Today is October 9, 2024.

Interviewee, Do you fish?

Yes, I fish.

What kind of fishing do you do?

I fish from the shore.

You fish from the shore.

It's the most convenient option for me because I don't have a boat as such. My partner has a rowboat, but we fish from shore. But if I'm invited to join a boat, I'll fish from wherever I can.

And when you fish from the shore, do you stand at the shore and fish with a rod?

With reel.

With reel.

That's how I was taught.

And is fishing strong?

And.

And what do you usually go fishing for?

I fish for whatever sticks to me that I can catch, that I can catch, but generally they're the brown ones, the mango snappers, which they call the brown mangrove snappers, right? That's what they call them, a variety of snapper.

I know, because I know for a fact, because that's how it was when I met you, that you are a chef.

Yeah.

What do you use that fishing you do when you go fishing from the shore?

My volume is small, and what I catch I use to prepare my food, sushi, in general I use sushi.

What kind of meals do you usually prepare? Do you stick to sushi only, or do you have a more extensive menu?

No, I've also served my own catch in a Creole dish, like whole fried fish, we've made tostones stuffed with fish, and fish cakes. It's a way for us to eliminate the cost of having to buy fish from someone else. The woman chooses that part. But as a chef, you have the full circle: from catching it, processing it, storing it, turning it into sushi, and selling it.

Do you serve sushi raw or cook it?

Raw. Yes. Whatever the customer wants, it doesn't hurt. I take out the fillets, make broth; with the broth, I make regular fish stock or miso. Then, with the fillets, I make sushi, I make ceviche, a lot of ceviche. My dinners have been with fish we catch ourselves. I try to stick with local products, and if I can't catch it, I buy it from the fishermen who are here.

[00:03:13]

Do you shop in the fishing village or from independent retailers?

Yes, the fishing village, the independents. Tomasito, who before the fishing village, is now here, Tomasito was the link between the fishermen and the people who want to buy fresh fish.

Do you have any particular recipe that defines you as a chef, that you say-?

Sushi.

Sushi.

I've been making sushi here in Culebra for over 25 years.

And who usually buys your sushi?

It's been a slow process of converting people to sushi, but I can say that after 25 years, I have a local following of more than 400 people. And from the local islands, who come every year during their season, they're always asking me for sushi. I think I've taught the locals to appreciate fresh fish in a different way, and those who tell me, "I don't like sushi," those are the ones I say OK, and within a month they're already eating sushi.

How do you get them to really fall in love with what you do?

I give them the product as it is. I give them the fresh product, without a lot of added flavors, fresh. If I know the restaurant really doesn't like it raw, I give it to them fried, and then little by little I give it to them a little bit more raw, until suddenly I give it to them raw and they don't even notice. Ceviche is great for converting people, those people who are very shy about raw fish, ceviche is tremendous, it's a good item, pardon my Spanglish.

Same problem, she has it too. You're going down the oriental line.

Yes, but also Creole, I can make you a little fish broth and you can sit down.

Suchi, do you use any spices to make it?

Yes, after it is- Pomito, I have used it, I have even made it out of balajú, sardine, everything.

So you get the most out of everything you catch.

To everything, oh yes.

As long as it's obviously edible. And where did you acquire the knowledge of what can be-?

I have experience studying cooking, being a chef for 25 years. I thrive on always wanting to learn different things, or I'm always watching videos of sushi chefs, and if you see the things they prepare over there in Japan, they have bread with balajú, with sardines. And I also have the legacy of my father, who was a sinner here, who arrived in '73.

[00:06:41]

Where did your dad come from?

From San Juan.

But-

Here I had a sailboat that I would leave in Fajardo, and go to Palomino, and if the weather was good, I would continue to Culebra, and I would fish while they did everything.

But he wasn't a commercial fisherman. [CROSSTALK]

No, he was a hobby fisherman, but when he arrived in Culebra, at one point he was the one who fished for sharks (Requiem sharks, \*Carcharhinidae\*), when at that time it was something more accepted than it is now, although, afterward, it was a species that was okay to catch, we were fine. But Papi learned from a Cuban who was here in Culebra, who would go out in a 10-foot dinghy and come back with a 15-foot shark in the dinghy. And Papi learned from him, and Papi always fished with a pot, Papi. Papi was a pot fisherman, and I came to fish later, Papi died, I never fished with Papi.

