put together, and all the speakers, and everybody.

MR: Well, it's all on tape. All of the stage stuff, all the talking stages, music stages, the oral histories. I know there were camera people going around.

RS: Excellent. That'd be a good Discovery Channel—

MR: And also fifty years from now, when somebody can goes back to see what was going on now, compared to had gone on fifty years before this and see if there's still a fishery.

DS: There will be, because we won't give up.

MR: Well there will be because we have to eat. [Inaudible] Anything else?

DS: Just thank you.

RS: Thank you very much.

MR: Thank you.

----------End of Interview----------

Reviewed by Nicole Zador, 1/12/2025