**Interviewer:** Okay cool. So to start off um, what is your current area of employment?

**BD042:** Uh, self-employed.

**Interviewer:** Okay. How would you…

**BD042:** …things outdoors.

**Interviewer:** Would you consider that media?

**BD042:** Yes. Definitely. Strategic marketing communications.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And how many years have you been doing this?

**BD042:** Two years full-time. I got on the company 4 years ago.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And then you also live on the water, you also fish, are there any other marine relationships or marine activities you have in general?

**BD042**: Uh yeah, I mean I grew up on charter boats, um, my family still runs boats for a living and directly impacted by water life.

**Interviewer**: Okay, Are you involved in like government environmental groups? Do you go to councils relating to environmental groups or anything like that?

**BD042**: Uh, CCA, NCWF, some conservation groups, we work with Alabama Marine Resource Division and getting their message out. Whatever their message they are trying to reach to people for snapper season, snapper shade, PSAs.

**Interviewer**:Amazing. And then you also, do you also do work with the sea lab? With Tag Alabama, you do a little bit.

**BD042**: Yeah, so we don’t directly work with the sea lab through Great Days Outdoors. We work with them tagging fish my whole life.

**Interviewer**: Right, right, right. But you do. Okay cool. So, some broad questions to start. Let me know if they don’t make sense to you or you need more um, narrow question. What specific aspects of coastal and marine biodiversity affect you?

**BD042**: Say again.

**Interviewer**: What specific aspects of coastal and marine biodiversity affect you? So living things.

**BD042**: I mean the fishery directly affects our business as a whole, especially being the podcast hosts. We do weekly fishing reports. Usually, if the fish are biting and we have content to put out.

**Interviewer**: Okay.

**BD042**: I’m not sure how else to elaborate.

**Interviewer**: No, that’s totally fine. And, um, are there any negative aspects? I guess if the fish aren’t biting, you don’t have anything to report. When that does happen, you just pivot to maybe talking about hunting or real estate?

**BD042**: Tactics or a deep dive on a specific fish, high catch or top water. We just pivot to other topics that would be helpful to our listeners.

**Interviewer**: Perfect. So, when are. Do you strategically plan during the year ahead of time? You know, seasonally wise when fishing is going to be good, and so you’ll focus

**BD042**: I mean, especially for our magazine, we planned two or three months ahead of time trying to figure out. Right now, we’re planning the March magazine, and it’s November fourth or whatever it is. We’re trying to figure out what the best hunting and fishing best bets and topics are for February, March, April. We’re always thinking well ahead of production schedule.

**Interviewer**: And is that just seasonally or are there like um economic factors in that?

**BD042**: Uh definitely economic factors as far as seasonality of our clients’ business. A boat dealership is not really going to want to be advertising right now.

**Interviewer**: Right, okay.

**BD042**: They’re going into March, April, May, they’re going to be one of them to promote their business going into busy season. I don’t know if that’s the right approach.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, perfect. Okay. Are there any particular species or habitats that are the most important to you?

**BD042:** They’re all very important. We have plants that are oyster farmers. That affects salinity, condition, speckle trout, redfish, all our guys get content for that. We get offshore reports. We get inshore and offshore reports every week. On the website and in the magazine, we put the content for everything.

**Interviewer**: Is there a difference between the podcast and the magazine with how you promote coastal and marine life? Like are they pretty even with talking about fisheries?

**BD042**: Yeah they’re pretty even. We bring it up any chance we get with the podcast because it is an easy topic to mention. Take care of your fish. For three years we’ve talked about it any chance we get. I guess it’s easier to do on the podcast because we do one a week and the magazine will be once a week I mean month.

**Interviewer**: One a month is a magazine?

**BD042**: Yeah. we’re trying to bring it up a lot more.

**Interviewer**: Gotcha. Are there social… Hold on. How do I want to ask this? How are the social aspects affecting your business? You talked a little bit about oyster farmers like you have.. Basically, I want you to talk about the different groups of people that you rely on for your success.

**BD042:** I mean the fishing guys are the first ones to come to my mind. They are big contributors to our content. People in the trenches everyday fishing being stewards of our fishery.

**Interviewer**: Are you relying on guides to be successful? Well, I guess they can come on your podcast and say, I haven’t been successful, It has been bad.

**BD042**: That’s our tagline. The good, the bad, and the ugly. It is what it is. I mean if its bad, thats a fishing report too.

