-Interviewee, 74 years is my age.

-And where are we here?

-We're in the La Mela sector of the Guaniquilla community, but this is the La Mela area. This is also the area they call Puerto Real Bay.

-And we're here because there's going to be a meeting where they're going to tell the stories of fishing, how they started here in Puerto Real, am I understanding correctly?

Many people, long before me, began fishing, and artisanal fishing, that is, rowboats, with oars, without motors. From what I've heard, we're talking about more than perhaps 100 years ago, given the structures and all that, you can roughly get an idea, sunken ships and things like that. But they started with fishing, having to make their fishing equipment manually, nets, and so on, so on, a lot of things. Eventually, when I arrived, all of that was in operation. Some things are still there, they're being used, and others have already been modernized, let's say, in terms of boats with motors and things like that.

-When did you start fishing?

-That was not long ago, like 60 years ago.

-60 years ago?

-Yes, I was a boy.

-And who taught him?

Some friends, who were older than me at the time, taught me about fishing in the town of Salinas, Puerto Rico, which is also a fishing area and where you can still see many of the fishing structures and equipment from that time. Some still have them, others have left them as decoration in fish markets because they no longer use them. And during that time, I began to learn the details of how to prepare hooks, where to catch lane snapper, where to catch different species, and how they could actually sell them, they could market them, back then.

[00:03:03]

-Were they marketing, could they market what, the networks and things like that?

-Yes, because they continued building later and there were people from other places who came there to buy them, because they didn't have the art of building them, but on a fairly reserved scale, because at that time that area, where I'm explaining to you that I was, where I developed the first years, was sugarcane plantations and there wasn't much accessibility to get there.

-And how many years were you fishing there in the Salinas area?

-My entire teenage years, from 14, 15, to 18. I joined the army at that time.

-How many years were you in the army?

-28.

-28, and you never fished in 28 years?

-No, the closest I came by boat, during that period of military time, was when I was already working in Vietnam, patrolling the coasts.

-And when did you return to fishing?

-I returned to fishing fully when I returned in 2009 and was there for that entire period of time, well, it wasn't up to me, because I was there, I had my job, which was in the military, and I was in different conflicts, even in the desert, three times. But once I came back, since I was facing out, to retire, well, then I came here, I came to Ponce.

-Let's stop for a bit.

[00:05:22]

-I was in Katrina, in New Orleans.

-Were you there, in New Orleans?

-I pulled dead people off the streets.

-Oh, you were in the Rescue?

-Yes in Rescue, in the streets,

-That was a horrible time, but we talked a little bit. You were starting to tell me about 2000, and when did you start fishing again, 2008?

-Yeah.

-And where did you start fishing when you returned to Puerto Rico?

-Ponce.

-Where is that?

-Ponce and Salinas. Ponce is in the south. Ponce is the second largest city in Puerto Rico.

-Is it part of Cabo Rojo?

-Sorry?

-Ponce is part of the municipality…?

-No. Ponce is the second largest city in Puerto Rico. After San Juan, it's the second largest city in terms of population. So, Ponce is located in the middle of Puerto Rico's southern coast, between the west and the east. Ponce is halfway there.

-And what did you fish when you started, what kind of fish?

-Sea bass back then, grouper, lane snapper (Lutjanus synagris XXVII\*), sierra (zero), and small picúas. I have never learned to fish for spiny lobster (Panulirus argus\*) or queen conch (Strombus gigas\*), in fact I don't know.

-And how did he fish, with what tool?

-With a hook.

-On a boat with a motor?

-Yes, with an engine.

-How far did he go?

-It was 8 miles out. The southern area of ​​Puerto Rico is deeper, meaning the depth is closer to the coast. Imagine if this is the coast in the Ponce area: 2,000 feet is a mile and a half, 3 miles at most, away from the coast. Here, at that same depth, you have to navigate approximately 15 miles, meaning this is, as we say in Spanish, a longer plain, like passing Florida, which is a plain that goes towards the Bahamas, so you can see it when you're traveling in the plane, you can see it, in the shadow of the ground, from a prudent distance, when you're above the Bermuda Triangle, that's where the abyss is, but here it's extremely close.

[00:08:25]

-And were there many fishermen in that town where you fished?

-In Salinas yes, yes, most of them were all yawls.

-From a yola, not with a motor, with a simple boat.

