

## The Conch Sz1Ep9CrystalSandersAlvaradoCOMPLETE.mp3

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:00:04] Hello, my name is Julie Kuchepatov and I'm the host of this podcast, The Conch. We're now well on our journey with this podcast talking about seafood in the ocean and, most importantly, continuing to showcase the incredible people working in the seafood sector. We get to hear their journeys, examine the challenges they face, the triumphs they've achieved and the insights they've gained. Today, we are very lucky to have one of the Conch Podcast's own Crystal Sanders-Alvarado. Crystal is not only the audio engineer of this very podcast, but she is the founder and captain of Seaworthy, a socio-environmental equity building organization rooted in radical scholarship. She is a queer, trans, non-binary, mixed race person of indigenous and settler descent, a coastal ecosystem and fisheries scientist, a storyteller, and a seafood a-fish-anado. And yes, that's aficionado with a "fish." Essentially, Crystal wears a lot of hats, and I'm so excited to get to know more about Crystal, so let's get started. Welcome and thank you, Crystal, for joining me today on the Conch. Well, I mean, you join me every time we record, so thank you for being on the other side of the mic today.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:01:12] Hi Julie it's so great to be here. And on this side of the mic, I'm usually here, but just in the background and it's nice to have conversation with you and we're colleagues and friends. And I feel like this episode's a little bit of behind the scenes of some of the conversations that we have as friends and colleagues, but also like after we get off the recording.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:01:32] Exactly, exactly. So we're going to give a little peek behind the curtain, I think here with our conversation recording it. But you know, we have, like you mentioned, these conversations after we record and, you know, during our weekly meetings together. So I look really forward to capturing all of these great nuggets of wisdom on tape. I mean, are we taping? We're recording so whatever digitally in the digital realm.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:01:55] Yeah, I think we're both like 90s kids, so we could say tape.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:01:59] Definitely, we're going to say tape and we're going to, we're just going to keep it at that. So I've got a lot of questions for you. And you know, you and I have worked together for a while now, and I think we've known each other for a while and I actually don't recall and we've discussed this like we met the first time at the Boston Seafood Show many years ago, I'm sure. And then the last time I was ever at any event prior to COVID, which was, I guess, February of 2020, I was at the Fancy Food Show in San Francisco, and you and I ran into each other and you were supporting someone that was doing interviews on the floor and you had a big mic boom and like a headset and everything. And I was like, What's going on here? Aren't you like a chef and a seafood buyer or what's going on? Why are you walking around with all this equipment? And so when I thought about doing the Conch, of course, I was like, Who do I know that has audio production experience? And then I thought of you. So that's how we kind of reconnected. And what were you doing at the Fancy Food Show? Remind me.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:02:56] Yeah, I mean, like you said, already, I have many hats.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:02:59] Yes, you do.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:03:00] You know, one thing maybe many people don't know is I've worked in the music industry for a very long time, for over 20 years, as well as the seafood industry. And so that's a lot of where my audio background and interest was grown from. And I was at the Fancy Food Show with my dear friend Jerry James Stone, who is a food blogger and has an excellent website with lots of cool cooking tips. And we were there to capture the stories of the Fancy Food Show for the Specialty Food Association and their social media efforts. And so we were walking around doing interviews, and I think we literally ran into each other on the floor and I was like, "Let's figure something out!"

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:03:35] Yeah. You interviewed me and I was so ill prepared and I was like, Well, ok, whatever happens, happens. So I think it worked out for the best anyway. And I'm fascinated to hear about some good stories from your days back in the music industry, but maybe we can save that for our next podcast.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:03:50] Yeah.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:03:51] Another thing I want to do and we've talked about this before is I would love to take what you did with Jerry. By the way, Jerry's Twitter is excellent, so if anyone's looking to follow someone really cool on Twitter, I don't remember his handle, but it's Jerry James Stone, right? Definitely give him a follow. So I would love to be able to go on that same kind of on-the-floor interview situation that you did with Jerry at the Fancy Food Show, but at the Boston Seafood Show. So I think that's something that we can work towards in the future. It's not going to happen this year, unfortunately, but maybe in 2023, what do you think?

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:04:26] Yeah, that would be so fun. And between the two of us, we know so many amazing people and....

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:04:30] Yeah..

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:04:30] With excellent stories, and it'd be a good way to connect and just capture what they're doing.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:04:35] I agree, and these stories need to be told. So I think, you know with you and with your support and the support of just basically everyone listening to this podcast and future listeners we'll be able to expand and do some cool things like that. So I'm looking forward to that. So, you know, given what you just said about your background in the music industry, how did you end up with seafood? Like how did that happen? I don't see the connection. I mean, that's not to say there isn't one, but what is the connection there?