At what age did you start fishing?

During the pandemic, that's when—just before the pandemic, we had so much on our hands, and Pedro and I started fishing. And that's when I realized I liked it, I was doing well, I was fishing, every time I went out I was fishing.

Do you fish during the day or at night?

We've fished at any time of day. Usually during the day, because I have two little boys, but they're older now, but usually during the day.

You said your father was from San Juan, however, when you hear your last name, it's not from here.

No, because at least my last name on my father's side has been in Puerto Rico for five generations, obviously it comes from France, but my great-great-great-great-great-great-grandfather was a merchant marine.

Merchant marine.

Yes. So, he did that job, and when the Spanish-American War broke out, he used his sailboat as a vessel and defended Puerto Rico.

That's great. And what did your mom do?

I get emotional.

Calm down.

It's very close to the heart. Mami was the daughter of a couple. My grandparents immigrated with their parents from Ireland to the United States; they were first born Irish. My mom was born American, but both parents were Irish, from a Catholic family. And my grandfather was a restaurant manager, and then at one point, the head of managers at Ponderosa in Puerto Rico. My grandfather went there, and my mom, at 18—it seems like she didn't have much going on at that time—went with her dad and stayed in Puerto Rico.

[00:10:14]

In Puerto Rico, there or-?

She met dad. Yes, in San Juan. She met dad, until later through friends, and he invited her to Culebra on the sailboat. After they met and got together in Puerto Rico, on one of his trips to Culebra in '72, '73, the Kokomo Hotel was for sale, and he bought it with the only $10,000 he had. In '75, something like that, '75, around there, and he had it, I think, until about '95, around there, because he tried to sell it and then they gave it back to him, so he sold it again. And in that interim, he was a fisherman; he would dive. He was one of the first to have saltwater fish tanks. Because he turned it into a hotel, which, at that time, if I'm counting the little history that exists about Culebra, my mom and dad had the hotel. When dignitaries, important people, came, they would let them know, because on the island there were maybe 200 or 300 people living in Culebra at that time, and they knew that Drews and James[ph] prepared the fancy dinner and all that. They learned from books, themselves. And Daddy would catch it, Mommy would cook it, and they would go, and it was called The Seafarers Inn.

What, excuse me?

The Seafarers Inn, the old way of riding seafarers, because there's two ways of riding it. The Seafarers Inn. And so, nothing, and they had that for almost 20 years and then they bought the property that, unfortunately, was lost due to things like family members dying. But that property that's past the clinic, where the three little wooden houses you see from the ferry are, Dad built and designed that, that's where I grew up. And he rents it out, and that's where I opened my first restaurant, Juanita Banana, it was up there. And nothing, basically when I decided to study cooking, well, it was a dream that Dad always had, because Dad-

Are you an only child?

No, I have two older brothers, 10 and 11 years old, but almost, more or less. And nothing, well, we made that dream come true, together, and we had it. Daddy died more than 18 years ago, we've been at it, but cooking is still what I do. And fishing has added to that profession of mine, because I hadn't fished. My dad always talked about fishing, but I'd never done it, and I started doing it a little bit before the pandemic, and that's when I realized the connection.

[00:13:30]

Connection of.

From my dad.

With your dad. You feel closer to him now.

Yes, always. So, you know that we define the world of gastronomy and fishing as a man's world.

Tell the 5 foot tall like girl.

Blue-eyed. Thank you.

It's been a constant struggle, but it's never been a problem.

But why a constant fight and no- [CROSSTALK]?

No, because I'm strong and I know what I want. It's been a struggle, but I've taken on the fight. For example, entering Johnson Wales with the dream of finishing my studies here to go to Culebra to open my restaurant—that sounds like a movie to many people. But that never happened; that was my guiding light then, and it's always been my guiding light: cooking. So, I always wanted to return to Culebra to be able to combine all the things I learned about cooking, about respect. Sushi itself is something that represents respect for a lot of things involved in preparing it. That simple little thing they give you involves a lot of different lessons on how to give that to yourself. And nothing else, and I learned it in school, but when I got here, I was able to learn what the spices are, what this is, what I have available, what's in season, that's not available now, so you use what's available. And that's when you start to gain respect for what you use.

