Interviewee

Twenty-four

Twenty-four years, for how many years have you been in the fishing industry?

At sea, I am nineteen years.

Wow

Commercially since I was fifteen, at my fifteen.

Can you please talk about how you started, like nineteen years ago?

I did homeschool my whole life and my grandparents live in front of the sea.

Mm-hmm.

So I spend a lot of time at sea. My grandfather had some time fishing but I don't see it as the reason to be in the sea. He just bring me stories, and he told me about the species he saw, what to eat and what do not to eat, so, yes. I had a lot of time with nature.

So your house was close, really close to the sea.

[CROSSTALK]

My grandfather's house.

Mm. Of your grandfather, and there you spend the time fishing since the beginning or just–?

At the beginning yes, it was only fishing, it was my main fever, fishing. I spend one year and then after five years, I had one year in-line fishing and then I stuck my head under the sea and never got it out. I live in the [INAUDIBLE] mountain, so to get there, I was walking until the road, but the desire was always there, it didn't see the distance as a handicap.

When you talk, excuse me, you talk about that you were up you were in-line fishing, with your hands.

[CROSSTALK]

Yes

When you talk about stuck your head under the water, you became a diver.

I started to dive,

[CROSSTALK]

OK.

Using my lungs.

With your lungs, skin-diving.

Yes

OK

Skin-diving,

Yeah skin-diving.

You did that at the beginning and what kind of fish did you catch?

I still practice it.

[CROSSTALK]

You still practice

[CROSSTALK]

What kind of fish, what?

What did you catch?

What type of species?

What type of species did you catch?

At that time, I didn't have to go too far from the shore to fish, eh, where I grow up there was a lagoon, I can't answer this question about species as, there was a lagoon in a bay, Esperanza, is a well-known Esperanza, there is a lagoon that in the same introduction that got me into the water, a few years later started the construction of a resort above the mouth of the lagoon, before that construction, came species to eat in that bay, schools of fish and manta rays, there are stories about two dolphins living there that swim with people, there was the beginning of the animal food chain, there wasn't security, there was life over there. So when they have food, the species came to you. So when you talk about species you don't think about it, [INAUDIBLE] squids, yellow tails, lobsters, whatever you can imagine from the Caribbean, so.

Sure, all kind of species that you can harvest, or mostly harvest, and did you catch all the species?, Or do you know what is called the first and the second one, eh, eh and it was for consumption.

[CROSSTALK]

You know, you know, is where the least seafood can be consumed.

OK

So for stories of past people in the shore, always in the shore, mostly on those times at the beginning of the 2000's, 2005, there's elder people living in the neighborhood from their whole live and that was their lessons, you get out and watched them fish and learn how to fish, this fish might get you poisoned and you learn to not caught them anymore, I learned from so many mistakes in life, since then I encourage to not repeat them, especially in these times when the volumes have changed, but they haven't changed because of the world climate change, the global warm up, everything is global now, but that's not it. [CROSSTALK]

In your opinion, why have they changed?

twenty years ago, the doors were open to the world, here was an Island that nobody wanted to visit and it didn't have much human progress. Progress that I can compare with Miami as an example, let's do it with lower scales with the hotel, with these things and it doesn't have rivers, have water springs that are finer than rivers, so they are more delicate than rivers, so I had fresh water, when I was little nowadays is lacking because of constructions like this in the mountains, everything that is broken end up in that vein that grabs there and there are houses in the middle, so the water is leaked and there's no reach where is supposed to reach. An example of that is when I was little, all the lagoons were of clear water, so if you go the lagoon today and people think is common to see a dark lagoon and is not that bad, the water is dirty and is bringing things that are not supposed, so when you talk about the global warming, coral bleaching and stuffs, if you check the temperature right now with a clean land, the coral might bleach but it will survive, the coral bleaching weakens the coral, adding some bacteria and dirt make it to die. Whoever survives these bacteria now. So what I am trying to say is, these time lived by this generation was hidden and didn't had development like San Thomas, Santa Cruz, Puerto Rico and many islands have, when the doors open to a piece of virgin land, all that development goes into wanting to happen on what didn't happened sixty years ago. To happen in a year or twenty years. That neighborhood over there Bravos de Boston, was the first piece of land that [INAUDIBLE] give it to rescue and right now there is not just one [INAUDIBLE] there are two and that also includes some places over here and that place Bravo de Boston was a whole place like Florida, with all those constructions what makes is a barrier,

Are you waiting?

