Interviewee

Never in my life- I later put another fish trap there, now that I’m older, and never- You just catch one or two. Incredible. During that time we would cover the nets with mangrove. With mangrove. Galvanized wire -

It was sturdier.

-and mangrove. We would cut Laguncularia racemosa. During that time we could cut it. It was banned later.

Did your father and grandfather use this type of fish trap as well?

During that time, that type of wire was all we had. Now that things have been modernized, it comes in vinyl covered steel. You don’t even have to cover it in wood or anything. You just make the box, and you put the buoys, rope, rebar and a block and you throw it in. You don‘t have to have nails and wood like we used to before.

Can you tell me about- This is a different question, but how- If you work with other fishermen- How is the fishermen community? Do you sometimes work together? Or is everyone on their own?

We used to work together when we had a fishermen association. All the fishermen would make a group and help each other. They would help each other out. We’d cut the rods. We’d make them between all of us. Now, today, everyone pulls for themselves. Everyone wants to be independent so they don’t have to depend on anyone. Each one- Like me, I have my two sons. Another person has his son or a friend that goes fishing with him. Now everyone is independent.

What happened with the association?

It was destroyed. The members- When we had the association there was a lot of competition for buyers. They would come and the ones who were members- Like I mentioned before, during Easter week, when we had an abundance of mutton snapper and yellowtail snapper, the fishermen members of the association would go fishing. The fishmongers from Puerto Rico, from the area of Fajardo, would come wait for the fishermen. In fact, they would spend the night in La Esperanza waiting for the fishermen. If the association, let’s suppose, would pay $1.50 for each fish, the fishmongers would come and pay $2.00 for each. Then they would sell to the fishmonger and leave the association hanging. Anyone would fall apart like that. They would hoard everything and then the association didn’t have any product. There wasn’t anything to sustain it. They fell apart. There are no associations left here. None. Everyone is on their own.

When did that happen?

Years ago.

Many years?

Years. The associations had already disappeared before hurricane Hugo.

But, is that the same thing as the fishery association? Or is it different?

It’s different.

It’s different.

This is private. I explained it this morning.

For the record, the fishermen associations were a group of fishermen united under a fishing village- Not necessarily a fishing village. They could be in a building. It was a united group from the same region or area. Fisheries are- Most of the fisheries are private.

Independent.

Independent. I also want to clarify that fishmongers- He mentioned fishmongers before. It’s a person that buys fish from a lot of people.

And then resells them.

And then resells them.

Then they resell them.

I understand. Thank you. Can you tell me a little about any challenges you’ve had to face? With the community? In accessing fishing areas? Are there any barriers or challenges?

The challenge we had was when the Navy came.

The Navy?

For war. From the United States.

Tell me about that.

They restricted fishing.

Everywhere?

Their exercises were done in the south of the island. The shooting range was up here. We would go out fishing and the patrols from the base would come and make us turn around. We couldn’t go further up.

Did they tell you why?

There were areas that were restricted by the federal court.

Were those areas important for fishing during that time?

It was where it was the most productive. We could fish up to Media Luna and Playita. That space. In front of Media Luna and half a mile down Playita. That was the area they wanted us to fish in. They restricted it. The navy would send their patrols to tell us we had to leave because the ship was going to fire. Or we had to leave because the plane was going to fire. That’s how they had us. I got arrested. I was arrested because of the fight.

Tell us about that.

We went fishing and the coast guard arrested us.

That was during the time of the fight.

During the time of the fight, yes.

The fight to get the Navy out.

To get the Navy out.

The fight to get the navy out.

To get the Navy out.

What time?

We had fish traps and fishing nets in that area. In the restricted area because they restricted the area. We always- Our family depended on that. On fishing. On us. So we had to defiantly go. Knowing that we were defying the court's order and we could be arrested at any time. So it happened. To my brother and me.

What happened?