In the interviews we have done previously, many fishermen mention first-class and second-class sin.

I don't consider fish that way. Maybe my volume allows it, because when you have a small volume, you have the ability to use things that perhaps a restaurant that sees sea bream all the time won't appreciate, but I can present it in a different way, but that's what my volume allows me. But I also think that what comes with being a chef is educating people on what they can use, and that maybe something maybe you were told it's not good enough, okay, I'm easy. Thank you. It's taught me that, even a little bit, when one wants to make a difference in the world, right? I can do it by educating people on that very thing. Look, maybe they taught you that that's not top-notch fishing, but that doesn't matter, that's what you use to make this, which is spectacular. And I think it's a huge responsibility, one that falls on chefs themselves, because you educate yourself, you're educated, in this large industry, that you have to have this in a restaurant all the time, and then as you gain experience, you realize it's not like that, no, you want to have what's in season, what you're fishing, what they have on hand, what's available, not what you had to source from the other side of the world. And my experience has taught me that since I started fishing too, the work it takes to be out there under the sun, sweating, the mosquitoes, the sun, and you say, OK, how can I get 100% out of this? And I get it. I don't let anything go to waste, because you get broth, you get sushi, you get fashimi, you get, as they call them fancy names of the restaurants there in San Juan, fish wings, which is basically the bed. I love it, I can be on a boat all day without catching anything, but I love the experience, and I know that's part of it.

[00:18:54]

And your children?

I forgot my baby. My daughter is almost 16, and she's 100% 16 years old, so she's not interested in fileting fish.

And the baby?

And the kid, at one point, before having a girlfriend, was interested in fishing, but he's surfing, I think, that's how he defines himself—part of that world too, because they're in the water, they're respecting the water; he tells you, look, a bunch of pelicans there when we were surfing. There's a communication.

You mentioned earlier that you started fishing during the pandemic. How did you market your products during the pandemic, when we weren't allowed to go out and have contact with anyone?

Through my sushi.

But you did it through social media?

I was talking to the people I'm selling raw fish to, because in my market, I have people who don't like raw fish, but love sushi; and those who love sushi, but want it raw, but there, the moment I say, "I just caught this," there's no more question, it's just give it to me. Hands down.

In other words, you don't need to constantly market yourself; you already have your established clientele.

I always want to grow, but it's a matter of having to convince someone to consume the product raw. I know who to offer it to. If it's someone from Culebra who likes tempura, I'll say, look, I just picked this little brown one, and it's fresh, and forget about the nuggets. The same goes for someone who wants a little bit of sashimi, I'll say, freshly picked. And if I don't pick it, I always try to find someone else who's cooking it here. I try, I source locally, as much as I can.

And you call, when you make sushi, sashimi, ceviche, you tell your client, it's made with such fish.

Yes. I have contact with my clients because I'm a private chef. I generally don't sell sushi from home, but I have a group of, let's say, 20 people. I contact them. I say, "I'm going to have this one day," because I don't have unlimited amounts either. For example, I make a maximum of 30 rolls a day. From there, if I manage to sell all 30 rolls, great. But if I'm having a private dinner, and 75% of the private dinners are repeats, then if they're asking me for something with fresh fish, I send them photos from the moment I catch it or from the moment I buy it from Jorgito or Tomasito, and I send them the progress of the ceviche I'm going to make them.

[00:21:59]

So maybe you haven't had the opportunity, or did you talk a lot with your dad about fishing?

No, because again, I was an oops, my dad, when I came back from college I was 21 years old, Daddy was already oh god, like 50 something. I was like an only child, kind of, but I was involved in creating the restaurant and that whole process, because we built it from scratch, the restaurant is complete, it was built and everything. I wasn't there- I just wanted them to bring me the box of fish so I could process my recipe, the acknowledgment of the history I have and the connection I have, came to me later, it came to me later.

So, in all the time that you've been fishing, even though you fish from the shore, have you noticed any changes in the sea?

I've been snorkeling since I was five, six years old with daddy, Melones, I can tell you, I don't have to fish to let you know that-

Tell me what you have observed.