**Interviewer**: What other groups? Fishing guides, oyster farmers. You have real estate?

**BD042**: We do. We have coastal real estate. Conservation groups. CCA. Really all of our listeners, our whole fishing community supports us by listening every week. I mean, it’s literally top to bottom.

**Interviewer**: Gosh these are some big ideas. Now, what about the economic benefits or economic aspects of biodiversity? Are there… Gosh, this is hard. Because your stuff is so broad, obviously, there’s a bunch of economic impacts to making money in your business. Do you rely on… Are there management decisions that would harm you?

**BD042**: Yeah. Well, just for instance I posted that thing about the flounder being closed in November, and everybody was up in arms about it. Government got involved in our God-given resource, etc. People don’t like being governed. More restrictions deter some people from doing the right thing, like buying the fishing license, contributing to the overall greater good.

**Interviewer**: And so I guess, you are communicating a lot of that management decision, even though you’re not making it. Do you get Backlash?

**BD042**: We really don’t. We have Scott Bannon the director all the time to give us updates. We don’t ever get any pushback from promoting CCA or ADC, or conservation as a whole. We really don’t.

**Interviewer**: Yeah, you're never affected.

**BD042**: We’re just educational about it. We don’t middle the road, give the facts, I put some personal opinions sometimes on the podcast. But try to stay in the middle, support everyone.

**Interviewer**: Yeah absolutely. Are there other environmental factors that you rely on?

**BD042**: Weather for sure, the rainfall around here is a huge deal. The tributaries, Water quality is huge. We actually just signed Mobile Bay Keeper yesterday. We will be helping them promote their messages as well.

: What did they say yesterday?

**BD042**: We’re gonna start pushing out their messages. We will sponsor them like CCA. They’ll be doing water quality updates in the magazine and on the podcast. Water quality is obviously huge around here. And there’s issues with runoff and all that stuff off the river. So that’s probably the biggest environmental factor. Weather, water quality, fish consumption, they’re gonna be doing some fish consumption advisories.

**Interviewer**: Okay. Um, When you say runoff, that’s freshwater runoff upstate right? Now as a fisherman, outside of your media business, but as a fisherman, are any of these water quality freshwater runoff affect you recreationally? Do you pay attention to that stuff?

**BD042**: Absolutely. Definitely determines when and where I’m fishing.

**Interviewer**: what are the conditions you would not go fishing?

**BD042**: A lot of runoff. A lot.

**INterviewer**: Just because its going to be bad fishing?

**BD042**: Muddy water is going to be low in salinity because of the freshwater runoff and it pushes all the fish out.

**Interviewer**: As a waterfront homeowner, whether freshwater or runoff water, do those things affect you economically?

**BD042**: No, I wouldn’t say so. Whenever there's a lot of rain, it pushes stuff off my deck.

**Interviewer**: Okay. Are there any other effects of living on the water? Economically, in general, are your taxes higher because of that? Are there things that are negative?

**BD042**: Insurance for sure. Insurance is high. Flood and wind. It floods the high wind. I’m not sure on taxes, that's probably just because of what they think it's worth.

**Interviewer**: And there was something else I was going to ask you. Are there any social negative effects or benefits to living on the water?

**BD042**: Definitely nothing negative except the work. It’s a lot of wor living here. Everytime the wind blows, you have to clean off the dock after hurricanes, little storms, and floods. Nah I think it’s way more positive especially for quality of life.

**Interviewer**: Okay. Cool. Media business. I want to expand on this a little bit. The groups that you rely on for yourself to be successful, are there… I guess I mean…Can you expand a little bit, when things are good, and people come on and it is good. How does that benefit you? And when things are bad, and they’re reporting it as bad, how does that benefit you?

**BD042**: Hmm. I would say, we’re well established now as far as the podcast goes, but I mean positive is always better. As long as someone is excited about fishing and weather is great, the water quality is great, they’re excited, is portrayed to the listeners and is stimulates a lot more participation.

**Interviewer**: So when things are good,

**BD042**: Yeah, but when things are bad, you’re just gonna sit and wait when things are good and pick up on a few tidbits here and there from captains. I don’t think it really impacts I don’t think. When bad weather, we can tell downloads are down because people aren’t

**Interviewer**: Really?

**BD042**: Yeah, Football, school goes back. Football starts, end of summer. Downloads go way down.

**Interviewer**: Okay. Why does bad weather affect downloads?

**BD042**: Cause people probably aren’t going fishing. I’m not going fishing this weekend. I don’t need this information. Your’e gonna have your hard core listeners that listen every week regardless, but a lot of our listeners live you know inDallas, Atlanta, Chicago, then come down to vacation. They're not coming down to vacation because weather is bad. They just don't listen. They can look up what they wanna do for the weather that weekend.