They took us to Ceiba. The coast guard arrested us. They had us tied up in a boat a whole day. We had handcuffs on our feet tied to rings on the boat. Up and down. At dusk they didn’t know what they were going to do with us. If they were going to let us go, or if they were going to turn us over to the Navy. In the end they made the decision of handing us over to the military through Caracas beach. They took us there in a raft and handed us over to the military. From there they took us to Roosevelt Roads in a landing barge. That’s where the Navy was at that time. From there the took us to the federal court. We were detained there for three days. They let us go. We got bail. After that we went to trial and because we entered a zone that was restricted by the Navy, the judge, Dominguez,- Judge Dominguez, I remember as if it were right now. -said that he had us investigated and knew we came from a family of fishermen, but that we had violated a law and he had to enforce the law. To all this, we were arrested in the water and we were taken to trial as if they had arrested us in land. On land close to Garcia Camp. They gave us 10 days of jail time. We served them. We aren't here because of drugs, or theft, or murder; we are fighting for our family's wellbeing and for this island. My father was the first one to be arrested because of the fight. That was when Romero Barcelo was governor. He was the first one, along with two other young guys. They lost everything. The day's catch was abundant, but we lost all of it. When we were arrested they lost all our property. Identifications, everything. They didn't find anything afterwards. Nothing. They didn't give us anything back.

Why do you think they did that?

To intimidate. We had to go back and do the same thing again. Get documents and everything.

Were you able to get your property back?

They have us our boat back some time later. They had even taken the boat. But our fishing effects, identifications, wallets, permits, social security, none of that showed up.

They didn't give it back?

We lost all of that. They never gave it back. We had to redo everything again. Driving license. Everything. The only thing we got back was the boat and the motors. Nothing else showed up. We've gone through it. We've gone through it, but we're still alive.

It started with your dad?

Dad was the first one. Yes. Dad was the first one. Dad and two other young guys. All three of them are dead now. My dad died and his two fishing partners died too. That was when Romero Barcelo was governor. The government got the boat back. That was during the time Codremar existed.

Codremar.

Codremar.

There were two boats, Esperanza I and Esperanza II. He fished in the big boat, 42 feet. The governor came in it. He brought it back from Ceiba. I remember as if it were right now. He gave the keys back to my dad in the La Esperanza dock. "Here's the key to your boat." Everything else, just like it happened to us, was lost. Fish, everything.

What happened after? How did you reintegrate to fishing? What did you have to do to start over?

We had to get our hands dirty. Like my dad used to say, we have get our hands dirty and move forward. We can't let ourselves be run over. We have to keep going. We can't be afraid. Up to this day.

Thank you for sharing that experience. In what year did that happen?

We were- Let me see. I'll tell you. It's been a few years.

More or less.

The navy has been gone for over 20 year. It was 24 or 25 years ago, more or less.

A long time.

Yes, it's been a long time.

The Navy left some years later.

Yes. A few years later. The Navy left when Pedro Rosello was governor. That was when the Navy was told they had to leave. Clinton was the president of the United States. President Clinton told them they had to leave Vieques. He told them that on this date they had to be out of Vieques, and that's how it was. He said if you don't want us we'll leave. [INAUDIBLE] closed and left after that too. After the Navy left Vieques, they blocked [INAUDIBLE]

Now there are no more problems with fishing in this area?

No, not like that. The court determined at that time- The would arrest a lot of people in the beaches during the time of the fight. The court of Boston determined that the beaches in Puerto Rico belonged to the people, not the Navy. That was the determination. In the [INAUDIBLE] cays they arrested a lot of people. They were in their land. The beaches belong to the people, not to the Navy. After the Navy left everything went back to normal. Now people can go enjoy the beaches. You can go in a boat to the area where they had the shooting range. Everyone can go enjoy the beaches. They are slowly opening the beached back up. Slowly. They are cleaning them and opening them for the people to enjoy. Vieques has over 100 beaches. 171 or 172 I think.

Does your family go to the beach on the weekend? When do you go?

I live besides the sea.

You don't have to go. You're already there.

I can walk there in five minutes.

[CROSSTALK]

You found me on the beach yesterday. They found us on the beach. Even if I don't go fishing, I go down to the beach every morning with the boys.

Let's talk a little about what you noticed during your career as a fishermen. Were there any changes you noticed? You already mentioned the change in abundance from the time you were younger and during your father's life. There are less now. What other things did you see? Did you see any fish that has changed more than others, for example? For example, was there any type of fish that used to be very abundant in the past, and now is not abundant anymore?

