

**Interview with Ian Parente [IP]**  
**Occupation: Fisherman**  
**Port Community: Sakonnet Point, RI**  
**Interviewer: Azure Cygler**  
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**INDEX: [minutes:seconds]**  
**Gray's Four Corners, Tiverton, RI**

**Interview**

[00:00]

AC: Ok, so for the record my name is Azure Cygler and today is July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012. And what is this? Where are we?

IP: We are at Gray's Four Corners in Tiverton, Rhode Island.

AC: Ok, Gray's Four Corners in Tiverton, Rhode Island. And I'm here with Ian Parente. If you could, just for the record, say that you read and signed the release form.

IP: Yes, I did. I can confirm that I read and signed the release form.

AC: Perfect. And please just state your name and address.

IP: Ian Parente. I-a-n P-a-r-e-n-t-e. And its 305 Long Highway, in Little Compton, Rhode Island.

AC: Ok, and your home port, Ian?

IP: Sakonnet Point.

AC: And your vessel's name?

IP: The fishing vessel *Argo* and the fishing vessel *Odyssey*.

AC: Ok, so two. And are you in a sector or in the common pool?

IP: Common pool with one of mine. The other one doesn't have a groundfish permit.

AC: Ok, and how old are you if you don't mind my asking?

IP: I'm thirty years old.

AC: Thirty, the youngest person we've interviewed. This is great, you are the next generation.

IP: Yeah, yeah.

AC: And are there, just off the top of your head, any real hot topics that are circulating around Tiverton as a fishing community?

IP: Just the whole sector project really.

AC: So that is a big, big topic.

IP: Yeah, yeah.

AC: Ok.

IP: It's put our entire fleet out of the groundfishing industry, basically.

AC: Ok. Now, as a general context of who you are and how you got into fishing, have you lived here your whole life?

IP: Yeah, I've lived here my whole life. My father's been a commercial fisherman his whole life, so [I'm] second generation. Grew up doing it and bought my own business. Started that up right out of high school, basically.

AC: And it's just you? Do you have [any] brothers or sisters?

IP: I have two younger brothers who both fish, also.

AC: So the whole family?

IP: The whole family, yeah.

AC: And your father's still currently fishing?

IP: Yes.

AC: And how old is he?

IP: He's fifty-six.

AC: Ok, so he has some good years of work left in him.

IP: Yeah, he's a pretty vibrant fifty-six.

AC: Ok, now do you run one of the boats, and he runs the other, or...?

IP: I run both of them, one after the other. Once the days are done with one, I'll switch over to the other. And he takes over for me during part of the winter. He runs it...

AC: Ok.

IP: ...when I'm doing other things [or] need time off. So we kind of alternate out.

AC: Ok. Now what's your educational background?

IP: Finished high school; never went to college.

AC: Ok. So this is what you knew you wanted to do right at the get-go.

IP: Yeah, I kind of fell into it, you know, and was doing well right out of school. So, it made sense at the time. And I don't know if I'd ever go back or not. But I, for now, am doing well with it.

AC: And are you guys inshore primarily or...?

IP: No, mostly offshore for me now. Started inshore, but mostly fishing offshore right now.

AC: How many days then?

IP: Just like two day trips for the most part.

AC: Out to...?

[3:00]

IP: South of Cox's Ledge, down to the Dump in the winter, and then the continental shelf in the winter also.

AC: Ok, and that's been pretty consistent over the last year since sectors started?

IP: Yeah, now we're primarily just monkfishing.

AC: Ok.

IP: Once the sectors kicked in, it put us right out of the groundfishing. I've [still] got, you know, the permits and all that. But because of the way everything was set up, I'm not really able to do that. Between the blackback flounder cut-back, and then sectors, it didn't make any sense.

AC: Ok. So state fisheries, is that something you're involved in as well?

IP: Yeah.

AC: That's what monkfish is?

IP: No, monkfish is federal also.

AC: Is federal, ok. So did you say there are some state fisheries you...?

IP: Yeah, we go fluking, black sea bass, scup, and dogfishing.

AC: Ok. And so over the course of your fishing career, what are all the different fisheries you've done? A bit of everything?

IP: Yeah, been through quite a bit anyway. Lobster, flounders, dogfish, monkfish, codfish, winter flounder, yellowtail, and then quite a bit of groundfishing.

AC: And that's all for a couple of day trips, a trip that would last a couple days?

IP: Yeah, exactly.

AC: Wow, so this area allows you access within a couple of days?

IP: Yeah, it is kind of a unique spot where we can hop out, and get some trips in and then get back.

[04:16]

AC: And are there a lot of boats that use this home port?

IP: Little Compton, Sakonnet Point has about a dozen fulltime fishing boats. Maybe a half or a third of those have groundfish permits, none of which are in sectors or doing any groundfishing at this point.

AC: Ok, and we'll get into more of those details. That would be good. And have your, or even your brothers' or your dad's, sort of roles in fishing changed since sectors began?

IP: Yeah, dramatically.

AC: Ok, and how so?

IP: We used to do a lot of cod fishing and flounder. We'd go for, well, winter flounder. And between the Days at Sea cut back, and also monkfishing, they forced us to either use our groundfish days on top of our monkfish days, so we're not able, we burn through our ground fish days before we're done monkfishing.

AC: Ok.

IP: Yet we're not able to use any groundfish gear.

AC: So while you're out fishing for monks, you can't just coincide?

IP: While we're out monkfishing, we're allowed the fish, but we're not allowed the gear to catch it. When we're out on a monkfish Day at Sea, we have a minimum 10-inch mesh. We use 7-inch mesh primarily to groundfish with.

AC: And that's a legal stipulation?

IP: Yeah.

AC: Ok.

IP: So we have to pick either one or the other; to go groundfishing or go monkfishing.