Someone? oh no that is my mother. [CROSSTALK]

So let's finish the interview, [INAUDIBLE] excuse me.

So what I hear is about the development totally, and people building, contributing, um like, the quality of the marine environment here, declines. That's what I heard, not sure if that's true?

The development impacts directly, it is making a huge impact in our water.

Water?

Yes, the water already enters and impacts with fresh water, and that fresh water ends up in salt water, so all that salt water what I talked about Esperanza Bay, didn't affect just the bay but everything that reached the bay.

Is just, um. OK. Do you know if there is fresh water under the ground? [CROSSTALK]

Under what?

Under the ground? [CROSSTALK]

If there is fresh water remaining under the ground? [CROSSTALK]

Yes, yes if there is, but it is, [INAUDIBLE] excuse me? [CROSSTALK]

Sorry, we will pause for a second.

You want me to pause? yes, OK

Excuse us [CROSSTALK]

So I am going to continue then [CROSSTALK]

So you were saying about the constructions, affect the movement of the water in the mountain and affect the lagoon and all the fresh water available here.

Everything is connected.

Everything is connected, and also you said it affects the um the coral, how do you say it coral reef? [CROSSTALK]

Corals, there will always be water affected, mostly the bottom of the sea specifically reflects the state of your land. That's what you're getting from your land, and you can see how is your land that is coming, these curiosities have arisen since I have started to know, send the [INAUDIBLE] Since I have started to know the sea, I started to move and expand little by little in the island, we were assigned in the same middle of the island, by having the east area and west area, that was the access. More on the east than the east that it was the bombed area when I get there. [INAUDIBLE] When I get to the east, I started noticed an area that was destroyed by over sixty years of pure bombing of different countries, modern bombs used in Palestine today, that they used in, they were nuclear bombs, were bombs, there are sightings of twenty or thirty-foot bombs, so ridiculousness. Talking about destroying ecosystems, it is increasing, how come those destructions are getting bigger?, and where the civilization is gaining access, everything is dying. Put the two sides of the table, the two sides of the island in a world, in a paper, there is something not right, so that's when it comes what I was talking about, the reflection of the status of the land, it is under the sea. Talking about regulations, that somehow could help to say about specifically about aggregations and reproductions, here they do not encourage, they imposed regulations that are not of our waters, which are under study of our waters, they are not a reality of our waters, may are from Florida, or western Puerto Rico, from different places but are not from here. What happens in the north of this island is not the same as what happens in the south. Sorry I said it backwards.

Mm-hmm

In the north to the south, so follow a regulation is to break the law of the sea. Right now, today.

So can you tell me [PAUSE] can you give an example of a regulation that wat placed and actually is not part of the reality that you live here? an example so we can have a better picture.

[CROSSTALK]

The sea bream closure regulation, I don't remember what the regulation ban was, it was from April to June.

April and May

[CROSSTALK]

April and May

April, may, state waters and then April, May, and June federal waters.

Sometimes, here it runs until July, without the aggregations, between May, June, July, is played, but that depends on the moon, that changes from year to year, the best example of regulations really that I have seen, I am not, I don't see much from outside, but I focus on what we have here, and I feel if everybody focuses on their backyard, something could happen, something nice, not everything that the world is throwing at you, that is, natural crisis, that are created based on what we talked about the water destruction. The earth, a world that if you prepare the blood, and the blood does not arrive where it should, the hand dies, That's how we are living in these times. That is what the cities creates.

Tell me a little bit about what it is that you have noticed on the seabed that makes you think that the earth is sick?