"It lasted longer there. I knew people who used to row boats to go fishing, but they had their fishing habits, their hours. They adjusted their schedule based on the catch they were going to have and what they were going to fish for. They didn't take unnecessary risks. At sea, nothing is set in stone. My experiences here may be different from yours, or a mile ahead, and we're in the same area. But in that Salinas area, the traditional fishing system is still maintained."

-Still?

-Yes, by area. Not as much as when I started, when I went around in my little motorboat, just like this one back then, and I met a lot of older people. Some of them were 21 or 18, and they were already 70. That's why I told you at the beginning, that history goes back more than a century, going back in time. I liked that fishing, because I don't know, it has something natural about it. They would throw in a piece of bread and butter (Graysby, \*Epinephelus cruentatus\*) and a piece of salami, they would give it in three pieces, and a thermos of coffee and a large gallon of water. That's what they carried as tools. Later, we started to say that they already carried their ice coolers, and on top of the ice cooler, well, they needed ice so they could spend more time fishing, so the fish wouldn't get damaged. You know, everything is progressive. As I was saying, someone once told me that necessity is the mother of invention.

[00:11:13]

-It's true.

-Whenever you lack something, you say: What do I have to invent so this doesn't happen to me again? Well, there's the invention.

-When was the refrigerator purchased approximately?

-I always went with a cooler.

-Since 2008?

-Yes, by that time I already had my cooler, one of those igloo ones. But sometimes, what they did was in their coolers at home, when they had a cooler, when the era of coolers came—at least here in Puerto Rico, television arrived in 1950, when I was 10 years old, sorry, when it was just being born. But what they did with the coolers was, they would take the empty containers and wash them well and put them in their little coolers, freeze them, and then take them home. In other words, they didn't need an ice maker.

-Tell me a little about the people who fished, who told me they were 70 years old, and they went out in a rowboat, they caught similar fish to you and where did they sell it?

-Normally, people, by that time, they already had an unwritten itinerary of the time they would arrive, and people were on the lookout, and since they were on the lookout, well, it was usually between 11 in the morning and 1 in the afternoon, that is, the bracket, open window of time that, more or less, they would arrive. And when they arrived, they would be waited for and quickly buy from them. They would scale and clean them, if they wanted them clean, like some people wanted to take them fresher, they would take them clean, without scales, because the scales are what protects the freshness of the fish, (Blue Marlin, \*Makaira nigricans XLII\*) so if you are going to buy fish and you are not going to eat it today, but you want it clean, without the guts, as we say, but if you want to eat it in 3 or 4 days, to keep it fresh, well, you leave it clean but with scales, that protects them, keeps them fresh.

[00:13:58]

And each boat was mostly identified, already known by the clientele, already permanent, they already knew, they even knew them, they would say to him: 'Pedro, look, how are you, what did you catch today?' or 'What did you catch?' and they already knew each other.

-But were they customers who came to the seashore when the fishermen returned?

-Yes, they already looked at them, since they saw them from afar, they bought from them, sometimes they bought for themselves, for their neighbor, for their mother, who wasn't just for them but they took advantage of the trip, for example, from Ponce they went there to buy fish and so on. In the Guayama area there are still fishermen who are dedicated to all fishing but, in particular, if you want to eat a fish (Blue Marlin, \*Makaira nigricans XLII\*) in particular, I forgot the name of that fish, (Blue Marlin, \*Makaira nigricans XLII\*) that is big, well...

-¿Dorado?

-No, dorado (Dolphin, \*Coryphaena hippurus\*) (dolphin) is caught a lot here too. Here they catch a lot of variety of fish: dorado, (Dolphin, \*Coryphaena hippurus\*) sierra (cero), cartridge (queen snapper), but over there… The wahoo (Wahoo, \*Acanthocybium solanderi\*) (wahoo). It is a delicious fish (Blue Marlin, \*Makaira nigricans XLII\*), it is good because it has few bones and is large, therefore it is juicy. When it comes to those who like to invent a lot of food with fish, the wahoo (Wahoo, \*Acanthocybium solanderi\*) is good because they make it stewed. I used to go and buy it there, for my use and my mom, may she rest in peace, because she would make it in empanadas, she would make it stuffed, and there was more variety, you could get away from fried fish. That gave it the Creole flavor. And on top of that, the seafood flavor. What else?

-I wanted to know a little more about the fishermen who still fish. Are they fishing in a more traditional way? You told me there are still some.