AC: Because you can't just put two nets on the boat and then switch them at sea?

IP: Yeah, exactly.

AC: Ok. And how many crew are on the boat at once?

IP: Myself and three deckhands.

AC: Great. And how big is the boat?

[05:55]

IP: 41 by 17, Novi boat. Both of them were from Nova Scotia: the *Odyssey* and the *Argo*.

AC: Did you have them built, commissioned?

IP: I had them both built, yeah.

AC: Wow, were you right there during the process?

IP: Yeah, I moved up there for most of the first one. And I just flew in and out of Yarmouth on the second one a lot.

AC: That's a very unique experience, I would imagine.

IP: Yeah, I go up to Nova Scotia pretty much every winter and spend some time up there. They have a project up there [that's] interesting as well, because they are a couple years ahead of the system that we're heading towards now.

AC: Ok. Have they been able to help shape some of your financial planning, in terms of fisheries?

IP: Yeah, it's been good.

AC: You've had a looking glass?

IP: A look into the future as to what [could] happen. What happened in Nova Scotia is all the processors bought up the entire quota, and none of the fishermen own any [of it] anymore. And so if the fishermen want to go fishing, they go to the processor and strike a deal with them so they can go. They'll get you for 50 cents on the dollar or something. None of the fishermen own any of the quota anymore.

AC: Wow. And is that an IFQ [Individual Fishing Quota]? Or do they call that an IFQ system, or something along those lines?

IP: Yeah, I think they are ITQs [Individual Transferable Quotas], or IFQs; same idea anyway.

AC: So have you always had the three guys?

IP: Yeah, different guys who switch out here and there.

AC: So that hasn't changed since sectors started?

IP: No, it has been about the same crew size; two or three guys.

AC: And if you could tell me a little bit about your neighborhood? Do you consider it a fishing community? Is it in touch with fishing?

IP: Yes, I think [it's] a fishing community. There's the smaller community that's year-round residents, who consist of basically fishermen and farmers. And then [there's] the larger community in the summer, where you get a lot of big summer population. As you hear them driving by right now, yeah.

AC: Ok, so would say if you ran into a neighbor that you knew here, they would be fairly well-versed on what's going on in fisheries?

IP: Yeah, relatively.

AC: So they seem to be connected to that?

IP: I mean, it's hard even for me to keep up with the day to day changes of rules and regulations and policy. But they've got a pretty decent handle on it, for the most part.

AC: And is that something that helps keep you staying here as a resident, or is it not a factor?

IP: [Its] not a huge factor, but it's nice to be able to talk at a coffee shop, or something, about what you're doing for the season or whatever.

AC: And have a lot of the people you went to school with remained here and gotten into fishing?

IP: No, not a lot of them. A few close friends have, but for the most part they've left town.

AC: People just go do something different.

IP: Yeah, unless you want to fish or farm, there's not a lot of work in town, really.

AC: That's a good point.

IP: Yeah, so it's kind of [like] a retirement area, or something like that, you might say.

AC: It's a very scenic spot. I always see people biking.

IP: This is the closest stop light we have to town, to Little Compton, so this is very busy from what we're used to.

AC: And in terms of your social relationships, do you feel like a lot of your friends are fishermen; or not?

IP: Yeah, quite a few.

AC: Ok. So do they sort of make up the majority of the people you hang out with in your off time?

IP: I'd say maybe 50 percent or something like that.

AC: Ok, and are these fishermen doing the same things as you? Like groundfishing, or monkfishing, I should say?

IP: Some of them. A lot of them are lobstering.

AC: They're lobstering, ok.

IP: Yeah.

AC: And there aren't any rifts?

IP: No, not too bad. It's a small town and pretty much everyone gets along.

AC: Ok. Now are you married? And do you have children?

IP: Nope, single.

AC: Ok. So in terms of your life plans, have you felt like you've changed what you want to do since sectors started? Or has that not affected your life-long goals?

IP: That hasn't affected it as much as other things. I was engaged for awhile, and my girlfriend died in a car accident. So that's changed it more than anything, not really the fishing end of it.

AC: Oh my God, yeah. Was this recently?

IP: Yeah, about a year and a half ago.

AC: Oh, that's very recent, I'm so sorry.

IP: Yeah.

AC: So, is fisheries sort of something that you're rolling with?

IP: Yeah, exactly.

AC: [You] want to stay in it? What are you thinking?

IP: I want to stay in it for the time being [because] I'm doing really well with it. I don't know about it in the long turn. We'll see where it goes. Probably more dependent on where the fishery goes than my plans, but we'll see.

AC: Ok. And in terms of retirement and those sorts of things, is that something you think about? Are you just putting a little aside?

IP: Yeah, I'm investing in real estate in town. I just bought a home. And also a piece of property I'm building two houses on for rentals.

AC: Ok, so you're thinking ahead.

IP: [Fishing] might not last forever. And physically, I certainly can't last forever, as far as my body and everything is concerned.

AC: And your family is a support network and all that?

IP: Yeah.

AC: Are they geographically living in town?

IP: In town, yeah.

AC: In town, very nice! Makes family barbecues easy, since you don't have to travel, and [deal with] traffic. I'm sure there's frustrating parts of that, too.

IP: I was going to say, we see each other enough. Well, I work with my father quite a bit. so I see him on a day-to-day basis.

AC: And are your mother and father still together?

IP: No, they're separated. My mother has a place in Newport where she lives, but she stays at my fathers' house a couple days a week. [She] has her own room there. So it's a funny family situation I guess.

AC: That sounds great.

IP: She works in town, so rather than commute, she lives here half the week or so.

AC: Very good. Sounds like you have a good, tight unit there.

IP: Yeah.

AC: Excellent. And are you an uncle to...?

IP: No, no, my brothers are younger than me. I'm the oldest so...

AC: Ok, that will come.