I'll be very honest with you, it's not something I'm proud of, but it's been over ten years since I went into the water with a mask on, and I went about six months ago with an ex- I went to boarding school, to Saint George's, in New Port Island, and the reason I offered you to that school, was that they had an onboard sailing program that they offered, you had to have good grades, whatever, so nothing, I worked for that in my senior year, I qualified, and I fell in the winter, I was done with boarding school, I was done with cold weather, so it was, like, Bahamas three months, my last three months of senior year, let's go there. And so, well, I got on that trip, and there I got like that experience of being on the boat, sailing, I had never done that, from Culebra, but I had never sailed, I had never moored like that, nothing, but well, I know the sea. And so, well, I did that program, and the captain who was my captain (Hogfish, \*Lachnolaimus maximus XXXIV\*), years later, he returned to the Virgin Islands because he was a tag turtle, he tags turtles, and he came the last year, when he was retiring and he took me out, his thing was that he wanted to catch a remora, and I'm going to go fishing, I don't come back with a species because I don't yet have the experience to say, I'm going to throw this to catch this, I'll throw this and whatever I catch, I catch. I caught the remora, I tell you, I'm lucky. I caught the remora in Culebrita, and he was there, anyway, he didn't catch any again, and we went snorkeling to Punta Soldado. And it had been more than ten years since I went into the water like that with a mask in the sea, and I almost died, everything is dead. I'm keeping my experience from when I was little, from when I used to jump in Melones, and those were fans, it was a live coral, full. And I got in there, and I swear I got out quickly, Pedro didn't understand me, Pedro, I'm reading you, Pedro was lying there, and I was like, is it me or am I exaggerating, and then I turned around, and I jumped in Tamarindo in just one day.

[00:26:11]

And what did you see?

Nothing. Turtle grass and no call home, forgive me. It's really sad, it's very sad. I noticed it, the colors even, you notice it, so I got a little furious seeing all these groups they bring from the island, charging them a lot of money, telling them they're going to see turtles and a lot of things, and it's not real. You can see the change, I see it, I don't have to go out every day to see it. Climate change is, whoever says it's not happening, it's a powerful thing. And you can see it, you can see the colors when your mind—your head—and you see.

It doesn't have to go deep.

No.

When you fish from the shore, have you noticed anything different?

He can't be in the same area for more than a week, you have to give him a break.

Because?

Because the fish, besides knowing, also run out, and you don't have to do much fishing. Besides the fact that the fish are getting smart, because that's the thing about the shore, they can see you, and they say the mango snappers are very smart, the snappers (Lutjanidae), the mango snappers, the ones you catch mostly from the shore, they say they see you, and they learn, but besides that, it's the consistency of the boats, the jet skis. That's what those of us who fish from the shore deal with. You don't have to deal with boats passing by you, or jet skis when you're fishing north, or in an area. Again, I am, I consider myself a beginner, but they consider me a fisherman, because we've been there day after day because I love it, it fascinates me.

And in terms of traditions you have here in Culebra, related to fishing, what do you do?

Well, Pedro taught himself the cast net. That's something-

Cast net fishing.

Yes, he catches the sardines. I haven't learned how to use them yet because they're quite heavy for me. He uses the five-footer, but I haven't worked with the cast net yet, but I'm the first one there when he catches the cast net, getting all the sardines out of the net, keeping them alive; we're a team as such. And I have to fight with him to get me big sardines (Sardines, Herrings, \*Clupeidae\*), to catch big sardines (Sardines, Herrings, \*Clupeidae\*) for me to fry.

[00:29:16]

And cultural traditions?

I'm creating my own, because I would have gone out with my dad, I would have had those fishing things with my dad, but a tinsmith, the things in life, in terms of those connections that one says, this is something out of my control. My nephew, the one who makes pizzas, you ask him, do you prefer to cook or fish, he goes fishing. What does he do on his days off? He makes pizza four days, and fishes three days, and nobody forced him to do that, he has that inside, because he's my dad's grandson, and that's in the blood, because Pai[ph] hates fishing. My other brother, because it seems like my dad forced him out when they were little, you know what those times were like, and my brother, to this day they come by ferry and get seasick, my middle brother. You know it was something, I saw that, and I see my nephew, who does it out of pure love, and I have no other choice to say, and when I fish with the ease that I do, if you ask Pedro, Pedro sometimes just stays there, he says, but it's that you keep fishing and I don't catch anything.