-There are still some, it's not the rule, it's not everyone, because what also happens is that you're looking for a way to catch more fish. At that time, there was more fishing, you fished basically the same, more too, but in a more traditional way.

[00:17:00]

-So, how are they fishing, with what kind of boat, with what kind of tool?

-That's subjective. If you're going to go fishing at a distance, quite far, then obviously, the boat you're going to take has to have certain characteristics; it has to be comfortable for you to work with the fish. It depends on what I want to fish, which isn't always what I want. Sometimes, other things aren't the best commercially, but... well, the size, where you're going, what the waves are like on that route, what I should bring, which is to keep the catch fresh. Before, fishermen used to pull 800, 1000 feet deep by hand, and they would come back and go up, and they would fish and come back and pull, now they use that, that’s what they call a winch, they throw it in there and put 8, 10, 12, 15 hooks, with some weights and they pull it along and it keeps going, until it reaches the bottom, at the bottom they lift it a little bit from the bottom, like a foot from the bottom, from where the bait is to the ground, and then they leave it there, depending on the fish activity at that bottom, well they leave it for 3, 4, 5 minutes, and then, they go back and pull it up and unfish it and that process.

[00:19:54]

Well, before, I tried it once. I only think I tried fishing at 500 feet twice, and then I regretted it because the waves and the jumps were tedious, and at the same time, I was doing that, and sometimes only 10 hooks would bring in more than 2 or 1 fish. So, there are those who can handle that situation. And when I'm fishing, well, I like to see more action, more fishing activity. When I see that there isn’t much fishing activity in an area, I don’t keep insisting, I leave it alone, so that it can grow up, increase, improve, and so on. I look for a place, I don’t know which one it is, but I can start to guess, to know where when at a given moment, I find a place where as soon as the fish (Blue Marlin, \*Makaira nigricans XLII\*) pulls, bites, and is very active, 300 feet deep, 200, 100, then there, well, I mark it with the GPS and take the catch and that’s it. If I come back, reasonably, I give it a month to return to the same place, because I make a lot of marks, it’s not about continuing to go to the same place.

-How do you make the marks?

-On the GPS.

-Ah, on the GPS.

-I put a mark on it and what I caught there, if it was lane snapper (Lutjanus synagris XXVII), if it was sea bass, watching the closed seasons. And then I try not to insist on the same place, and the teaching point, least to know, so that you only know... I mean, if you tell the other person, they're going to go to your place, I betchu, they're not going to tell you their areas. Those are the keys, because that way you don't create an area with no fishing activity and another with too much, too much. There's nothing too much, but there's a lot of fishing, if that's the case, then everyone has it. The sea is immense, they have countless places where they can go fishing and there's always going to be fishing, and that's it. One of the obstacles fishermen are facing today, across the board, which I read sometimes, is that many of those who sit at the table making administrative decisions related to fishing do not make a living from fishing.

[00:22:57]

And then new regulations and things start coming out where they prohibit you from living. It's like telling a police officer: Well, from now on you're not going to fine anyone on the street, nor are you going to prohibit a person from walking shirtless in the spring, or from jogging... But come here, if that's your way of life, many of them are retired, others are people who like sports, and based on their mentality, they want the rest of the population to do the same. And sometimes we're fishing and there are rules and laws, which we don't read all the time, all the new stuff, well, we don't know about them, and then it comes, be it the Coast Guard, or FURA, Natural Resources, and I dare say that often the only thing they know how to read is the regulations, but they don't know about fishing. And so I don't make a living from fishing; since I have my pension, they pay me for it, but I like fishing.

—-----Audio # 2: (00:30:04)

[00:00:00]

-Let's try again. OK. When did it start... in 2008 with commercial or recreational fishing?