To know a living seabed is to see it die little by little, but then to see it die and not just to see it die but to see it die because to see what happens and to see it enter and reach it directly where it begins, where it first begins to die is where it first touches the water that goes. This includes the lagoon I mentioned it kills first La Esperanza and it kills little by little to where the current takes it, by creating barriers, it creates bacteria in the water, and if you completely obstruct a water flow, that water does not reach clean to the water and if it remains stuck it creates bacteria and pest, all that creates bacteria, when they touch the water. There start viruses and so many things that come out and is no good at all. We were fortunate to experience a bit of clean flow that we could appreciate what, we could better appreciate the dirty flow and how it has been getting dirty as it has been moving with all the progress between constructions, between roads, the same roads are built over the water veins. We are in two times, in twenty years, we have lived two times.

The time of the beginning, when did it start?

Well the time of the beginning starts before the arrival of the navy. IT was an advanced island, an island with a train, an island that the roads were designed for water to flow. Where nature was rich so what is left over from that today is that we have the brightest bioluminescent bay in the world today, but it is also decreasing, although the number of bioluminescence is maintained if the environment continues to die, it goes from one day to one night to one morning, it was in two thousand sixteen I think, it stopped shinning overnight, the world fell into crisis, it shone again and everybody forgot about it, everybody want to bring more people in it. Now they want to bring more companies in, but then it comes to the flows again, the bay today has almost sixty percent and forty perfect of dead mangroves which they still want to blame on Maria, but Maria did destroy it, but if she is not breathing, she cannot recover.

Do you think that Maria rushed the destruction?

Maria destroyed but it has nothing to do with it. IF a living organism destroys and recovers it is sometimes better than when it is being destroyed. But if that body of water that is connected to these veins of the mountain that are getting water or is not getting water, or the minimum that arrives is dirty water, we are talking about the same, everything is, everything, the ground is a body of veins, just like our bodies. That's why these hurricanes are getting bigger and bigger, because they are trying to breathe, everything they can't breathe will make them bigger and bigger until they destroy and they can breathe again, so it is hard, because, we live in times that comes to when it is our turn, and what can be done, the people think about their individual, but, but there is something bigger than our individual in this world and there are things that individuals like us from a hundred years from have been taking down organisms that have been alive from over thousands years, so what can be done?, I don't know if you have another question [CROSSTALK]

Yes [CROSSTALK]

OK, we are listening to you [CROSSTALK] if you want to ask a question that you think any of us can answer [CROSSTALK]

No, I can ask you a question. [CROSSTALK]

Of course. [CROSSTALK]

A comment, I mean. From a, I don't recall which event it was, anyway I was told about the Nova, that they work for spaces with situations like this, situations where the regulations are not adequate so they use local wisdom or they use other things, but that wisdom, getting there is not that simple, they focus on research and I understand they can support us.

It is true, but sometimes, it's necessary to present it in front of the people and scientists in that way, the way you speak. There is power in the stories of many people who live here and are connected to nature. That's why it's important for us to share these stories and make them more visible. So, one question I wanted to ask you, you are one of the people who taught yourself to fish, I want to ask if that's still the case. Are you sort of working alone or what is your relationship with other fishermen here? is there a community, or do you participate in something like that?

Fishing has been created, has been thought to require passing a baton, a legacy of knowledge, but that isn't true. You only need your eyes and your mind, so that's why I work now at a Marine School now. I start, I have been training mentors for this, To really confirm theories, about water flows, marine cycles, to educate these new young people. This is a new wave, to get into the sea, whether you want to become a fisherman or learn something else, you first need to know it, if you only learn to extract, you will always be extracting and you will only see what you're catching, missing everything else. So my education is based on understanding your environment, knowing the life surrounding you, what you see alive, what you see dead and what you can identify as dead. This will guide your eyes and your thinking, rather than having me telling you what to think, like most educational system do. My role comes in when you're doing your art, making sure you're safe at sea without worrying about your safety, because you have been trained and know what to do if something happens at sea. Obviously, there are risk but if you are prepared, those risk turns into a matter of switching from plan A to plan B in case something happens I have to swim here or I have to swim here, everybody has the ability to know our environment and to live for it you need to know it.