IP: Maybe, I don't know yet. We'll see.

AC: So in your span in the fisheries in general, what were some of the best years in your opinion?

IP: My last couple of years have been the best. I'd say my last three years or so.

AC: So even though sectors were a couple years ago...?

IP: Yeah, [well] I've been doing better monkfishing than with groundfishing.

AC: Ok, so it was a forced switch?

IP: Yeah, the forced switch probably helped me in the long-term. [But] not emotionally. I still resent being forced out of groundfishing. You know, we've been here in town for hundreds of years. So for us to be pushed out is not the way we wanted to exit it. Nor did we want to exit it at all. But it's forced me to invest more in the monkfish fishery, and I've been doing well with that.

AC: Ok. And they're both trawling?

IP: Gillnetting.

AP: It's gillnetting.

IP: Always gillnetted, yeah.

AC: Ok, so you've always gillnetted. I should've asked that. Now, it's hard to just isolate fishing [as it affects your life]. But would you say your quality of life has improved or has changed at all since sectors started?

IP: [It's] definitely changed. It took some of the flexibility out of what we could do. If we want to do some groundfishing mixed in with the monkfishing, we no longer have that option.

AC: Ok.

IP: And it's been a big hit, emotionally, for the entire community. It's always [been] in our heritage to groundfish out of this area. And [we were] one of the first areas to do significant groundfishing down here. So to have that pulled out from under us has been kind of...

AC: Kind of a blow?

IP: Yeah, it has been a blow. It's been very disappointing, for every age range I would say, too. It's been something [that] we've done forever, so it's hard to have it taken away.

AC: What advice would you give someone starting out today?

IP: Not to get involved in groundfishing, period. I think the sectors have just completely ruined it. I mean, the groundfish fishery isn't set up now where a younger person could get into it, even if they really wanted to. You need to buy such a significant amount of quota to overcome the sector costs and all that. I think they're doing a good job in eliminating any small-scale operations.

AC: "They" meaning...?

IP: National Marine Fisheries Service. The way they've designed it all, it's great for the Wal-Mart of fishing, but [not] as far as smaller operations go.

AC: And have you seen that, certain large corporations?

IP: Yeah, it's the consolidation stuff. You know, it's incredible how much it's been consolidated over the short period of time.

AC: In your town specifically?

[15:12]

IP: Well, no. In town we just basically got pushed right out of it, because during the periods they used we weren't doing much groundfishing.

AC: Ok, what were those years?

IP: I think '99 through '09. But we were doing more monkfishing [because] our codfish stocks took a significant dive during that period. They've rebounded since, but we no longer have access to them.

I was doing a lot of flounder fishing during those years. So I have incredible flounder landings, but because of the southern New England closure it doesn't do me any good. Proportionately, I have huge flounder landings. So if they ever give it back to us, I'll have a piece of the pie. But [since] it's closed now, it doesn't matter anyway.

AC: Nothing else was considered in your history?

IP: Yeah, exactly. They base it 100% on historical landings. For awhile they tried talking about taking Days at Sea into consideration. [If they did that], we would have gotten something; because even though I wasn't going for cod, I was spending all that time floundering. So I would've gotten some credit for using my groundfish days. They [also] talked about taking baseline of vessels into consideration. But they didn't, they went 100% history-based.

AC: Is this something that they're thinking about, or that you as an industry member can push to have [changed]?

IP: No, I think once they've done it they won't go back.

AC: So next year when sectors are renewed, it's going to still be based on [the same]?

[17:10]

IP: I mean yeah. I think this is just a stepping stone to total ITQs anyway, which we didn't want. They needed a majority vote to get the ITQs, which they knew they weren't going to get. So in my opinion, they gave us something so bad, sectors, that when the vote finally does come, people will be glad to have it.

AC: Gotcha.

IP: The whole thing was illegal anyway, if they needed a vote to pass an ITQ system. And sectors are ITQ; every aspect of them is. Yet somehow they're able to slip it in under the radar without it being considered an ITQ.

AC: So do you feel like sectors were never spoken about prior to two years ago when they were instituted; it was sort of just sprung?

IP: I mean, it's in the Magnuson Act [that] we had to vote on it as an industry, and we never did. So my personal opinion is the whole thing was illegal anyway, but they've gotten away with it.

AC: Now why did you choose to join the common pool versus the sector?

IP: The expense of being in the sector outweighed the benefits; which were none, really. I mean, I could've leased quota. But by the time I pay to be in the sector and lease quota, there's no margin for profit there anyway.

AC: Ok. And most of the fishermen you know in this area have made that same decision?

IP: Everyone's common pool and no one's groundfishing at this point.

AC: Ok, so they made the same sort of decisions from a financial [standpoint].

IP: Yeah, exactly.

AC: Was there a sector for you guys to join [close by], if you had more quota or if it was more financially worthwhile?

[19:05]

IP: There was one in New Bedford that Bill McCann and his wife were on. But still, we just didn't have the [history]. We had flounder landings, but that didn't do us any good with it being closed.

AC: Ok. Now was there ever any talk to form your own? Would that have helped at all?

IP: No, I don't think that would've helped because [there wasn't] enough to go around.

AC: So collectively, you didn't get enough quota allocated?

IP: It works great for the bigger New Bedford and Gloucester groundfish boats. But it didn't really work out at all for any of the smaller boats. A friend of mine did it last year and about broke even. He even leased quota for skates and all that, but didn't see any profit out of it. So it wasn't worth it.

AC: Ok. Does the monkfish stock seem pretty stable in your eyes? Do you think this could help support you for awhile?

IP: They consider it fully rebuilt.

AC: They do?

IP: I don't think it's quite there yet. But they consider it fully rebuilt, so it's definitely doing well. Is it doing as well as they think it is? I don't think so, but it's on the right road I would say.