There is a variety of fish. The grouper. The grouper-

The butter hamlet?

The tiger grouper?

No. The Nassau grouper. What we also call the white grouper. The one with the spot in the back of the tail. The white grouper. And the yellowfin grouper. The yellowfin grouper is history. It's rare to see one of those fish.

Do you know how to say that- [CROSSTALK]

I have the- I was going to bring it with me. -chart with the species of grouper.

Is it this one? Look.

That is a Nassau grouper.

This is a Nassau grouper.

This one. This one.

The white grouper?

Yes. This grouper is very scarce.

They are endangered.

It's the Nassau grouper. The Nassau grouper.

The Nassau grouper.

Capturing them is not permitted. If you catch them accidentally you have to let them go.

You have to let them go.

It's recommended- There is a website called merospr.org that details where it was caught, the size, and things like that.

Because it's known that there aren't many. You did catch those often when you were younger, with your father? They were more abundant. Why do you think there aren't as many?

Overfishing.

Overfishing.

You very rarely catch it with a trap, but divers- People who fish with tanks are partly to blame. We didn't use to catch many with traps. Now the divers go down to the area where the groupers are abundant and look for them where they are. When you throw the fish trap you can catch one if they by chance swim by and get in it. That doesn't happen anymore. You can't catch them with traps. You might get one very rarely. And small. Rare and small.

They're small.

Very small. Divers have done a lot of damage.

Divers?

Divers.

Diver. Scuba divers.

Scuba divers.

Another issue is conch fishing. They have truly hit conch hard. You used to be able to free dive 10 to 12 feet in any of the places around and you could catch 15 or 20 conches. Now you won't even find the baby conches because they take the small ones too. Then they complain there is no conch. They don't let them grow.

Are there a lot of people who fish like that? Diving.

There used to be many in Vieques, but not anymore. There are very few divers. Here in the north there are like four or five that still fish diving. In the south I think there's only one left.

What type of [INAUDIBLE] are they using?

Very few- The ones that don't go have money. The marine lottery [INAUDIBLE]

To clarify, the conch is the queen conch.

The marine lottery. The ones that used to fish around here don't anymore.

That wasn't recorded. It stopped recoding.

I don't know what's happening with the phone.

It doesn't stop recording. It keeps going. Mine does that. It looks like it's not recording, but it is recording.

Right now it's asking about your key code.

Let me see.

Yes, that's because the screen locks, but it keeps recording.

[CROSSTALK] put it in the circle.

Let's see. No, it stopped.

It stopped.

Yes, the divers have made a lot of damage. In fact, let me tell you, my son's father in law fishes with traps too. There was some time when divers from Naguabo and Ceiba would come up, take his new traps, and rip them open there at the bottom to take his catch. New traps out of the rubberized wire.

From Naguabo?

They told them down there that one day they would go up to Vieques and never come back down.

They would drown them so they could fish?

No. They would reach the buoys and go down with the tanks to get the catch. Many times I went out to fish and would see them diving in the buoys of my traps.

There aren't many fishermen that come from the big island to fish in Vieques anymore?

No. There's one or two that come up from Naguabo.

From any fishery in particular?

No. The ones from Naguabo are also independent fishermen. They were causing harm. A lot of harm. They are told they were causing harm in Vieques and they would come up and never go back down.

Can you tell me if you've noticed changes in the water? In the maritime environment in general. Maybe the climate changed. Have you noticed anything? Can you make a comparison between when you started fishing and now? What can you say about that?

I've noticed something in the sea currents. Currents like we had never seen before. The currents change according to the phases of the moon. Usually during a waning moon the currents would go down here in the south. We say down, I mean from east to west. Now it's the opposite. Waning moon, waning quarter, new moon, it doesn't matter, it goes up. And it's very strong. Something incredible. I've gone out three times to look at the traps, and three times I've had to turn around because the tide is too strong.

Does that affect-

Can you identify, more or less, when it started to change?