But do you think there are many young people, or people in general who have learned like you did in the past? Or does what you're telling me not happen as much now, people go to school, but in the past, do you think many learned like you did?

No, in the past, past, past way back in the past

Way back

Yes, nowadays it is more common to see how these batons or what you call them? baton, batuca?

The baton [CROSSTALK]

The baton, the baton

The baton of knowledge that was acquired in those times has been passed down, passed down, and passed down, but time has changed, progress has changed, what I'm talking about, the development along our coast and in the mountains, goes against the knowledge you're getting from a past that didn't have those developments. Back then, there was richness that could be extracted without harm, because of nature's cycles occurred, if you let them occur, and flourish, then flourish and provide food for everyone. But we are living in different times, where advancements are happening fast, the walls are taller, the constructions are bigger and stronger, so every single time the destruction is bigger. If we go way, way back to when you think of the indigenous people, who used to eat turtles, now you will see it like Turtle, oh no you can't touch that, that is the same with all the species, that's the way I see it and I see it through art. I don't think all art is appropriate for current times. As my understanding to get into an art and know it today, adapt to it, requires personal thought.

Are you talking about art as in the art of fishing or fishing gear?

Mm-hmm.

OK

Here you can mention the fishing trap, before the fish by using the fishing trap and they extract it with bare hands, which wasn't too impactful, but now a person can have two hundred fishing traps and throw two hundred fishing traps. that already makes it industrial and when you have that, what we are talking about you are not letting flourish and just extract it becomes impactful, Besides people like me, who are fishing sustainably, fish less but do not have a way to sell it, since the one who fishes more in this fishing trap art, it is filled with seafood, and you stay with your seafood in your hand, and the value of the seafood is as it is, the same as it is on the floor.

I heard what you said, the times changed then and people have to do different things.

But it is not, fishing is being lost in a certain way, in terms of age, so it should, you use this situation to educate these young people.

So they can continue fishing

But not that they continue, so they know their environment and can live from it and they can fish in it, but not to pass the same baton, that you can even create your own art if you want to, but you create this because you knew the area and you know it flourishes and you want it to continue to flourish.

And who, that's for the local schools that organize it or who organize this? [CROSSTALK]

No, a marine school

A marine school here in Vieques [CROSSTALK] OK

Here in Vieques [CROSSTALK]

He, he owns a marine school.

Oh it is yours?

Interviewee It's not mine, it's from the sea.

OK understood, OK so how, how did you get the idea to do that?

I already told you, little by little [CROSSTALK]

It is all that you said, for your love to the, the sea and pass the baton as you said [CROSSTALK]

I shared how I started, how I saw it when I started, what I am seeing now, what I saw die but nobody is hurting, because nobody knows it, you can't protect something that you don't know.

What have you seen in the young people that you teach? have you seen change? [CROSSTALK]

Sparkles in their eyes, and in those sparkles I see faith that a change can happen.

When, when did you start with the school?

It has been a process of several years, I have been working not directly with it, but with visuals, since two thousand sixteen, promoting with visuals, that they know their environment, but then it is getting out of hand, that these visuals are expanding, that our land and our water are not ready to receive all the tourism that they want to bring, because there is no type of control. You can't depend, with all reason, I mean everything feels like, there are two boats of natural resources or three boats [INAUDIBLE] There are a few patrols to handle everything, I am not demanding for them to come to patrol, I am demanding that they provide us the time to train us so we can protect our home.

Starting as a citizen patrol.

Yes, many islands have those [CROSSTALK] in Mexico [CROSSTALK] there are many islands that [CROSSTALK]

And they are fishermen that are authorized, under an agency that are [INAUDIBLE] to intervene with [INAUDIBLE] what they call illegal, illegal people do the fishing.