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:05:02] There is a connection that's why a long journey of, you know, explaining that to people but we won't we won't dive so far into that today, but sure, I think and maybe we'll just come to it naturally. But I fell in love with the ocean as a very young kid, and I knew I wanted to be a marine biologist from like the age of twelve is some of my earliest memories about that. And I grew up in Rockwood Territory along the Gulf of Mexico, around Corpus Christi and the triangle of Corpus Christi Aransas Pass in a small town called Beeville. And I spent a ton of time with my grandparents, and then on the weekends, we'd often go to Aransas Pass, which is a small town on the Gulf of Mexico and self-proclaimed shrimp capital of Texas, for a long time. And we go there to visit my great grandma Ruby and my grandpa would take me fishing a lot. You know, lots of wade fishing

and fishing off the causeways. And that was my kind of first immersions into fish. And yeah, I wanted to be a marine biologist, but not actually having the language for like what that was. And as a kid, media we're fed like, Oh, marine biologist, you work at SeaWorld, you train whales and dolphins, and that's what it is. And so knowing that I was like, hmm I don't know about that, but like, I know I love the ocean, I want to learn more about it. So I went to college at Texas A&M University in Corpus Christi, at an excellent field and marine biology program, and was taking just all the basic courses, marine ecology, you know? And then I get to ichthyology, which is the study of fish and my favorite professor, Dr. David MaKee, is the teacher of that. And yeah, I had no idea going in that I was not going to be the same person coming out. And literally, it was the hardest class. I still, to this day, the hardest thing I have ever done in my life. But like the thing I loved the most because we had to learn all the taxonomy, the life history, the strategies for survival, management structures, all about all these species of fish, both saltwater and freshwater. And the Gulf of Mexico has a lot of very important species in the ecosystem, as well as recreationally and commercially, and it was just very much deep dives, really hard and intense tests and lots of hours spent in the ichthyology lab late nights with, you know, dead fish out of jars and just examining the difference between them and where they live and why and how we're connected to them as humans. And Dr. McKee is just this amazing professor who you don't want to disappoint, not because you want to pass and graduate. It's because like, it's like disappointing your grandpa. And so I studied hard. A lot of us studied hard, and he just always was very much one of my champions. And just like, you know, happy, I was so into fish.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:07:37] Is he still teaching?

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:07:38] He's not. He's retired now, which is so good because, you know, like, living life and he grew out his hair and it's it's so amazing to see.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:07:46] That's great. I mean, that's so important when a teacher at any, you know, level of education makes such an impression on you. And it really serves you for such a lifetime of learning. And that's really special that you were able to find that person. You know, maybe a little bit later in your educational career, but better late than never, right?

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:08:06] Yeah, definitely. And you know, we still keep in contact when I go back and I have several professors like that as well. Just an amazing program there. It was small at the time and we had tons of field trips. Everything was camping. You know, I joke that I like went to school to learn how to camp so that I can be outside for long periods of time so I can watch nature happen and then like, write down what's happening and then go back and research it.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:08:27] But yeah, that's amazing. So, yeah, you gained a lot of life skills out of that training, it sounds as well. That was for your undergrad?

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:08:33] Undergrad and graduate school. Yeah. Like, we even had a class where we had to learn how to drive and maintain boats.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:08:40] That's amazing.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:08:41] and backup trailers and all that, so

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:08:43] That's a good skill to have, in fact, I, as you know, unfortunately, my car that I've had for like 15 years just basically died and I had to get a new car and I was really excited. I mean, we were excited to get a manual transmission, right? And I have two kids who are like, Hell, no, I don't want to learn how to drive manual. I am not down with that. I don't want that. And I was like, You guys, this is actually a really good skill to have because I think everywhere in the world there's like manual transmissions and also like when the zombie apocalypse happens, you're going to have to be able to drive a car that you might not know how to drive. And that car might be a manual. So get with the program. But unfortunately, the kids' opinion prevailed and we ended up getting a car with an automatic transmission.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:09:28] My truck is a manual transmission and I live in San Francisco, so there's..

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:09:31] Oh, wow, those hills. How do you do that?

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:09:35] Practice?

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:09:36] Oh, that sounds like a nightmare. Oh, man, no, thank you.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:09:40] You get the hang of it. Well, this will balance, you know.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:09:43] It's, I think, it's a definite, it's a dance, right? It's a dance. So after you graduated, did you end up working in marine biology or fisheries biology?