AC: Ok. So can you give me a little description of what a typical day looks like for you, from morning to night?

IP: Right now we're monkfishing, so we'll leave at dusk or so and steam out to the fishing grounds. We'll get there around two in the morning, start hauling, and haul for about twenty hours or so. We cut and clean the fish on the way in, and then offload. [So] it's about a thirty-six hour trip.

AC: Thirty-six, ok. And they're iced up?

IP: Yeah, iced up and in insulated containers. They get weighed when we offload and shipped out from there.

AC: Ok. And are there pros and cons of being in the common pool versus the sector? You kind of touched on them, but are there more specifics?

IP: Yeah, a pro is not having to pay for the dockside monitors.

AC: So they do have dockside monitoring requirements?

IP: Yeah, any trips for the sector boats. So not only would you have to pay for it for groundfish trips, you'd also have to pay for all your monkfish trips, too.

AC: Even though that's not related to the sectors?

IP: Not related to the sector, yeah. That was one of the things when my friend joined that became cost-prohibitive and was a nightmare, logistically speaking. But even being in the common pool is a nightmare, too. I have to do pre-trip notification when I go monkfishing, which is an enormous pain in the ass. They want forty-eight hours notice. So if we don't tell them forty-eight hours in advance, we can't go. Sometimes I don't know four-and-a-half hours in advance, with the weather changing. So giving forty-eight hours advance notice is pretty difficult to do, or next to impossible.

AC: Wow. So it's sort of an unrealistic expectation?

IP: Yeah, so we lie to them. We tell them we're going to fish every single day. And then as the weather comes up, we say, "Ah, we're calling off today, we're calling off today."

AC: So you're covered that way?

IP: I'm covered, but I spend my whole life on the phone, checking in and out. If I somehow space out [and forget to] check in forty-eight hours in advance and this weather window opens up, we're stuck at the dock and can't go.

AC: Oh really? So once those forty-eight hours have passed, there's no changing your decision?

IP: Nope.

AC: There's no emergency number you can call?

IP: If I see a great weather window twenty-four hours in advance and want to call, it doesn't make a difference. We can't go. Even if we can find an observer to come with us on the trip, they won't let us go because we didn't give that forty-eight hours notice.

AC: Really? Ok, so that's pretty bad. You're hounded.

IP: Yeah, for sure. Quite a few of the guys have given up their groundfish permits for that reason, because they're not able to use them anymore. The sector has kind of booted them out of it. That's what's disappointing, too. Even if the system were to improve, these guys have given up their groundfish permits anyway.

AC: 'Given up?' You mean selling them?

IP: No, you can't separate them, so they just turn them in. They drop off the permits and they're gone forever.

AC: So what used to be a potential big value item is now...?

IP: Yeah. I spent fifty-six grand when I bought my original groundfish permit. I spent about another fifty on my second one, so I have over a hundred thousand dollars in groundfish permits. And every week I weigh whether or not to turn them in and take a complete loss on a hundred grand, because it's such a pain in the neck having them. It does me no good at all.

AC: So you can't just put that in some sort of a bank-type thing?

IP: No, they should. It'd be nice if they did. They do a CPH [Confirmation of Permit History], where you can put your entire permit in. But you can't separate out just the groundfish part of it and put that in. If I wanted to give up my monkfish thing, which is what I make my livelihood on right now, I could put my whole permit in. But I couldn't section off just the groundfish part of it.

AC: That seems to make it very difficult for you.

IP: Yeah. Again, I can be as paranoid as I want about it, and some people are more than others. But it seems intentional to weed out as many people as they can, to keep the pool. They give you a system that works so poorly that you're glad to give it up, basically. And I think that's what they've done. They've done [this] to get the numbers down or whatever the final goal is..

AC: Ok.

IP: It's so influenced by the environmentalists now; nothing but conspiracy theories. Everybody through the industry is worried that this is just designed to fail.

AC: Now have you considered yourself active in terms of going to meetings and counsels?

IP: Yeah, for sure.

AC: And has that changed since sectors? Have you just stopped going?

IP: Oh, I've gone to a lot less, because it never seems to make any difference on the federal or the state level. We had a sector program in Rhode Island for summer flounder and it was voted down by the council. No one wanted it, but a few of the key guys got to the Director and he passed it anyway. It seems like the same thing has happened on the federal level with it.

AC: A politics situation. Now, joining that state fluke sector is not something you can do simultaneously?

IP: No, I could. And I've thought about it, but I just didn't want to take part in any of it really.

AC: Ok, so it was philosophical.

IP: I disagreed with it on a philosophical level, so decided not to. And I think I've done just as well not being in it anyway. Actually, this year's the first year they

didn't renew the plan anyway. They decided not to, [since] no one liked it that much after it was all said and done.

AC: Oh, so as far as you know it's not [renewed]?

IP: No, I think they did it for four years or something; three years maybe. And finally they decided it wasn't worth doing. We had one guy in town that was in it, and he dropped out. He also dropped his groundfish permit and just monks now.

AC: Wow.

IP: He gave sectors a fair shot, and on both points they didn't work out for him at all. So he backed out of both of them.

AC: So do you feel like your financial business planning options have been changed? It seems like you've done okay with the monkfishing option, which was really more of a default.

IP: Yeah, well it's never good to be locked into one. I'm relatively locked into monkfishing now, which is working out great for the time being; but you need to be flexible in this industry.

Historically, in Sakonnet we've always done a significant amount of lobstering, groundfishing and monkfishing. And as the stocks do better or worse, we tailor our businesses to work on one or the other. It not only works out well from a business standpoint, but [also] from an environmental standpoint. The stocks that aren't doing as well we leave alone for a little while, and shift into something that is doing well. But this takes all that flexibility right out; you have to pick one or the other. And then you also have to worry about fishing for things that you have no interest in fishing for. And profit-wise, that doesn't make sense either. But I want to fill historical landings, so in the future I have that as another option. So it changes what I'm doing, even from what makes sense from a fiscal point of view; just for the fear that we might go into ITQs for say dogfish or skates, or whatever it might be.