But the world, and the world of exposure and the world of tourism, the systematic world, something that happens fast, something that is encouraged fast, something that is extracted fast. You bring a cruise ship, it is full of people, in this capitalist world, the reality is that it takes you out of focus or it takes you out of putting, it makes a slow process of training those guardians. I have managed to train completely, completely two people, this was through this last year, that I have been adapting, I started taking them fishing but I see that I can teach them to extract as a first thing, instead should be to know, so, yes I need more time. [CROSSTALK]

Takes time [CROSSTALK] But from what I hear, I want to make sure I understand is that, the school has two purposes, one is to know the sea, to work as fishermen in some way, in the way that you want them to respect the nature and two that maybe in the future, they will be like guardians of the island, in the marine area or something [CROSSTALK]

Of their coast. [CROSSTALK]

Of their coastline [INAUDIBLE] Like to officially make it a place to say here we are to protect the nature and our [CROSSTALK]

Of course, because they already, on their own without any official thing yet, that would be the goal, that we could have an official preparation that would allow us to intervene in a certain way with people who are not doing things that are impacting our

Tell me a little bit about the things that you have noticed that people who come as tourist or other people, treat nature in a way that you think is not necessarily good?

As it is not their home, it is like their playground and as it has happened to other things, there are hundreds of boats dropping their anchors daily, without knowing where or why, the anchors are electric and that drags and make a disaster, as a person, you're in the water without peace because the boats are up and down and backwards, that takes away that peace but that is where the anchorage comes again. I am going to focus on anchoring and charter, we are receiving a lot of charter from the big island daily from boats that are not small, botas that can hold fifty or sixty people that an anchor is bigger than this table, and that is a stab that our seabed is receiving, all the seabed is connected with all the seabed, the corals and the most delicate thing that is the sediments, the sediment includes what I am talking about the development of the mountain, but also directly from these anchoring events, boats that leave nothing on the island, only their anchorage and their garbage, that arrive and put on a mask and can go and break whatever they want and there is no control to tell them commercials, even boats arrive to commercially fish on our coasts and leave nothing just extract, only extract

When you say they fish, can you show me fishing on the shore like near [CROSSTALK]

Yes, a lot of people come here [CROSSTALK]

What are the places affected by tourism? and you told me charters and [CROSSTALK]

Right now [CROSSTALK]

In what areas you say the charters from Isla Grande come? [CROSSTALK]

No, is just that [CROSSTALK]

and they could damage [CROSSTALK]

Right now the whole [INAUDIBLE] that they have destroyed has been Puntarenas and here we can start with this portion, this land was from Ceiba itself, the Ceiba companies come here, they dive here, they anchor their fifty-foot boats daily, this is a graveyard right now.

and it wasn't before?

No, here it was, I remember like yesterday a ditch, which did not go in, and there were two water walls that does not exist right now.

Wow

A wall with life, of coral, the north is not so much with coral, but it is life, sponges, the coral does not necessarily fall in the sea, at the bottom, from there we jump to Esperanza again, that was when I talked about the Sunbay Hotal included.

There is the lagoon you were telling me about?

Mm-hmm

OK

The lagoon is here.

Mm-hmm

That right there is the hotel, that you can see it on the satellite and you can see where the hotel is and where the mouth is, you know you don't have to be a scientist to do that, besides that it is closed and limited where this area has become a reserve for yachting, for boat people who have their access to beaches [CROSSTALK]

Jet skis and things like that [CROSSTALK]

Private, mostly yachts. huge boats.

So you are saying this part of the island is kind of private?

It's not private, it's polluted.

Polluted

This part of the island was polluted, all this is full of bombs, all this affects our targets, currently we have the most polluted lagoon in the Caribbean, if not the, let's leave it as the most polluted lagoon in the Caribbean that is called Anones, but what hurts of all of this, that all this people lived here, we are eighty years and that is not much, that's the time of my great grandfather, I knew it until it was one hundred, mom how many he had? [INAUDIBLE] one hundred and two and he had the memory intact when he worked around here. I saw that it was an island that had a train, that went around with four power plants, it was an island that didn't need to depend on anything because it had it's cattle it had a sugar cane factory, it had a pineapple factory, even people came to work, that's why we were bombed, we were a threat to the system, so the system arrives and you can literally see it as a bulldozer, they take people out of their houses or inside their houses they gave them a couple of days to throw them all in the middle here in this area. This is the bubble that we live in today, and today the kids go to school, they finish school and they know about this bubble outside Vieques, from there they end up here or they end up in the United states, that's the education system, which is teaching us on the island [CROSSTALK]

And here, here because there isn't? [CROSSTALK]

This was the area where they stored, the military, the military stored their weapons [CROSSTALK]

The two areas are

They were military, yes. [CROSSTALK]

Military, I get it.