You take more than him.

Yes, sometimes, and I'm not the one who's the fisherwoman, I'm the fisherman's assistant, and then I say, that's daddy.

It's present. But then, when I told you about cultural activities, you participate. Here, for example, there's a procession of the Virgin of Carmen.

I've never been there. I wasn't here in Culebra this year; next year, we'll see. But I participated in it as a child. I think the tradition here is to keep that simple fishing alive, that shore fishing, that of talking with the local fishermen. We're always talking with them, too, learning tricks, the recipes they tell us they made in the 70s, that they made these sardine cod, all that stuff.

Do you do it?

That's all there is to it. I'm a chef, again, I'm back, mother of a 15-year-old and a 13-year-old. My life is a little complicated right now, but I have a list of things, of recipes, that I'm eyeing up for experimentation.

Forget sushi right now. Is there a family recipe, a recipe that's shaped your life, that you say, this came from my family and I want to preserve it as a tradition, and this is the best thing I've ever made?

[00:32:24]

Daddy was crazy about making the pigfish, so he used to tell me that the best thing about the pigfish was the skin, and he would take the pigfish and put it right there on the barbecue, skin and all, and that was like a natural aluminum that it had, and all that fat from the skin would melt, like a ham, and when it came, what he would do was roll up the skin, and the pigfish meat would remain, and Daddy would serve that on a tray with onion, with pepper, with a little bit of butter (Graysby, \*Epinephelus cruentatus\*) with garlic. I don't think you can make more of a snake.

What is the fish-?

And the fish broth, the fish broth I think that-

How do you do it?

Sin, what is left over, no one wants meat anymore, what is left over, everything.

But do you throw it into boiling water?

In water and that's it.

And what else do you put in it?

You don't really need anything.

Just let it boil and that's it?

Yes, if you have an onion, cool, and that's it, you strain it, and to that you add the corn flour.

Yes, polenta?

Yes, but there's a Puerto Rican name for that.

Funche.

That's exactly it. And you add a little bit of fun to that and forget about the rest. But for me, the recipe I created, I created with local fish, is sushi.

And it has a very good output apparently.

And.

If you had the opportunity to inspire more young people to follow in your footsteps, whether as a fisherman or a chef, what would you tell them?

Culebrenses?

Yes, let's think about the people here.

Those who are interested in one of those two areas, fishing or cooking. To pursue it, they have to leave Culebra to be able to—

In the case of being a chef.

Being a chef. But fishing here, I'd tell you that 75% of the kids here know what fishing is, and they've gone fishing. There's no need to teach them how to fish now.

The same people of the community.

The dad, the grandfather.

Are there many people who-?

There's a tradition here, I'm talking about Culebra; you sit at the turn, whether you fish or not, it's a— I tell him, and I said it, when I started doing it during the pandemic, I say, this is my yoga. And why did I say that? Because it was the only time of day when nothing could interrupt the moment. I always have my phone for the kids, one call, but nothing else. It was like I'm off, and I told the kids too, unless it's an emergency, don't call me. Because when you're fishing, your hands are not only full of sardines, but you're also fishing, so you have to put everything together to go, and then the moment you let go of the line, that's when they pull you in, because that's life, Murphy's Law.

[00:36:02]

Sure. So you've already told me the story of how you started during the pandemic, but there's one very important thing we need to know, and it's obviously from your perspective. Were you here during Hurricane Maria, Irma, all of these hurricanes?

I spent Hugo here. I was nine years old, and I remember Hugo. It still happens as if it were right now, I can tell you about it.

Tell me about the experience with the hurricanes and how the fishermen, and you as a chef, if you were involved in any way with the community, did something to get ahead, how it all went.

That's a big question.

With Hugo you were little.

I had new years in Hugo.

But do you remember?

I remember everything.

So tell me.