**Interviewer**: What else did you say, football season, and what else affected,

**BD042**: back to school. The whole August, September back to school, football starts.

**Interviewer**: Does that… Do you get paid per download?

**BD042**: No. It doesn't affect my pay. It does not correlate directly. I just keep up with it and watch it because I’m a nerd like that.

**Interviewer**: Oh okay. A bad download week. You said something else. Football season. Back to school. Weather. Bad download week.

**BD042**: And hunting. People have a hunting podcast but that one picks up when the fishing one drops off. Cause everyone gets geared up. Geared up towards hunting. So it kinda swaps from fishing content to hunting content around July or August.

**Interviewer**: Do you rely on tourists at all? Like tourists listen to the podcast?

**BD042**: We get a lot of tourists absolutely.

**Interviewer**: And tourists can contribute to … do you know what percentage of tourists like summer? Does it go up because of the tourists?

**BD042**: I’m sure of it. I would have to dig into the demographics and analytics of it

**Interviewer**: How do people.. How do tourists know to look at your.. Do they look up Alabama podcasts or what?

**BD042**: So we are search engine optimization specialists. And so we’re very good at getting found. You can either go to the podcast engine or Google in general and people are googling something along the lines of Alabama saltwater fishing or saltwater fishing or Orange Beach fishing or Gulf Shores fishing or Dauphin Island fishing report.

**Interviewer**: What did you call it? Search engine what?

**BD042**: Search engine optimization specialists.

**Interviewer**: Now is that like something you do on the side? Or do you have to just pay for that?

**BD042**: It’s all part of the process. We have an entire team that takes care of it. Director of Digital Operations.

**Interviewer**: Do you owe.. Do you owe credit to this search engine optimization specialists for the podcasts success?

**BD042**: Some of it. Just being found is part of it. The obscurity.

**Interviewer**: Okay. And is that mainly how tourists or people who aren't in the area and don't know you is that how they get a hold?

**BD042**: I think so. Mostly.

**Interviewer**: So that's a big deal, the search engine optimization.

**BD042**: It is. That's why we specialize

**Interviewer**: Oh so you get contracted out to do that? That's why you have all the sponsorships.

**BD042**: That's correct.

**Interviewer**: But that's individual. That isn't really…. That doesn't affect your media business. Can you tie this all in? You get sponsorships, because of the search engine optimization and then you are also able to promote that on the podcast. So it’s like a two for one thing?

**BD042**: That’s right. Well it’s kinda like a multifaceted marketing approach because we have the magazine and we have all the podcasts and we have the website and we have a huge email list. So basically it's a package we do. We do a couple advertising on the podcast and magazine, website banners, with podcast sponsorship. It’s exposure there, magazine exposure and website exposure. So it's like a multifaceted marketing approach. All of them are spokes of our media business if that makes sense. Think about the podcast, the magazine, online, sponsored emails. We just do it all.

**Interviewer**: Okay. So it's all one business, The search engine optimization specialists are a part of this one business. That's pretty cool.

**BD042**: Yeah, people think its just a podcast

**Interviewer:** Well that's what you get all this clout for, but it really is super involved. What takes up most of your time?

**BD042:** That's a good question. Magazine takes up a lot of time. Do a lot of planning. We have a manager that we hired full time this year. Managing all the writers and the editing. I handle a lot of our social media and that's a lot.

**Interviewer:** Really. Like Instagram and Facebook.

**BD042**: I handle a lot of other companies too.

**Interviewer**: Oh, you’re like a social media guru. Is there one of these media facets between the podcast, magazine, website that you deem the most important to your success? I know it’s sorta all in one.

**BD042**: No, There's one person that's gonna read the magazine and absorb that information then listen to the podcast and there's a different person that listens to the podcast then goes to the website typically. You have to do it all. I mean the media historically has been three pieces of the pie. Where you have TV and radio and now you have everything.

**Interviewer:** So you guys are trying to monopolize everything that you can? And it's you and Joe. And you are doing all of this. How many people are you with now?

**BD042**: We have five full time employees now.

**Interviewer:** Oh okay so you… How have employees benefited your business?

**BD042:** It’s given us time to do business development and grow our business instead of having a job and we're running the business.

**Interviewer:** So obviously you have five employees, that's pretty monumental. Are you relying on them significantly? Like would you be able to do your job without your employees or is it just sort of… Employees are saving you time.