Currently, today the two zones are U. S. Navy territory managed by the fishing wildlife contracted to the Navy for cleanup and another company that I missed the name, By our own point of view they still detonate outdoors, we still have two or three times a week they add all the bombs and explode them outdoors, so our island has a cancer pandemic, with a percentage of cancer bigger than the entire island of Puerto Rico but the most painful thing is that twenty years ago when the doors were open, I understand that the education system enters and ends up taking out all Viaquenses who were educated, since they were little, they are already aspiring to leave the island with the American dream,

What educational system was in place before?

You can leave that up to her who lived through it.

OK

I can tell you, but she will tell you her own story. [CROSSTALK]

She grew up in that system, you grew up in this new system? [CROSSTALK]

I started and when I was in second grade, they knew the system and they pulled us out of school and we were homeschooled.

Your mom homeschooled you, and the seasons had to do with the educational change?

Excuse me?

Why, Why did you do this?

Oh yes, but you can save that question for her too, but it has a lot to do with the change [CROSSTALK] the educational system was to medicate everyone, it was to medicate all hyperactive people, so today that was the principle. I understand today, the educational system you see a higher impact that has on all these young people, that none of them stay.

Everyone wants to leave here?

Everyone wants to leave here, everyone is counting their days to leave.

So this brings me to the question, what do you think is the future of the island and the future of the fish, well, of the work of fishing as in [CROSSTALK] the fishery?

Among all the problems you can, you can drown in all the problems, all over the world, everywhere, I like to think about the solutions of all the things, we have a space that was relatively hidden by the bombing disaster that I talked before, hidden from the development that we talked about, for sixty crucial years in the Caribbean, sixty years that St. Thomas advanced, that Santa Cruz [INAUDIBLE] I can also speak about Santa Cruz Vieques, with the arrival of the Navy, they took a lot of people to Santa Cruz, to Santo Domingo, to New York, but anyway talking about the riches that we were talking about like the bay, as they are remainders of those no developments. I believe this island can be used as an example of what a clean flow means, an example for a larger space, as an example Puerto Rico, United states, wherever you want to go, everything that can be solved is somewhat easier to solve in a smaller space and we are also limited to the center of the island.

So can you give me more details, if the world would be ideal and you had the power to make that change to make Vieques as an example

With an island education.

A [CROSSTALK]

Island education.

OK, [CROSSTALK] it could start with education in school

Yes, everything. You need to start with the "Viaquense" with the one who is in his house and knows his house, because then you get back again to what we talked about guardians, to be able to teach in peace to another person who is not here, you need to feel at peace, because you know that you have the island, that they are watching over you, that there are eyes that know that if you come and do and undo, there are eyes that are watching and hurst them, so they are going to do something, they know how to communicate, the island guardian system on an Island that they wanted to protect, at this state, right now, I can freely teach someone who is not here because it can be used against us.

So, when someone wants to come to your school you have to know that they are a local person living here, is that what you are saying? I'm trying to understand.

Yes, in part is not that the person has to be a local, but in order to be able to freely educate the world, to whatever the world implies, that makes this school able to become a university that anyone who knows a cycle of nature, knows an harmonious environment, first you need to get to the guardians, first you need to get to the protection of the island. So, until this protection isn't in place, I cannot freely educate people like you.

I understand, it's more like the example you want to set at front, you have to start here first and then [CROSSTALK]

Then, I can feel free, I can't be in peace if you start educating everybody who lives on the island if they are leaving, It doesn't make sense. It should be the first to focus on how to prepare the island to receive tourism, you have to prepare the island to be able to receive tourist, For whatever you do, if we go as an example into the modern days, it is needed Airbnb's, sad. The biggest systematic example, so you can bring people and have a place to sleep, but if the idea is to bring people and to be able to share in an environment that is not their city, that is not to leave their home and get to know an environment that can offer them peace and even a change of perspective in what life is, you don't know more about life than a hundred year old [INAUDIBLE], you need to have a secure island and an island that has already had sixty years of bombing. I think is enough to be throwing more problem at it.