All of Hugo's. We lived up there where I explained to you, which is above the clinic. They're just a few modules, all separate, and nothing. It was just me, my mom, and my dad. So we started in one module. A window and a door collapsed. We had to move three times, but in the position where the property is, which faces right onto the port, well, when the eye hit, because the eye hit Culebra directly, or that pause of about ten minutes, we got out. It's surreal. We went back again, we got in, and that's when the wind changed direction, and that's when other doors and windows came into the units. I think hurricanes, in terms of fishing here, I think it's the quickest way to recover because as soon as the waters calm and clear, it's the first thing you can do if your boat wasn't damaged. But hurricanes change everything, depending on the hurricane, depending on the intensity.

At least in my particular case, the hurricane that marked my life was Maria, and I think that most Puerto Ricans, men and women, can tell you Maria, Hugo, it didn't affect my area, therefore, there's no way- But Maria affected the entire archipelago.

All.

How was Maria in the context of how it affected marine ecosystems, if you had the opportunity to see what I mentioned about, how did people here come together, how did they collaborate?

Yeah.

Were the fishermen active? All of that.

I think there's a recovery period before people can do any kind of work. And here on Culebra, there was a time when we—they gave us electricity from six in the evening to six in the morning so we could sleep. No one else on the island had it, and during that time, when it hit six in the morning, the lights went out, you were there for a couple of hours, but by the time it hit 12 or 1, it was hot, not the heat it gets now, but it was also boring, and there was nothing else to do but go out. So little by little, families with children, who are the ones most looking to get out of the house, arrived at Flamenco, and we realized that's what many families were doing. It got to the point where it was at one in the afternoon, there was an entire community in Flamenco, and we would stay there until five thirty, 5:45, so that when we were coming down the Flamenco hill, the electricity would come back on. And everyone was screaming. But I sought out community in the food services, because I couldn't cook either, no one could. There was no fishing, no cooking. We were assimilating, survival mode, because that's basically it: look for water, food, leave the house for a little while, go back home. And that's it. Thanks to the community we have here in Culebra, I think we were blessed during those times here.

[00:40:51]

In what sense?

Well, because the community is so small that there comes a point where no matter how bad things are, we're fine here, and it makes the day a little bit better.

You mentioned food services.

Here there was a service that was available to anyone, and as a chef, I love the food in the cafeteria and having them cook for me. On top of that, forget it, I was always there, I went for everything. They offered it for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. And at first, because it was a time to get out of the house, a hot plate, because those dishes, precooked hot, are hard to eat, you have to have a heavy stomach. Those pre-prepared meals are hard. For me, at least, I didn't take that for granted, for me it was very important. But fishing, fishing during the pandemic, was another outlet, a hobby, so I could do something, and with that, do something too. It was nothing more than a project I didn't have—

Yes, but for the hurricane, going back to the hurricane, I still have it in my head, going over it. Weren't there fishermen who said, I'm going to try to go out and see what I can catch to cook in the community?

No, I think that right there, those who knew how to fish, fished. Because there's a large community of individuals here who fish.

But they did it for their own consumption.

Yeah.

The fishing village.

I got to know that community when I started fishing.

In the pandemic.

Exactly. That's when I met the community of people like you and me who, having nothing to do, a day off, go fishing, and sit in their spots. They can really open any part of the shore, but there are some parts that are better than others. And that's when I realized there were a lot of people who know how to fish, but it's like a third or fourth thing they do with their lives.

And right now, the only person teaching you is your partner.

I learned from Pedro. I learned how to use a reel; fishing, as such, I do it my way. He doesn't tell me how to fish; he simply taught me how to cast the reel. And how to go fishing.

How many hours do you invest fishing?

When we go out, we can easily be there for half the day. We're here from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

How do you preserve fish?

On ice, in the cooler all the time. That's where the chef thing comes in, and that's it, it's done or it's done.

[00:44:01]

If I give you a map, could you show it here? Before we go to the map, are there differences between men and women in general in Culebra and in fishing?

No. In fishing? No. I think that when you come from a community like Culebra, which is a small community where, to go to work, you don't really have to dress too fancy; here, it's more like living out of the house. Here, the easiest thing you have to dress is if you work in the mayor's office, and here the dress code isn't so—I think that gender as such, male or female, isn't judged. Many of the Culebra women are strong because they also come from a strong heritage, from grandmothers, who were the ones who fished.