-No, when I arrived in 2008, it was mostly recreational, because I'd been away for a long time and they wouldn't let me renew my license, which is something I brought to the attention of the lady who was here right now. That's unfair because I was serving the nation. It wasn't something I made on my own to stop fishing, and I had my license by law. So, no punishment, don't punish me for something I had no control over, but I did what had to be done. So, there should be certain guidelines in those regulations, which neither think nor suffer, more than the person who wrote them. They should set certain guidelines for that type of population: people who may have been sick, in a certain physical condition for 10 years, and managed to recover and are fishing again in a different way. Before, they were a team, now, or it's a boat, you know? That kind of variation, where people are affected, who were doing nothing but contributing to society, well, we're left out. So, the newcomer who doesn't know what to do, what to pull, who's just starting out, has everything at hand. They arrive there and get a stamp, get another, go here, go there, talk to a lawyer, documents, some affidavits, and that's it. And then, you go with your license, where it shows that you're registered, that you're registered with the Government. It's not that you're going to create something new, it's that you're registered. Well, leave that population, which is quite a lot, leave them an open window so that, using those legal resources, they can continue, and nothing. You come back and start the boat, the motor, the launch, whatever, and you abide by the rules, which is why you let yourself be carried away by the new, and you continue. You are not doing anyone any harm by approving a license that you always had from the beginning, it was not a nice-to-have, it was simply that you decided to come back and you decided to go yourself, it is because of life circumstances, you had to go to a job in the Azores Islands, over there, and you were there for 10 years,

[00:02:50]

And when you came back and you want to return to normal life, to your routine, which is part of the classes they give you there when you go back to the world, as one says when one goes back to the world, they always tell the military that one returns to the world when one is about to retire, because I am different. Well, then, there shouldn't be so many impossible punishments for one to fall back on time, in time.

-How did it affect you, I mean, did you have the commercial license?

-I was going to bring her, but…

-Then he went to the Army for 28 years, you told me?

-Yeah.

-And when he came back and wanted to go fishing again, he discovered that his license was not valid…

-I went to renew it, they told me no.

-Because?

-Because it was expired, I had to take it out again.

-And what do you need to get a new license? Is it difficult? What is it like?

-According to them, it's like starting over.

-What does it mean to start over?

Starting over means I never had a license, and that first impact affects you emotionally. How am I going to start from scratch, from nothing? And then, along with that, come some benefits. When the aid comes: 'How long have you been a fisherman?' Well, a year, a month, or I don't have a license. I don't have anything against the newcomer, but the one who started a month, three months, a year ago, maybe, has everything. A hurricane comes and the Federal Agriculture Department comes, they have money to replace the things you lost, and when they say: 'Give me your fishing license,' 'Oh, well, I have this one that's expired,' 'But, look, that's been there for more than 15 years, no, you don't have anything. That's just an ID to me, it's worthless.' ‘Can you do something for me?’, ‘Check my commercial fishing record, if I'm there, I'm there, I'm not eliminated or anything, I'm there, it has a number that isn't repetitive, that number can't be repeated, so give me the privilege, then, of being able to continue with that number and that license.’

-And now you have the license to return or not?

-No, I have the one I always had.

-Dog.

-But they won't let me. All you have to do there is administrative work. It's all there. You don't have to create anything, just hit "in processing." And if there's room for a remark, add a remark: however this fisherman, babababa... and explain.

-A note…

-A note.

-But they don't want to do it...

[00:05:51]

-And I tell you that because I had a lot of people under my supervision, soldiers and I had my secretaries and everything, because I didn't stay without ranks all my life, I reached my rank and I had people in charge, I told him, the regulations say this, but put that same thing, I had 4 or 5 computers there, my administrative staff, I told him: look, you are in charge of X thing, that kid, well, his military driving license expired, but he had his license and everything and he says he already has the trading, it depends on the equipment he's going to drive, add the new equipment, if it's the one he's going to have right now, which he didn't have when they gave him the license, it's not that it's no good anymore, well one fills out some spaces, one can sign, a note and they leave me a space at the end, and I sign it as if I verified it.

-Why do you think there is this rigidity, perhaps, that they don't know, what do you think is happening, why don't they let it go?

-Perhaps they think in an ignorant way, ignorant in the sense that I don't know other things that I don't know, but the clashes of authority, between federal affairs and state affairs, which also happen in the states, well sometimes they merge and sometimes there's a mismatch, like no, and then many people are caught in that middle depending on what the topic is that you're talking about, who's speaking at the time, and that happens very frequently. And it's easier, the easy way out is that they tell you: shrug your shoulders, nothing I can do, because that comes from above. And there remains that entire population that later on goes to live with the Lord, passes away, and never got to enjoy 8, 10, 12, 15 years that perhaps they could have had and contributed.

-Can you tell me a little bit about whether you've seen any changes in the marine environment, comparing what the environment was like, the seabed, everything, the fish, the density, the abundance, all of that, when you started fishing and now, while you're still fishing?