Now we have a new moon. The phase of the moon just changed. We have a new moon. I haven't gone out today. I went out last Tuesday. I went out Tuesday. I was able to raise, between one and the other, 36 traps because the tide was too strong. One here and one there where I could see the buoys. My son told me we should leave because we weren't going to be able to raise them, so we left. One guy went out trolling today and I asked him, and he told me that, supposedly, they changed. They are down. But, one day it may be down and the next day is up, like we say. The tides are very weird here in the south.

Why do you think that's happening?

I think it's climate change. Climate change. People don't want to believe in that, but it's climate change.

Let me see if I understood what you said. I think what you're saying is that in the past it was very clear, when the moon was a certain way the current was a certain way. But now you never know what it's going to be.

[INAUDIBLE] When the currents were good during the waning moon we'd go out. Now it doesn't matter when you go, they're the same. The moon changes, but they stay the same. The tides don't change. Very bad. In a waning moon and a full moon they were always from east to west. Fishing was very good. The buoys were all out. Now we go, regardless if it is a waning moon, new moon, or waning quarter, and the buoys are submerged. The don't come up. The tide stays up. From west to east. A change- Something we had never seen before. At least here in the south.

To you that means that sometimes you can't get the traps up?

Yes. We can't see the buoys. They are submerged.

So you have to go back a different day.

Go back. Wait a few more days. Maybe the tide changes in the afternoon. Sometimes it changes at night, but at night we can't go raise the traps. We have to go during the day.

Do you normally go aisle the traps at night? Normally? Or in the past?

No. No. We always lift the traps during the day. We always raise them during the day.

But, what happens now?

The tide might be good at night, but at night we can't go.

I understood. Thank you.

Maybe they're bad during the day, and good during the night. The tides change. But at night we can’t- You might be able to fish with a line, but you can't lift the traps.

What other things did you have to do to adjust to these changes? For one, it's not very efficient according to what you're saying because you have to see how the water is. Sometimes you can do it and sometimes you have to go back. Is there anything else you have to do?

We have to fight. Sometimes we can go, sometimes the sea conditions are bad. Sometimes we have to take a risk. Sometimes we go out and the tides are good, but the sea conditions are bad so we have to turn around. Come back to shore.

By sea, you mean the waves?

The waves.

The waves might be bad, but the current is good.

Its good.

Or the other way around.

Or the other way around.

The current is good, but the waves are bad.

In the past, it was usually more-

Yes, things were more calm and we could do it. Lately, there have been many changes.

Many changes.

Nature has changed a lot.

What other changes have you noticed?

Through those changes the fishing issue- In fact, when the tide is going up hard, the trap doesn't fish well. It doesn't fish. It fills it up with sargassum. The tides move the sargassum that is loose in the bottom. The traps come out half full of sargassum. We have to clean them and take it out.

The sargassum phenomena, can you identify the period of time- Has a lot of sargassum reached Vieques?

Yes.

Can you identify the period of time, more or less, that it made it here? That's not something that was common.

It wasn't common. According to what I've heard, it comes from the coast of Brazil through ocean currents. That's where the sargassum that comes here is most abundant. Let me tell you, two months ago there was an abundance of sargassum. It's October now. August. There was a lot of sargassum around June and July. The sargassum patch was incredible.

Does the sargassum affect your fishing?

There are times it gets inside the trap. The one that sinks to the bottom. There is a lot that stays floating on top, but there is a lot that sinks down. Then the ocean currents put them in the trap. Them the trap doesn't fish. Nothing else goes in it.

Because everything is too fast-

You know what sargassum is, right?

Yes. Yes. What do you think this climate change means for the future of your children and your businesses? Have you thought about that?

That they are going to have to look for another way to support themselves because we are seeing that things are going from bad to worse. Shortages of fish and seafood. This is for some time. Now we have an abundance of lobster, but it's only for some time. Fish keeps diminishing. Less, and less, and less.

What advice would you give- Now that you say that, what advice would you give the young fishermen to- Not to fix it, because the problem is already here.

It's here.

The damage has been made. The damage has been made. What advice would you give young fishermen, based on your experience as a fisherman of many years, to protect or something? What advice would you give them so that the future of fishing can be-

So that fishing has a future.