Monkfish and skate are next on the chopping block, it seems anyway. It seemed like that was getting relatively close to happening. I think [sectors] have opened everyone's eyes as to how much of a disaster it was. That's been about the only blessing with the sectors. I think it just took the wind out of everyone's sails, as far as doing an ITQ system with the monkfish.

AC: Ok. Now, you've said some interesting things that made me wonder how all of this has changed your perception of yourself as a fisherman; the notion of what a fisherman is or maybe used to be? Has that all changed? Have you seen that change in yourself and in others you know? I mean, it seems there's a certain something that's [been] taken away from that meaning.

IP: Yeah, the freedom of what fishing was to us when we first started.

AC: Sort of a freedom to decide?

IP: Yeah, to decide which way we wanted to fish for the year. And now we no longer have that. We are kind of locked into one thing or the other.

AC: So when you think of yourself as a fisherman now, how would you characterize yourself?

IP: It's very different than what it was historically in Little Compton, where we had more flexibility. And our whole fishery revolved around that flexibility; being able to target the things that were doing better and lay off the things that weren't.

AC: Ok. And how do you view other sectors as operating; potentially more successful, less successful? Do you just not pay any attention to them? How do you view others?

IP: As far as nation-wide, or globally?

AC: Within New England.

IP: New England. They seem to all be pretty darn close to the same, to me anyway. They're all structured slightly different, but I think the basic layout of them all seems to be pretty similar. The Cape Cod Hook sector is a little different I guess.

AC: And they were one of the first in New England, right?

IP: The first, yeah.

AC: And do you think that it's all fair?

IP: No, I don't think fairness is at all part of it. So much of it seems to be steered by the environmental groups at this point. And my opinion is that they don't want it to work anyway. They want to give us a system that doesn't work very well; it's not efficient, it's not streamlined, it's more of a headache for us than anything. That serves their ultimate goal of cutting back, or completely getting rid of, the industry.

AC: Ok. Now do you feel like you and other fishermen in the area sort of socialize about, or strategize about, being in the common pool? [Talk about] ways to

make it more advantageous to you, or do you not talk about those sorts of things?

IP: Yeah, I'm one of the few guys who have actually stuck out being in it. Most of the guys have given up at this point, because they had even less of a historical landing than I did.

AC: Ok, but is it something that other fishermen in Tiverton and Little Compton can talk about? Is there an open dialog between you guys or is it something no one wants to talk about?

IP: I mean, at this point I'd say people are out of it anyway, so they don't really want to talk about it too much. But nothing about the basic principles of the sectors has changed anyway, so conversations that we were having two years ago about it are still the same.

AC: Ok. And do you have health insurance?

IP: No, I don't.

AC: Ok; and boat insurance?

IP: Yes.

AC: Is that mandatory? Or is that optional?

IP: It's not, it's optional. But from a risk point of view, with the crew members and everything, it's too high risk not to.

AC: And the crew members deal with their own health insurance?

IP: Deal with their own health insurance, yeah.

AC: And has all that changed in the last couple years since sectors started?

IP: No, I'd say that has been about the same.

AC: So they haven't affected that end of business.

IP: No, I don't think so.

AC: Ok. So you said it's about 50-50, your network of friends that are fishermen versus non-fishermen? That's a good balance. How often would you say you interact with the fishermen? Is it on a daily basis?

IP: Yeah, I'd say pretty much on a daily basis...

AC: Daily basis? Even if you're not fishing that day?

IP: At least over the phone or something like that. Touch base and see how the other person is doing, strategize a little bit, and go from there.

AC: Has that type of communication changed, or has that always sort of been the way you guys do things?

IP: It's always been the way we've done things, in this area anyway. Some areas are more secretive, and some are more tightly knit and able to share information. I've got some good friends in New Bedford, and a few in Newport and Sakonnet; a small group of us that kind of pool information and work from there.

AC: And do you end up fishing in the same locations?

IP: No, part of the reason we do it is to not fish in the same location. [We] figure out what depths and temperature ranges people are doing well in to find similar areas, [without being] on top of each other.

AC: Ok, so there's sort of cordiality.

IP: Yeah, that's why it's worked out well, and it's why we've formed the network that we have. Its people we're comfortable sharing information with and not worrying about them setting on top of you, and getting in your spots.

AC: So how do sector and common pool fishermen view each other, in your opinion? It doesn't sound like there are any sector members here.

[34:30]

IP: Yeah. The guys that are left in the common pool are just in disgust. They're disgusted by the whole thing. I'd say most blame the Cape Cod Hook Fishermen for starting the whole mess to begin with.

AC: Ok, so would they choose to not talk to another sector? Is it that bad?

IP: Well, in some cases it probably is that bad. I mean, they don't hate them on a personal level necessarily, but what it's done to the community has been dramatic.