-One of the experiences that I can tell you, that always shocked me, was, in the last few years when I was fishing on my own, like this, here you don't see much but, in the southern area, when I went fishing there were some prohibitions for a fish (Blue Marlin, \*Makaira nigricans XLII\*) in particular and yet, maybe 1 mile away from where you are fishing,

[00:08:50]

A fishing boat passes by, from I don't know, from Korea, from Africa, I don't know from wherever, with foreign flags, and the flags, by law, they have to have the United States flag too, but the main one is the one that identifies what country that boat is from. And they were throwing traps, at 800, 500 feet. So, sometimes I would see another fisherman from right here and they would tell me: look, look, what they prohibit us from doing, they are doing freely, fishing thousands, hundreds of tons.

-When you say 'we', do you mean commercial fishermen?

-Yes, it doesn't matter who's there, whether commercial or recreational. We're residents of the same area, and the rules of that area apply to us, to ourselves. But whoever comes from a foreign country—I'm not talking about the United States, it's not a foreign country to us, but whoever comes from Cuba, Cuba either, because of the maritime issue—but those commercial fishing boats that fish by the ton, sometimes spend three days, a full week in the same area, back and forth. When they leave, what do they leave behind? They don't have a fish selector in the traps (Blue Marlin, \*Makaira nigricans XLII\*), which ones are good and which aren't. Who supervises the tons of fish for them? When they fall into the boat, they're thrown into that conveyor so that people can skin them. Sometimes the ones that aren't interesting are thrown back into the water dead. And there, I watch a lot of documentaries, and I see that sometimes even small dolphins, babies, won't stop a production because, if no one is supervising them at the time. And it's a crime, that's a crime. But going to extremes, that happens, and in documentaries they talk about it because you see that it costs millions of dollars to film those babies.

-Have you seen him while you were fishing?

-What, them fishing? Yeah. I don't know what kind of fish they catch, but...

-And the ships are not marked, you don't know where they are from?

-Mostly, at least in the years I saw them, they were mostly from the coast of Africa, Africa is to the east of us, so maybe they stray from their route, they come, they fish outside the area and leave, and then, the local authorities don't intervene with them, because it's a 300-meter boat, I don't know what, the process is more bureaucratic, they have to find a way to get on the boat, so, many of them, the authorities themselves here say: no, those people, we can't intervene with them, things like that. But it also has to do with the impact, because it's not that they're fishing for small fish, it's that they're fishing without any control.

[00:12:02]

And then what happens? Those who pay the price are those of us who are left behind: 'You haven't let the fish grow or you're wiping out this or that species,' and they don't know that the direct impact is this illegal fishing, at the commercial level. We're at the commercial level, but at 20 pounds, 30 pounds. And if we see that it's an area where there's a particular fish (Blue Marlin, \*Makaira nigricans XLII\*), it's not allowed, then we don't fish it anymore; they don't have any kind of restriction. And I watch those documentaries, that's why, from there, it goes to a refrigerator, to be frozen, and right there they pack it and put it in boxes, they do the entire process, long range, that causes, well, a loss. My comment is in line with what you asked me, that if I've noticed in the years I've been fishing the decline of some things, in particular, fish in particular, and that has to do with it, because you look and you don't see anything, not a boat, not a ship, nothing like that. Because they come and go at different times of the year, because they know when the fish (Blue Marlin, \*Makaira nigricans XLII\*) they're looking for is abundant. The dorado (Dolphin, \*Coryphaena hippurus\*) (dolphin) right now, the dorado (Dolphin, \*Coryphaena hippurus\*) that normally comes during these months, well, it's so abundant and they come in schools. And this is whale season, too, the whales started to come out there, you see them here, sometimes, you go out there and see them. But then... Whaling is quite controlled in the United States, there are still countries that do the same, they fish negligently, but there are already authorities working on that. But at our level, that is completely prohibited here. If I saw someone doing something to someone one day, I would call them right away and report them, but no one does that here. To me, that's outrageous.

-When did you see them last?

-What, whales?

-No, the boats.

-Ah, that was like, I'd say like 4 years ago.

-And where did you see them?

-In the southern area, near the Island of… Towards the Island of Caja de Muertos, but outside, not inside, because that's an area...

-From Federal water?