So that the next generation has a future in fishing.

First of all, obey the laws, prohibitions and regulations there are. That's not being done. That's why things are the way they are. They make regulations, they close the season, and they make laws, and people don't respect them. In those islands out there- In the Bahamas, in Saint Croix, and those places around there, there is an abundance of lobster, there is an abundance of everything. Why? Because they obey and respect the laws. In Puerto Rico closed season is not- It's rare to see someone comply with the closed season. During the time of spawning, they still fish for Mutton snapper. During the time of crab spawning, they still catch them. They don't comply with the closed season. They break the laws. They don't obey.

There's also the grouper closed season.

The grouper closed season. The rock hind. They still fish for it during closed season. That's when they fish for it the most.

Why do you think fishermen do this?

Because during that time is when they're most abundant and it's when they can sell to get the most money. It's when they have the most sales. They are causing harm to the future generations that are coming up.

To elaborate a little on that, those closed seasons for each particular species, grouper, land crab, or conch, have been made because of investigations that show that during those months is when they reproduce. Therefore, they catch a lot of them because they get together to reproduce.

I understand. I understand. It's all about money.

Yes.

But- It's about money. Do you think that you have received information about climate change because of being a fisherman? Or did you learn everything you know on your own?

Because of my knowledge because of how long I've been doing it. It's also being seen in the changes in nature. Climate change.

If there was something you would like to know about climate change, what would it be? Any information that you would like to know to help plan for your business or something like that. Is there any information that you think would be useful to you?

[INAUDIBLE] Can you repeat that?

You didn't understand my question. If there was some scientific, or other, information about climate change that could help you with the future of your business-

What would you like to know? If there existed additional information on this subject, about something that you don't understand or don't know, what would you like to know about climate change? Or do you feel that you understand it and know what is happening?

Yes, I know, more or less, what is happening because of the damage that has been made to nature. Nature is reclaiming what is hers. [INAUDIBLE]

What changes would you make, or would recommend, so that climate change could improve?

In part it's the experiments scientists are doing. They are doing a lot of damage to climate change. In fact, you can see how the ozone layer is doing and all that.

To the environment.

To the environment. They're doing so many experiments. So many scientific experiments.

Do you feel like what they're doing- Let me start over. What could the government do? For example, to help fishermen that face these changes?

Well, the government would have to get more strict about the sanctions that exist, the laws, the closed seasons, and all of that. They have to be stronger.

With the surveillance.

Surveillance. They have to be a little stronger. Right now, there are watchmen here, but you never see them. Like I mentioned, during closed season, they stand out for their disrespect. Around like nothing happened. Like we like to say, no one puts the bell on the cat. There are ways to do it. They are not thinking about the future generations that are coming up.

Can you tell me a little about your experience with natural disasters, such as hurricane Maria or other hurricanes? How did they affect you? What did you do? What have been the consequences? Things like that, or any other things that have affecter your business more than anything.

After hurricane Maria, naturally, we couldn't fish. There was nothing. I lost all my fishing equipment. I had to rely on the social security pension to survive. As well as the small jobs I took here and there with people. Sometimes I took on construction jobs repairing the damaged houses. Thank God I know how to do a little bit of everything.

What did it feel like having to abandon fishing? Something you have lived off of-

You get frustrated. You would like to be doing what you like, but this was something major. We had to wait and move forward again slowly until things normalized. Another thing was that we spent over six months without electricity.

How long did it take you to get back into fishing after the hurricane? Full time.

After the hurricane? It was over six month. It was after we got electricity. One of my friends that came to Vieques, from Las Piedras, gave me three wire rolls so that I could start putting traps out again. He ordered them from Miami. Then I started over.

Your boat wasn't damaged?

No. I secured it.

Where did you secure it? How do you know where to secure it do it doesn't get damaged?

In the Lujan neighborhood, right before the entrance to the Garcia Camp, there used to be a big government building. One of those very big ones they made and then abandoned. Like the one where General was. That building was empty and the government had given it to a young guy to do something with it. We talked with him and he gave us permission. We put most of the boats in Vieques in that building to protect them. None of them suffered damage. We even stored our vehicles in there. Because it was high off the ground, an excavator machine had to fill in the entrance to the building so we could go in. Everyone put their boats there. We sheltered all of them there. Nothing happened to any of them.