- AC: And so people who say, “You know what, I’m going to join this sector because this is a good, viable option for me;” for whatever reason, they see them as almost contributing to their own demise?
- IP: Yeah, and looking out for just themselves instead of [considering] the bigger picture. What most of us would like to have is small, community-based fishing operations versus three corporations owning the entire groundfish stock in New England. But it seems like [that’s] the way we’re headed. If you had to design the perfect avenue to get to a monopoly, sectors is exactly how you would do it. You’d say, “Ok, we’re going to cap everybody in at these small numbers that they’re not able to survive on. Then the only viable answer is for them to sell out to big enough groups that can stack it all into one pot and work from there.” [And that’s what] happens in New Bedford and Gloucester.
- AC: So who are these big corporations?
- IP: Carlos Raphael owns forty permits, as an example.
- AC: Ok, so we’re not talking Tyson, or something?
- IP: Well, I think it’s headed that way too. I mean, guys like Carlos aren’t going to be around forever. He’s an older guy; not particularly healthy. [But he’s a] nice, smart guy. I have a lot of respect for him. He was very outspoken about saying how sectors were not fair.  
I went to meeting after after meeting where he was saying, for lack of better words, “This is bullshit.” These were the words he was using. But financially, he couldn’t not do it. It was perfectly designed for a giant corporation like he has. So I give him a lot of credit. He was very outspoken from the beginning, and right through, about how he didn’t think it was fair, and [how it] didn’t make sense. He said, “It makes sense for me, but I’m an anomaly here. I’m a giant; I’ve got a giant corporation.”
- AC: Yeah, one in hundreds.
- IP: Yeah, basically one in the entire east coast, as far as groundfishing goes. [There’s] no one as big, or close. But exactly, it works for one in hundreds, or thousands.
- AC: And how has the shore-side infrastructure changed? Has there ever been much here in terms of fuel and ice and bait and whatever else?
- IP: The fish dealers definitely have taken a huge hit [from] it.
- AC: Do they still base here or have they moved out of town?

IP: Yeah, but the ones in Newport have shrunken up to nothing.

AC: Is that where you go?

IP: I sell in Sakonnet, but they own a building in Newport and one in Sakonnet. I do occasionally land at the Newport one, but mostly in Sakonnet. And Newport has shrunken up to almost nothing. There's basically no one landing fish there. Monkfish is all that's keeping them alive at this point, too.

AC: So what were the options in terms of landings, before sectors?

IP: Before they had a lot of groundfish boats that would come in there. And now they just all go in to New Bedford, because it's so much more consolidated.

AC: So before sectors, were there more or less of these facilities, or has it not changed?

IP: I'd say the number probably hasn't changed dramatically yet. But they're falling apart; financially, they're just holding on.

AC: So it's sort of slow degradation. I see.

IP: Yeah, and it's sort of the same as what giving up our permits is doing to us, too. It's slowly wearing away at everyone. And they're folding, because financially it makes the most sense to do something else.

AC: Ok. So is the port itself in Sakonnet?

IP: Yeah, Sakonnet Point.

AC: So Sakonnet Point is the port, ok. How many facilities are there for you to use in Sakonnet itself?

IP: There are two with buildings at Sakonnet.

AC: Is there offloading at Sakonnet?

IP: Offloading, yeah. And there are a few trucks that come up from buyers in New Bedford. It all ends up in New Bedford.

AC: And ice facilities?

IP: We get ice from Fall River, but the dealers handle that.

AC: So you could potentially get it through the Sakonnet dock?

[39:28]

IP: Yeah. I sell to Paras Condola's, so I get it through them.

AC: Ok, gotcha. Now you've sort of answered this, but based on your perceptions of sectors, which is largely non-favorable, would you recommend another fisherman join a sector? Not necessarily one close to you, but any sector that might benefit them? Or not?

[39:55]

IP: Depending on the structure. I don't think any of the ones existing now are [structured well], but the basic idea of them isn't horrible. I just think it didn't work for a few different reasons, including the way we took huge hits in our total allowable catches for some species [when] sectors were coming through. But with better monopoly clauses (they didn't put any in), I think it might not be a bad idea. I'm not completely against the theory of it, but I disagree with the way they put it into practice.

AC: So the initial allocation was...?

IP: The initial allocation is where any of these ITQ systems go into place, so it's where it makes it or breaks it. That's what decides whether it's fair or not. Between that and monopoly clauses, I think the system can work. [As long as] it's divvied up more fairly, and not just based on historical landings from a very short period of time that's hand-picked by members of the council, or whoever wanted it structured that way.

So I think the allocation process [should be] based on a combination of Days at Sea and vessel size. Days at Sea were the currency with which we bought permits before. It had nothing to do with historical landings, up until a short period of time right before sectors actually went into play. I made all my investments based on how many Days at Sea my permits had, which didn't do me any good. But if some of the plans had Days at Sea as a third contributing factor, [as well as] vessel capacity or baseline of the vessel, and landings, I think something like that could worked out.

AC: So some formula?

IP: Some formula; some breakdown of the three. I'm not saying what percentage of which, but something that [split it] more evenly. And I'm a big [supporter of] monopoly clauses.

AC: Which prevents too many boats from...?

IP: Too many boats, or one owner, from buying up too much of the resource itself. [However], historically, monopoly clauses haven't worked throughout the country and the world. No matter what you set as a monopoly clause, people find a way around it; whether they form multiple corporations or what. [Claiming], "I own this corporation, my wife owns this one, and my brother owns this one," when really it's one big thing anyway.

AC: Right.

IP: So that's one of the excuses they use for not putting in monopoly clauses; they historically don't work very well anyway. But at least the intent of it is there, if you do set up something.

AC: Right, at least have the word of the law, per say.

IP: Yeah, the intention.

AC: Are you involved in the fishing community and the wider community, in any way?

IP: Yeah, I'm pretty involved. I go to a lot of meetings.

AC: Are these boards or...?

IP: On the smaller level, I'm on some of the panels in Rhode Island for tautog, codfish, and monkfish.

AC: Ok.

IP: In Little Compton, I'm on the Sakonnet Point Fishermen's Association. I'm part of that, [as well as] the Harbor Commission for Sakonnet.

AC: Ok, so there is a fishing association.

IP: Yeah, it's pretty loose. We don't meet all that often, but we have it in place anyway.

AC: About how many members would you say?

IP: It's about a dozen of us.

AC: Ok. And those are folks from groundfishing?

IP: Yeah, all from Little Compton; some lobstermen, some groundfishermen and some monkfishermen.

AC: Ok, so it doesn't really distinguish between anything; but just fishermen in the area can join?