[00:14:50]

-For me, they were within Federal waters, because Federal waters are 10 miles, which are American waters, up to 10 miles in that area, it varies here, but in the southern area like 10 miles and I would say they were... Caja de Muertos is like 9, from Ponce it is 9. It depends on where in Ponce, because the island is like this, well in some places 8, others 7, others 9. But they, going by memory, would have been around there, between 10 and 8 miles, and it is a draft of 4,000, 5,000 feet. And so they created like a route, that left from Guayanilla, they were going up like this looking for, running what they call the edge where the fall is, but there comes a time when nobody does anything because nothing happens, those who have done have not seen results. At the very least, a Coast Guard helicopter could take off, from there in Ponce or from here in Aguadilla, and fly over it. So they can see there's surveillance, that they're on the lookout. Maybe it'll create some impact, or they'll get the serial number, and then they'll wait to see where they're going to make the next one, where they're going to stop next, so as not to disrupt their schedule. And if they stop anywhere, they'll be waiting for them and check the fishing there. They can create a tracking pattern; it has long-range effects, but they have the information. That's what happened with the whales. I remember the story of the whales. I've seen almost the entire story, different documentaries, and how it all started back in Japan: the oil barrels, a crime, those animals, an animal so big they're trying to extract oil barrels, and a loving animal. The culture has changed, but yes...

-Tell me a little more, if I remember, at the beginning when you started fishing as a child there in the Salinas. What did you catch, what kind of fish? (Blue Marlin, \*Makaira nigricans XLII\*)

-As a child they were sardines, (Sardines, Herrings, \*Clupeidae\*) that small sardine.

-Well, when I was already independent, around 18 years old, before going to the...

[00:17:40]

-Well, the same, the lane snapper (Lane snapper, \*Lutjanus synagris XXVII\*) (queen snapper), the sea bass, the big grouper, the small grouper, but you release one, as it was not deep, because it stays alive, you release it and it stays alive, the sawfish (zero) running and the same if it is a small sawfish, well you release it, the sawfish as soon as you put it in the water, as it only hurts its lip, well it immediately goes away.

-And now what fish do you catch?

-Right now I had the boat broken for a long time, now when I go out, the same, I go with my son, when he doesn't have work, when he's not working, well I go with him, I go with him and he catches silk snapper, queen snapper, it's the most common and most commercial fishing and there's a closed season for them too, but the depths are quite marked, 800 feet, 400, 600.

-Can you notice an abundance? Do you think that fish is abundant?

-It depends on where you are.

-But overall, if you compare it to when you started…

-Any fishery you compare to the past was more abundant, regardless of species.

When do you think abundance changed? Not that it ended, but that it changed, more or less, 10 or 15 years ago. What did you notice?

-I didn't pay attention in that sense.

-Okay. Which fishing town do you think you belong to right now?

[00:20:01]

-Well, I've been to Salinas, Ponce, and Cabo Rojo. Right now, Cabo Rojo.

-And do you think that the economic activity of the fishermen in Cabo Rojo is an important activity for Cabo Rojo?

-Well, yes, because it's the one that supplies raw materials to the restaurants in the tourist area, and it's fresh food, which is what people come looking for, fresh fish, not the kind that comes through supermarkets, frozen, from the coasts of... I don't know where.

-Is fresh fish important to Puerto Ricans?

-Sure, well, for everyone who eats it, it's important because it's more nutritious, the cold burns the meat, the food, food that is fresher is like when you there in Florida make a home garden in your house and you have the plant with peppers, a plant with sweet peppers, a plant with tomatoes and that day you stand at the window of your house and look at the garden, and you say: I'm going to make this food with food from the yard, it tastes better.

-Of course.

-And that happens with fresh fish (Blue Marlin, \*Makaira nigricans XLII\*), obviously, it arrives better.

Do you think fishing in Cabo Rojo has a future?

-The key here is aid. Aid, if the necessary aid arrives…

-Help from whom?

-Help is needed, look at these docks, they made them, even my son worked on it, fixing these docks, with the pieces of wood that were left behind after the hurricane, that's why it has a blue piece, a red one, a green one, because it was made with debris, the cement underpinned the remains and the rest was broken into pieces, firewood as we say in the countryside, otherwise no help, I contributed from my own income, from my retirement check and bought wood and nails and zinc sheets, we went to look for where some fell.

-So, can you tell me a little more about that? After Hurricane Maria, that was completely destroyed?

-This was completely without a dock.