So the community of fishermen met together and decided to do that.

And people who weren't fishermen, but had their own boats. They took advantage of it and sheltered- secured them in there too.

How did you learn about that? How did you hear about that opportunity? Were they talking about it in the community?

Yes, the guy who had it is my friend and we spread the word. We told people that we were going to safely store the boats in this place. In this place. They took them all there. We arranged them one next to the other and were able to put all of them inside the building. It's that building that's on the right side of the entrance to the base. When you go down to La Esperanza. That big building there. That's where we put them.

I understand.

It's like a sports complex.

No, that's the complex. It was further down from there. In the entrance of the base. It used to be a factory. Some Arabs came and planted zuchinni, pineapple, and all kinds of stuff. That building used to be Fomento's.

How was the seabed after Maria?

Destroyed. The seabed is still destroyed. What's more, there are parts of land, when you go up from [INAUDIBLE] to Media Luna, where part of the cliffs in that seashore collapsed. The waves were so strong that when they hit it many rocks fell into the water and the shore. They fell. It's like limestone soil there. Limestone. You get it wet and it's soft. Those also fell.

Can you tell me a little more about the days after the hurricane? For example, you mentioned that you had to take other jobs to be able to work. I understood that there was no electricity. What did the community doing? Can you tell me a little more about how the community developed in this situation where there was no electricity, no water, or things like that? How did it survive? What did you do?

Here the community survived with the aid the central government was bringing to Vieques. Aid that the National Guard would bring. there was no electricity, there was no work, there was nothing. Now, one thing that we never lacked was food. Food or water. We didn't have electricity, but we were never short on food because the government kept bringing it in. The National Guard would distribute food.

When were you able to start working again? After those six months?

After six months. After we got electricity back. We got it back in sections. American companies from the United States came and restored it by neighborhood. They would tell us to check when they were done in our area. We used to get our electricity, and we still do, from the submarine cable that comes here from Naguabo. That's the one that supplies electricity to us. That cable suffered damage. The ocean took the station in Punta Arenas. It tore it down. We didn't have electricity for a little over six months. I got electricity back in my house after six months.

You must have been so happy when you got it.

Yes. I remember, there was an American man who came to tell me "Sir, try to see if you have electricity".

What a joy. It's a kind of excitement [INAUDIBLE]

We used to sleep outside because it was too hot. We had the mattresses outside. Most of the people in Vieques slept like that. There was no electricity or anything. We had food and water, but we didn't have electricity. The heat was too much. Vieques looked as if it had been burned on all four corners. The vegetation- There was no vegetation. There was nothing.

There was no [INAUDIBLE]

In the distance you could see the rocks in the mountains.

Then you started fishing again after six months-

I started again after about six months.

Everything was the same as before?

Yes, until I got sick and I didn't fish for about a year. As soon as the doctor gave me the green light I started going again.

I understand. How did the pandemic affect you?

During the pandemic I was in the middle of my treatment.

For cancer?

For cancer.

You weren't working during that time?

No.

But your children we're still working?

Yes, my children were. I have four children. Three boys and one girl. They always gave me a hand. My boy [INAUDIBLE] The second one is a cop. He always gave me a hand and brought things over. We fought until- If we needed anything we'd get on the boat and head over to Naguabo. We had family that would pick us up over there, we'd go get what we needed, and then head back. If we weren't able to get something here, we'd go get it on the boat to the big island.

At the beginning you mentioned that this is generational family work. Can you tell me if you're married and, I don't know, if your wife helps with anything in the business?

No. My wife died 12 years ago.

I'm sorry.

When this happened she had already died. She died of cancer too.

Two years ago?

Twelve years ago.

What type of cancer?

Breast cancer.

I’m so sorry.

It's been 12 years since she died.

How about before that, was she in charge of anything fishing related?

Yes. Before that, my wife- My mom used to have a van in the beach where they sold fried foods, creole foods, and things like that. My wife worked with her. We'd manage with that. It would at least sustain us.