IP: Just fishermen in the area, yeah.

AC: Cool. Has that been around for awhile?

IP: For a long time, yeah. I'm not sure how many years exactly, but I've been a member for ten or fifteen years anyway.

AC: Now did you have to get written in through your dad?

IP: No, I was able to get in on my own.

AC: Ok. For some of these sportfishing groups, I know you have to be sponsored.

IP: Yeah, sponsored. No we're pretty open to anyone in the area, basically.

AC: Nice. And then, any other sort of town councils, not necessarily fishing interests, but...?

IP: No, just the harbor commission, which kind of oversees the entire harbor. Not necessarily the fishing aspect of it, but moorings and usage of the harbor itself.

AC: And is that all volunteer? Just in your spare time?

IP: Yeah, in my spare time, which I have plenty of. Luckily none of them meet very often, so [even though] it's hard to make them all, I do as much as I can.

AC: You have your secretary take care of it right?

IP: Yeah, right.

AC: And what do you think the future holds for you, Ian?

IP: Right now, [I'll] continue the business I have here. I'm also looking elsewhere; to start something up in South Africa. I'm looking at some commercial fishing businesses, kind of globally. I'm also looking into a few things in South America,

for more under-utilized parts of the world that have the infrastructure to handle it.

AC: Ok. So staying in fishing it sounds like, with the side housing business?

IP: Yeah, that as a kind of backup. You know, as a retirement sort of savings, [while I] try to set up some other businesses. I'm also doing some experimental stuff on the East Coast here. We're working in really deep water on a few different things.

AC: Ok, that was going to be one of my other questions; is it co-operative research, are you involved, and what are you doing?

IP: Yeah, I'm really involved in the monkfishing and the codfishing co-operative research program with SMAST [School for Marine Science and Technology].

AC: Ok, so your vessel becomes a research vessel?

IP: Yeah, both of them do.

AC: For different purposes?

IP: Yeah, mostly monkfish and cod at this point. Actually, I did some dogfish research last summer, or the summer before, for a guy out of Maryland.

AC: Does that keep it interesting for you?

IP: Yeah, I like it. I really enjoy the codfishing part. I enjoy all of it, but the codfishing in particular; I think we've seen some good data brought through. I like the DNA research they're doing on it, and the genealogy. Yeah, it's pretty neat to have a part in it.

AC: That's excellent. Very good. And just in terms of income, how do you get paid? Is it at the dealer when you land your fish?

IP: Yeah, we get paid from the dealer every Saturday for whatever we caught that week.

AC: Ok. And is that different from how a sector member would get paid, or do you know?

IP: No, I think they're relatively similar. And depending on how they're structured, I think they have to deal out maybe a percentage of it, or a flat rate, to the sector itself.

AC: So that mechanism hasn't really changed since sectors started.

IP: Not for me anyway, no.

AC: And would you say your income has changed? You don't have to give me numbers or anything; but since sectors started?

IP: Yeah, I'm doing better now with the monkfishing than I was with groundfishing.

AC: Ok. The next few questions are on well being, which is sort of a personal; this is what I did my graduate work on, fishermen's well being. Would you say your general outlook on life has changed since sectors began, or not?

IP: Yes, I would say it has been kind of an eye-opening experience as to how little control the average fisherman has over policy and all that. So it's been disappointing, from a personal standpoint, to see that we don't have much. Our input doesn't really count for anything.

AC: Even though you were one of the fishermen who went to meetings?

IP: Oh definitely, yeah.

AC: You gave your effort to be involved, [but] you didn't feel like you were getting...?

[48:44]

IP: No, it's so political I think. And the National Marine Fisheries Service is so worried about being sued by the environmental groups [that] they're going to fold on almost any topic. What's going on with sturgeon now is just crazy. The environmental groups are really dangerous at this point, I think.

AC: So when you say your life has changed, what are some concrete examples? I know that's kind of a tough thing to think about, but if there are some examples you can think of; that you've seen in yourself, or in your family?

IP: Just [being] disillusioned with the whole process really.

AC: So it's more of a mental [thing]?

IP: Yeah. My father is even more of an extreme case than that; he's just so fed up with the way everything's gone. He's seen it from the beginning to end, and he's just disgusted with how it's worked out. I think pretty much all the older guys down our way are in the same boat; some of the guys are fourth, fifth generation

fishermen, and have been groundfishing for literally hundreds of years. They're just dumbfounded that they no longer have any stake in it at all. It's just disappointing for it to not be part of our community anymore.

AC: Have you yourself, or anybody you know, experienced any sort of health issues because of these changes in the last couple years? Have you seen it in yourself, or others or your family, or your father?

IP: Yeah, I think it's definitely built on stress. My stress level has come up a lot in the last couple years, for a lot of reasons, but that's definitely part of it. I would attribute part of it to that. Spent a lot of nights awake, thinking; as the sector thing was coming through, realizing I had invested over \$100,000 in something was going to be worth zero in another year. It's a hard thing to swallow.

Again, the whole money thing aside, it's just disappointing to know that it's not going to be passed down from generation to generation anymore here. The only reason I've kept my permit is [because] I've got my fingers crossed that maybe something will change that'll give me some access to it again. But as it stands now, it's just a huge burden for me. Fifteen hundred dollars a year in costs, just to keep a VMS for having my groundfish permit.

A year before last year, I lost four monkfish Days at Sea because I ran out of my groundfish days first; and because I was required to use my groundfish days with my monkfish days, I [couldn't] use my monkfish days. So even though I wasn't doing any groundfishing that year, I had to forfeit four monkfish days because the groundfish days ran out. [That cost me] \$20,000, if I average \$5,000 a day on it. That's a \$25,000 hit for the year, just to keep my groundfishing permit that I'm not [even] using it anymore.