We could say that then you consider that the community in Vieques is-

Snake.

Sorry.

Alright.

Matriarchal or patriarchal?

Half, half, and half. Yes, there's obviously the generation where men are strong, but there are many very strong women here.

And are there many fisherwomen?

Yeah.

Do they fish for sustenance or do they fish-?

Yes, my own. Just a fisherman, hobby or self-support, yes.

So, I'm going to put a map in front of you, and I want you to mark the areas where you fish on that map.

OK.

You're going to mark them for me. Can you see them well there?

Yeah.

Or you need, I'll put a light on for you now. Do you want me to put it on for you?

Right next to it. I was looking for my cell phone, which is right there, and right here.

Show me the areas where you have good fishing in Culebra.

Yes, in the western area, because the eastern area that faces San Tomás, over there, well, generally, you have to get there by boat because the beaches there, at least around Brava and Zoni, aren't shore beaches where you can fish. If I were to go to the area there, which I've been to, Culebrita, it would have to be a really nice day to go to Culebrita, to enter Culebrita, to Tortuga beach to fish. In general, what I do is stay in the area here, which would be Punta Soldado, Melones.

[00:47:24]

You can mark it, and then if you want, you can add names later.

This, in the bay, all of this right here in the bay. In the bay, right there, what's Punta Soldado, obviously not Melones, because it's a reserve, but up to Sardina Beach, at least around there. Basically that area, yes, that's the tip of Melones, right there. More or less.

That's for going fishing.

At least I do, because I don't have a Hummer or anything four-wheel drive, I stay more or less—I've fished in Punta Soldado, I've fished in Punta de Melones where I can; all of Tampico, El Puente, more or less.

So you mentioned there's mortality, that-

In all, in Punta Soldado up to- Those who work in- can tell you that

You can name them however you want, and write down what's going on.

The ocean floor, you know, it's dying. I'd say all of this here, Punta Soldado, Tamarindo around here, all of that is—that's where most of the coral programs are. There are big coral programs here, to plant new corals, try to grow the ones that are there. But I don't know what you want me to write, but, at least here in the dark, because I haven't gone diving here.

You can make an arrow.

This is dead here, in my opinion.

Sweet.

And this one too, and here too, that sea grass is dead.

This is here.

I'll see where I fish, on the shore, the coast where I fish. You can also fish around Culebrita, but you'll need a boat.

And there is good fishing there.

They're good, but again, that's more about bigger fish. Again, as I'm learning, I come with the bait. I've caught a small fish of about three pounds, but bigger fish require a different type of bait, and I'm going little by little.

What team, the-?

The reel.

The reel, do you use any particular type of pin?

They're used, I'll go with what Pedro tells me. But we use the hook, which is good so that if it stays in the fish, it comes out. There's a hook with a kind of curve, instead of the normal one, exactly, we try to use that. You know, once we caught one—not the seagull, which looks like a seagull, but has a yellow beak, like what happens to pelicans catching sardines—I forgot the name.

[00:50:42]

Isn't that an earwig?

No, the white ones.

Some-

Chirre.

Chirre.

He once threw a hook, and you know, you throw it in the air and it falls. And in the air, the stingray caught it, and we pulled it into the boat, and that bird is huge when it hits you in the face, and we took it off, and it was a good hook, and well, that's why he doesn't use it. And the ones that are also, if it stays, it falls, it corrodes.

It doesn't hurt.

That don't hurt.

The seven didn't me-

Down here.

But look, I'm learning, and in the process of learning, I haven't learned yet. I've learned how to tie the knot properly. I put on my own bait, I do the whole process, but tying the hook itself, I'm still not 100% right. I try and try, but I'm not 100% right. But I don't mind it, like there are people who fish, and they're afraid of touching it. I'm a chef, I don't mind touching dead fish or whatever.

Interviewee, thank you for this interview. You know it's going to be used, it's going to be published.

I hope they can, a salary for my little experience.

We are more than grateful for the time you have given us.

Thank you.

From the information you have brought, it has been excellent to listen to you.

Thank you.

I am truly grateful.

Sorry for those moments of- I get these things, it's weird.

I think that-

It happens to me with politics too, and it happens to me-.