**BD042:** Absolutely. It grows the business instead of treading water. Staying afloat.

**Interviewer:** So you have someone working for the magazine, someone working for the podcast.

**BD042:** We have a full time host. The Alabama Fishing Freshwater Coordinator he is also our manager. We have a general manager also.

**Interviewer:** What other aspects are you attributing to your growing business? Besides your employees.

**BD042:** I feel like I'm really good at community outreach. That's one of the reasons my podcast is so successful. I'm so entrenched in the community.

**Interviewer:** That's good. That's good. Is there anything else you would attribute to your growing business?

**BD042:** Putting out quality content. Not just saying good things about companies because they pay us but strategically get partners that we believe in. Being helpful and educational to our audience instead of just trying to make a buck.

**Interviewer**: What happens when you get something that is bad? You just message them and say “Hey, I don't like this, I’m not going to sponsor.”

**BD042:** We haven’t really run across this yet. We've had some conflicting stuff with clients but we direct them to someone else who could help maybe. But really we haven't run into that a whole lot. You know as far as someone trying to push a message we don’t believe in. I just don’t think we would do it.

**Interviewer:** Really? Cool. Okay so. Water quality. So going back to the environmental factors that might affect your business, water quality, runoff, weather, is there anything more about those things that.. Obviously they affect your fishing success and that affects what's on your podcast, but is there anything else sorta in that realm that is affecting you?

**BD042:** I can't really think of anything besides hurricanes since they reduce precipitation. but we haven't had one of those in a while.

**Interviewer:** Hurricanes reduce downloads? Or I guess you said weather.

**BD042:** But yeah definitely because people are more worried about staying alive than fishing. Charter guys and Offshore guys worry about marinas. And try to have rebuilding periods and stuff. It’s been a while since I've had to deal with that. Any other economic necessity.

**Interviewer:** Okay Cool. Economically like…do you see … like right now, the economy being tough with gas being more expensive. Is there any effect on you with that stuff? Do you get less downloads because the price of gas is so high and people aren't fishing?

**BD042**: Even last year when gas was crazy high,

**Interviewer:** You still got downloads. So what’s the…people are still downloading and listening to the podcast when

**BD042**: Even when people aren't going, they still wanna keep their finger on the pulse and know what's going on. As far as the economic thing right now, we’re seeing a little bit of bigger brands tightening up on their budgets. Just cause it kinda trickles uphill if that makes sense. The consumers or the products are not flourishing like they were, so they are tightening their belts and not buying as much tackle and rods and extra stuff. So I'm sure that goes all the way up to the top line of bigger brands tightening their budgets a little bit. We haven’t really lost any. I think for the most part, fishing and hunting stay steady. The people that fish and hunt a lot aren't really impacted by small economic things. Like they are pretty… like they don't buy big boats or lots of land. They're usually pretty affluent. For the most part.

**Interviewer:** Right, so they're still going to be listening to the podcast.

**BD042:** Go fishing. Still listen to the podcast. Still hunting. Still buying their licenses, still

**Interviewer:** Is there a group of people…Is it true that even if there's economic hardships that people who…people are still gonna splurge because it's like a vacation thing so they would still listen and play the part? So economic hardship doesn't really affect your business.

**BD042:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you're kinda sitting pretty. I mean hunting and fishing will always be around, economic hardship isn't going to bring you down. Like I guess…

**BD042**: It might change things

**Interviewer**: yeah. We’ll pivot and maybe do something a little bit different. Media is the business to be in right now. Okay cool. I think I’m done with this. That was pretty challenging but thank you for bearing with me

**BD042:** Of course.

**Interviewer:** What’s your highest level of education?

**BD042:** I graduated from college

**Interviewer:** Oh wow, With what?

**BD042:** Business management.

**Interviewer:** What year were you born?

**BD042**: 85

**Interviewer:** I assume you're not enrolled in any Native or Indigenous tribes or corporations.

**BD042:** Not that I know of.

**Interviewer**: So we are having a workshop in two weeks, on November 15 and 16, if you are free, we are offering $250 to anyone who comes.

**BD042**: I might be able to do the 15th.

**Interviewer**: Oh really,

**BD042**: Maybe, I’m going to Kentucky the next day to go hunting.

**Interviewer**: I can tell you the times specifically. Don’t stress if you can’t. November 15 would be 10-4. If you come, you get $250 a breakfast and lunch are provided. I’ll put you down as a maybe and reach out to you next week.