-How many fishermen are fishing here?

-Here, there are about 20 of us.

-All commercials?

-Yes, yes, some have had to go to work as bricklayers, others as carpenters and fishermen due to the need for income...

[00:23:00]

-So, do you always do this or did you do it now, after the hurricane, like having another job?

-Since they don't have the means, they have to go out and look for work on the street. Those who know carpentry, well, but those who don't know anything about it, who've always fished, find it more difficult.

-Can you tell me a little more about that? After Hurricane Maria, this place was devastated, so the fishermen couldn't go out fishing for a while.

-A good time. There were boats that were destroyed, you can't see them anymore, but they were buried in the mangroves, broken. You still go out there among the islets and there are sunken boats.

-Still sunk, since Maria?

-And [unintelligible] at the island level as well, the same thing happened in many places.

-How many fishermen returned to fishing after Maria, here?

-Months later, like 8.

-There were 20, and now there are like 8?

-No, there are still 20 with license plates, but we're catching about 15 or 14 of them. Some of them have died.

-Some have died?

-Yes, by age.

-Ah, of age.

-And others who haven't died, but aren't physically fit to fish, and others who don't have a license... As it should be, I should officially have my license and go with my grandson, and when he finishes school: well, come on, let's go, let him learn, so that the culture is maintained, and so on, but they're not motivated because, one says if you get down there, out there and you say: and your license, then, to avoid situations, sometimes. There are very shy people, who to avoid situations, well, they don't even go out. So, it's necessary that the new laws that are signed that are punitive, for the fisherman that make life more complicated, more difficult, they give a lot of emphasis and a lot of publication,

[00:25:37]

But the ones that are about guiding you, helping you and saying: ‘there’s a program for this,’ ‘we’re going to give you the exams, we’re going to give you the classes and we’re going to qualify you, and on top of that we’re going to give you, we have 10 million dollars, to give a motor to everyone who manages to reach the goal of getting the permit, having their license, and then they’ll have a new motor so they can go out fishing again.’ Look, that sounds nice, but no. It’s like when you’re little and your dad has a leash in his hand as soon as you walk through the door, well, you: no, no, you don’t even move, an example, right?

-Are there young people who don't want to get into fishing because they think it's too difficult, the rules are too harsh?

-Yes, because after all, anyone who goes fishing normally comes in with a certain amount of concern; the sea is a challenge. I always compare the sea to the desert, I don't know why, I compare it the same way, because I've been in both places. I arrived, I entered the desert with people who trusted me, I gave them instructions and I had the coordinates of the mission, of what we were going to find, what we might find, that this, maybe we would see it, all that, and they trusted me, and their parents and their grandparents trusted that they were with someone who knew what he was going to do, that [unintelligible] in the desert. I had my GPS, I had everything, I had the marks I could get on land, which were very few and I had them, the coordinates. What's going on? It's the same at sea. At sea, I managed to orient myself there in the Ponce area, in Salinas de las Antenas, the tip of the mountains. When it wasn't cloudy, when the antennas could be seen, I oriented myself, and I had my GPS, but I kept turning off [unintelligible] the terrestrial orientation, in case the GPS got damaged. That's a soldier with caution. I didn't put, as we say here, I don't know if they'd say it back in Florida, I didn't put all my eggs in one basket. If I dropped it, everything would break, I'd split them.

[00:28:01]

-Do you have a story from the sea, something that happened to you, something that sticks in your memory?

-Well yes, but not tragic.

-Something that left you with a great lesson?

"One day I was in a boat like this, a little bigger than this one, with my son, and the engine died. The wind changed direction and was pushing us toward land, but not where we came from, farther away. But the oars, since the boat was quite large, were tough, and the wind, so we could return from where we came from. And I told my son, well, the hood, like this, bigger than that. I said, 'Let's do something,' I had already come back from the trip. 'Let's just release the hood on one side, so the wind fills it and pushes us in the same direction the wind is going, but with the oars we'll steer it and reach the shore, no matter where we come from.' We left Salinas, almost Guayama, and arrived almost at Santa Isabel, about 15 miles further downstream, but on land. And that was a powerful moment, because there weren't many people in the water, no one would have noticed, and when I was with my son, who was still a young boy, it worried me. That was something for me... Aside from that, I've always been in control of my emotions. Nothing tragic, really.

-Well, I'm going to stop, because Jannette already told me.