So, the solution.

What do you think, do you talk to people in the community about these ideas and if you talk about it what do people say?

Every person that was alive in that time, every person that was alive in the two thousand century, you can talk to them about our water bodies in our life. Without being fishermen could observe it and could appreciate it, there are all of them. I feel that if you wait for the other generation an example that did not live at that time, nothing will happen, and it will happen as the system wants, that everyone will leave because they didn't live those times mentioned, so you are not among those people who lived during those times, you talk and feel that you get to their core, that is the truth, that we were on this island, that if it wasn't like that, if you don't actually enjoy, you know there were jewels with [INAUDIBLE] you could find food everywhere and have a place with fruit trees, that you were walking and looking for fruit, that can also be better explain to you by the lady, but today we need help from the capitalist system that was introduced to us to survive in the capitalist system, to be able to make these changes, to be able to achieve a focus, because the acquisition of a piece of land is impossible for a person like me, the land acquisition prices are in the hundreds of thousands, two hundred, you know, prices that are designed to get the outsider to come in and buy their land and every piece of land that is bought on the island doesn't go back to being "Viequense" [local] each [CROSSTALK]

When did this started?

In the two thousand's

In the two thousand's itself

This is the opening to the Vieques stores.

It is like officially opened at this time [CROSSTALK]

Well already [CROSSTALK]

It was for the exit [CROSSTALK]

Here, there were episodes, she could talk to you better but she has her lived experiences intact of the bombing episodes, you know it was to be awake and to be [simulated bomb sounds] it was a war, that they lived here, who would want to come to vacations on a war island?

Of course, and when that left, tourism came and before people could buy their own house and property?

Of course

And then the prices went up so much, how come the most fishermen does not have their own property? or does it depend on age or something like that?

For most of the people were already taken out of their houses, at the beginning of this, they were thrown in a cardboard house, that inside the great-grandmother can tell you better, a community of survivors was created that the system left as stranded there on the island and created their ability [CROSSTALK]

I mean, on the day they decided this is the land of the army or the navy [CROSSTALK] they destroyed all the people's houses and put them there. [CROSSTALK]

Yes, they didn't take all the people out of the island, which was the plan, because it was advocated and fought that they had to take the people who died. History is being buried down to the children themselves how is it that on an island with so much history and so much blood, what they teach at school during class is the colonies of the United States, doesn't make any sense but it makes sense in all of its complete lack of sense.

So it is not a thing that is taught in school now, the history of, the history of colonialism is not taught.

They teach you what they want you to know, yes, but there we work on an education and they are from our eyes, again, we go back to the status of the seabed, it not only reflects the seabed, it also reflects the history, plus we have those bombs, all that residue of this war, but the boys don't know their land, they won't appreciate it and if they don't appreciate it, they won't protect it. Everything is as simple as that, all the people who fought to get the navy out, they knew their land, they knew what was beyond the box that is locked up so, yes we need help, we don't need more troubles.

Yeah, I hear you, well thank you very much for telling me about all of this, let me see if there are any questions that I still have, well I don't know if you want to tell me. What I would like to learn from you is about the experience during the hurricane, the immediate experience like what you did immediately after the hurricane, if you had to stop doing your business, education, things like that, and for how long?

I am going to leave that question to my mother as well.

But you experienced this, didn't you? [CROSSTALK]

No [CROSSTALK]

No [CROSSTALK]

No, I had another experience from another point of view from Los Angeles. [CROSSTALK]

Well, tell me about that, in Los Angeles?

Yes, I left [CROSSTALK]

You were there? [CROSSTALK]

I also moved away to this college, oh well.

OK tell me about that, what did you study?