Would she use the fish you caught? Would she cook it and sell it?

No. We sold fried foods, and-

Something else.

Something else.

It was something else. I understand.

During that time we'd catch fish and give it away since we didn't have electricity.

Everyone would helped each other. Neighborly.

Yes. I would come back and give them all away to the first people I saw.

There was a need.

Exactly.

Today's youth- For example, if there are young ones whose families aren't involved in the fishing business but they would like to get into the business, what challenges do you think they'll face in coming into the business? If, for example, there is a young man who wants to be a fisherman, what does he have to do?

They have to work hard and look for people who can help them. Teach them how to continue. Help them.

Are there people who might help them be?

There have been young men who have come to my house saying that they want to learn to make traps, and I tell them to come over when I'm making the traps. Actually, the young man who was there when you got there, I taught him how to make traps. He didn't know how. In fact, I went to get wire and brought some back for him too. I brought him the materials. One afternoon I went over there and made a sample one for him. I told him how to make it. He paid attention and I think he's made 24 traps already. He asked me today when I was going to get more wire so I can bring him two more rolls. He made them and then asked me to see if they looked good. They couldn't be better. Very well done. Square. He has 24 traps already.

He had a good teacher.

Have you taught many young ones?

A few have learned with me. My son, the one who is a policeman, also fishes and knows how to make then.

One question, have there been any girls who want to learn to fish?

No. Not here.

Girls don't want to.

Not here. Women don't want to here. That I know of, there's only one who fishes here. Nanette Rosa. Her husband fishes. She's the only one who is still fishing.

Not only ones that go out fishing. Are there any the clean fish? Help selling them?

Around here? Rarely. I would say there isn't. Unless there is one in the fishery on the north. My daughter is in Jorge's fishery and she cleans fish. She is Jorge's partner. They are starting to do that now. She, at least, knows how to clean fish. Other than that, There's no one around who works fishing.

Your daughter helps in the cleaning process.

Yes. Yes. What's more, she would sometimes go with him in his boat to get conch in Saint Croix when it was closed season here.

Why do you think women aren't as involved in this business?

There used to be fisherwomen in this area, but they have died. There was one here people called Julia the Chicken. Do you remember Julia? They called her Julia the Chicken. That woman fished her whole life. She line fished and trap fished. She fished like a man. She had her own boat and everything.

Did Julia die?

Yes, the died.

Of?

I think she had a heart attack or something.

So- Do you have to take that?

This is Prieto, my brother.

Do you have to take it?

I told him you were going to call.

You can answer, we're almost done.

Hello. Yes, I'm here with them. They're going to call you later.

Give me the number.

Tell him that I'm going to call him as soon as we're done.

As soon- I'm with them now. As soon as they're done they're going to call you.

We have five minutes left.

No, here. You know, going towards Mirnellis' house. Instead of turning towards Mirnellis' house, you keep going up the hill.

We have another person coming right now.

Yes. Tell him that as soon as we're done with the interview I'm going to call him.

Yes. As soon as we're done Wilson is going to call you.

If I have to-

The only thing- One- Well, two questions. Do you think there is a future in fishing for the new generation?

If they do their part there is. But they have to do their part. They have to be interested. There are enough resources. It's not a lot, but we still have some. They can at least support themselves.

How do you see the youth today? Do they have what it takes to be fishermen?

There might be some who have the ability to be fishermen. I doubt there are some- There used to be many young fishermen here, but they have quit fishing. They want an easy life. They lost interest.

What do they do? How is their life easy?

Well, making their own fate. Taking the evil road, like we say.

What?

Taking bad steps.

[INAUDIBLE]

Thank you very much for your time and everything you've told us. It's very valuable. I've learned a lot from you. Now I'm going to ask you if you're alright with us distributing this interview-

There is no problem with me.

You know that you're- This is your postal address, right? This is where you receive your mail? Tres [INAUDIBLE], Barrio Girasoles, Calle Esperanza.

Yes, that's my address.

In a few days she's going to send your information and you're going to receive a check for $200 in the mail.

Yes, no problem.

If you don't want them, I'll take them.

It doesn't matter.