AC: And there's no way to temporarily suspend your use of the groundfish permit? There's no sort of built-in mechanism?

IP: Nope, no mechanism at all. You can do the entire permit, but then there goes my monkfishing and everything; the boat's just sitting at the dock at that point.

AC: That seems like something that could be pushed for in some way, because that would at least help you guys. But, who has the time?

IP: Well, not only that, but part of me thinks that they don't do it [because] they don't want us to hold onto the groundfishing [permits]; they want them turned in. They want it [how it is now]. It's become so cost-prohibitive to keep them that people forfeit them, and they're gone. It's one less in the pool.

AC: Yeah.

IP: Which bumps all the remainder shareholders' percentages up a little fraction, too. If all the guys in Sakonnet gave up their [permits], that would make everyone else's slice of the pie a little bit bigger. So the more people that get out, the bigger their pieces get.

AC: Right. Now if you could go back in time and remove sectors as a management tool, would you do that?

IP: Without a doubt.

AC: And what would you replace it with? Have you thought about that before?

IP: There were some interesting points-based systems that they were working on; where it would've been sort of a hybrid of ITQs or sectors. Again, it would be dependent on how they allocate initially. I thought it made a lot of sense. They were talking about a structure where each fisherman would be allowed so many points, and each fish stock would cost more or less points, depending on how they were doing. If the codfish stocks were doing really well, they might be only one point per pound to go catch, whereas flounder might be ten points per pound.

So you could still have the flexibility of catching what you want, and using those [points] how you wanted. But [it] would also encourage people to work on the stocks that were doing better, while steering away from the stocks that weren't doing as well. From my standpoint, that sounded like a pretty logical way to do it.

AC: Now do you know people that have gotten out of fishing entirely? What do they do? Is it sort of a retirement type of a thing?

IP: Some of it is. I don't know, most of the guys [will] do it until they are ready to retire, and physically can't do it any longer.

AC: Do you know guys that have given up their groundfish permits entirely?

IP: Yeah, and they'll go monkfishing, or fishing inshore; do something else.

AC: But in terms of guys who have gotten out of fishing altogether?

IP: Yeah, I know a few guys that are carpenters now. For the most part, its people who want to work outside anyway, so it seems to be tailored towards that.

AC: It's tough to put a fisherman into a box after a lifetime.

IP: Yeah, exactly, cubicles don't look so good after that office.

AC: Probably a bit of a jail.

IP: Yeah.

AC: Are there any other things about your experiences that you would want to share for future generations? Something I haven't asked that might have changed for you, or a way you've been impacted?

IP: Yeah, let me think that one through for a second.

AC: I've had a few guys share just a story that sort of encapsulated their life, or their love of what they do.

IP: I just hope that forty or fifty years from now, we're still able to have small vessels doing community-based fishing out of these smaller ports, like Little Compton, Westport, Tiverton, and Newport. [Hopefully it won't] just be done by a handful of guys out of New Bedford, and Chatham and Gloucester. I'd like to see it still spread out and kind of the small business owner-operator type thing. I hope it stays at least partially like that.

AC: I just thought of another question: Have your father or your brothers influenced your life in terms of the decisions you make, or do you sort of stand on your own?

IP: Yeah, I kind of stand on my own. They all sort of take a back burner to what I'm doing. Both of my brothers fish inshore, out of skiffs in the spring, summer, and fall. And my father works for me in the wintertime. So I'm kind of leading the whole thing; it's my own deal.

And then they'll work for me off and on, but do their own thing as well. They haven't wanted to make the big investments into buying the bigger vessels and permits and all that. Between the groundfish and monkfish permits and the boats, I've probably got close to a million dollars invested in the business.

AC: Right.

IP: So it's a big nut to crack when you don't know what's going to happen on a day-to-day basis. Something like sturgeon could put us out of business tomorrow; or a marine mammal incident, or anything. It's a risky venture.

AC: I just thought of your mother. [Do you think] the men in her life being on the water stressed her out?

IP: I think she's pretty accustomed to it. She dealt with my father fishing his whole life, before we were even born. So she's pretty used to it at this point. She doesn't get rattled too easily.

AC: Now did he do the same sort of things?

IP: He started out longlining for swordfish when he was younger. He did one year of college, for forestry, actually. He always fished in town, but he wanted to try something else.

AC: Outside?

IP: Yeah, outside. So he went out west and did one year [of school] for forestry. He came back with a 3.9 for the year, and went swordfishing for the summer to make some money for school in the fall. He made \$70,000 his first summer and never did another day of school in his life.

AC: Yeah, that would secure your decision. And then from there he just sort of worked his way into other fisheries?

[59:30]

IP: Yeah, exactly, he kind of rode the swordfishing wave for as long as that went, and then when that started to slack off, he got into groundfishing in the area. He codfished for years, and then got [into] other fishing, and monkfishing.

AC: Did he encourage you guys [to go fishing], or were you pulling at his pants, trying to get onboard?

IP: No, he never pushed us to, but we were exposed to it from childhood.

AC: Ok, so you felt like it was natural?

IP: Yeah, I can't imagine doing anything else really. I don't know, some days I question what I would if I were to get out of fishing completely; and I really don't know.

AC: Well, it sounds like you're trying to do everything you can to stay in as long [as possible]. You have your whole life before you.

IP: Yeah, exactly. I'll try to stay and keep the business here, as diversified as possible, and also look at other avenues elsewhere in the world. [That way] if this falls apart, I'll have that to move into.

AC: Excellent. Are there any other thoughts you have, Ian, before we close?  
Something you would want to end with?

IP: No, I think that covers it pretty well.

AC: Ok, well I thank you for your time. And again this is July 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012. I'm here  
with Ian Parente, and this is Azure Cygler. Thank you for your time.

IP: Thank you.

[60:35]

**END INTERVIEW**