I was working to become a merchant marine, to study marine transportation, that was what the system forced me to dream of going to how the parents, they worked their whole lives for our sake, so that we have a roof over our heads, so they had to get pushed into these economic hikes, again they came in the two thousands, the dream was to be able to retire my parents, but as I leave my house they start to appreciate and see the different thing inside oof the system as such and I see how it works from inside, you know how the people who work on it end up, like that's happiness, where is it? I only saw slavery and that's not who I am, that's not, I don't have to work the dream of someone who is not even present to see it because I feel that all work that is out there, the vast majority is not the dream of that individual but the dream created by another individual who is guiding that individual that wants to dream.

How many years did you study in Los Angeles?

three years.

Three years later did you decide to return?

Maria helped me.

Maria helped you, tell me a little bit about that?

I didn't know anything about my parents for I don't know how many months and I didn't know anything about my house, how the backyard was, how the seabed was, I didn't know anything and I realized that it was the moment that I became aware that I was already showing signs that this was not the case, I studied a world in which everything has a purpose, in nature, in the sea, everything has a purpose to be to maintain a life to sustain, the little fish is alive to feed a bigger little fish and everything is like that all the way around. Everything has a purpose to be to stay up, which makes you wonder what one's purpose is in this world and it definitively wasn't there, and as close as I am to my purpose, I can't find the purpose yet of being human, but I was able to find the purpose of my life in these times and that is to avoid what all our neighbor islands are going through and have gone through all that gentrification that Hawaii is going through, all that we are going through right now, but I feel like we still have time to be able to resist. So that's where the help comes in from whoever basically. We would make a non-profit organization to be able to go into this world and do it right with a beautiful board we have. as I don't know if you know Michelle Sharer [CROSSTALK]

Tell me? [CROSSTALK]

Micaela, Michelle Sharer?

Doctor Sharer

No

She studied the sound of the sea, a very brilliant woman. [CROSSTALK]

A Marie biologist [INAUDIBLE]

Yes a UPRT professor of Marine Biology

OK the University of Puerto Rico [CROSSTALK]

Yes, we are being supported by an insurance for the school to operate, a land trust whose purpose is to maintain the lands that are, that are not private lands, that are lands that belong to Puerto Rico that are from Puerto Rico, that belong to Culebra are from Culebra, that are accessible to the people, they are support us with insurance. The trust right here in Vieques that supports us as a fiscal agent and can be at the end of the day, what I want to say is that from possible ideas of a crazy person there are still many endorsements of help and support in different parts, because it is a crazy person with a heart and I believe that we all have a heart and we can have it but it takes a big heart to know yours.

That is, it might sound very easy here, because the area is really nice, but I want to ask you more if you don't mind, what do you think you talked to me a lot about the fact that the island needs help, the people here need help to protect their island, what do you think would be one thing that would be the most impactful in helping?

To support the community, things that the community trusts and that can move the community, really everything that I am talking about and the school I am talking about are not spurs that I have, spur like a defense, because they have not created it, they arrived in the same two thousand, there was a certain innocence in the people, innocence that obviously has been turning into defense, so it has created a lot of distrust in what comes from the outside, not where it comes from, it is with the people intentions that are coming from, so my only remaining faith that is left with humanity and the community is with actually with, let say nice projects that are really working from the heart and not with words, I do not speak with words, I speak through visuals, just as I educate, I educate with your eyes, with your mind, not with mine, so really if I have the support, I feel that it may sound a little crazy, but I am calling it a school but I see this as a future university that can provide to people here and that you can serve them in peace, because you have a reserve, you have your space, that you are not studying something that you are watching die, if you see something that is dying and there are many of us that are watching it and why it is dying, we can make a change. So, I do not want to say that you should bet on me, but I would say that you should be on nature, because this movement and all this thinking, it is not a thought that, I am just a translator of organisms that do not speak.

OK, well thank you very much for everything you told me and for the time and your thoughts, I appreciate it very much, is there anything else you want to tell me? something you want people to hear?

I would like every human being focus on what is in front of them, the life in front of them, it is difficult to see life in the city so I urge all the people who are in the city to get away from the city, not to live but to appreciate other spaces, spaces that were born in this world, the city wasn't born in this world.

OK, thank you very much, I am going to stop now.