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:09:52] I started working in fisheries even before I graduated my undergrad, I worked with the State Parks and Wildlife Agency, and then I started working for the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council and National Marine Fisheries, doing head boat surveys, going to the docks, meeting with fishers who were going out on party boats and head boats and then bringing back in their catch. And as they were offloading, I would collect population data, you know, lengths, weights, measurements like the otoliths out of the head of the fish and record then like the trip effort data, how many anglers were on board. You know, how long was the trip? All of the things that, you know, as fisheries management employees, we put into these mathematical formulas that then tell us the health of the population and, you know, the amount of mortality that we're seeing, both from fishing and or natural mortality. And then all of that goes into more equations that then we set our catch limits that are then passed down to either recreational or commercial industries. But that was one of the main jobs that I was doing, and I was still living in Texas at this point before I moved to California.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:10:55] So a couple of questions. So we have talked about otoliths on this very podcast before, and I remember exactly it was when we were talking with Monique Coombs from the Maine Coast Fishermen's Association. So please go back and refer to that episode.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:11:08] Yeah, I was so excited. I'm obsessed with otoliths, and I have a collection on my bookshelf over here and just all these different. They're so cool. And, I just like, yeah, I can go on this amazing podcast about otoliths.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:11:20] That's amazing. OK, maybe we'll have to do that in the future. But wait. So the other question I had is, you said, head boat, what is a head boat?

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:11:26] A head boat is like a party boat, recreational where, for hire. So, deep sea fishing boats where people make reservations and it could be you and I could make a reservation to go out fishing and then 100 other people could make that same reservation. We all go out on a boat. Yeah. And or if we really wanted to get down with our friends, we could like rent the entire boat. But a sector of recreational.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:11:47] It's probably expensive.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:11:49] Oh yeah, it'd be fun.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:11:51] Yeah, it would be. So you gave us a really good rundown of your education and kind of what led you to just be obsessed with fish and ultimately have a whole shelf of otoliths in your apartment. I think it's interesting, then you ended up leaving Texas and you came to California. How did that journey happen? Because I know you worked with a lot of fishermen in the Gulf. And what was that experience like, like working actually with fishermen as opposed to just surveying fish? Or, you know, all that stuff that you were doing with the fish on those boats?

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:12:23] Yeah, it was quite the experience and like the influence of me, ultimately leaving Texas and moving to California in some ways, part of the influence. It wasn't the whole thing. Music was another big influence in that. But what I noticed, you know, like, I'm coming there and collecting data. I'm showing up as a representative of National Marine Fisheries, which is the federal agency that handles fisheries management in the United States and its waters out to 200 miles. And in a small town that is a historical fishing area, historical fishing community and at that time was like literally crumbling into the water, like docks at the heart. You know, as I said, Aransas Pass was, you know, the self-proclaimed shrimp capital of Texas growing up. Their annual festival was called the Shrimporee. And I always thought that was so cool because it was like a celebration of shrimp.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:13:12] I...the Shrimporee? I love that.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:13:14] You know, like I remember, just as a kid, these like costumes and everything, there's like people in shrimp costumes and shrimp balloons and floats. As a kid, I was like, This is so cool and now reflecting back as an adult, it's like, wow. that like is literally not...

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:13:28] Was insane. It was insanity. But I love it.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:13:31] But it's a celebration of the shrimp, which is again an unlikely character to celebrate,.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:13:36] I guess. Yeah, but it sounds good to me.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:13:38] Yeah. And you know, we used to have a booming economy around the shrimp industry, but in the main harbor there and around this past Conn Brown Harbor go down and the docks literally were like falling in the water. There's sunken boats that are just sitting in the water and have been for years and then government regulations at this time, this was when red snapper populations were really struggling. And so it was the efforts to recover the red snapper populations were heavy underway. And what we see a lot of times with, like management and fishing communities

is, of course, this very like top down, power heavy coming from federal agencies like "do this because I told you to. And don't ask questions, and I don't actually need your input as somebody who's out there on the water every day, all day and maybe seeing other things that me at my office desk reading scientific articles and journals is not seeing." And so then I show up coming in in a truck and I have the NOAA emblem on it, and I have, you know, this big metal scale and this electronic measuring board and like, "Hey, I'm here to get the information about your trip where you're fishing along your fishing, how many people are fishing and measure the fish that you're bringing in." And and just like immediately like cussing, you know, like what the fuck are you doing here? And then like, these fucking regulations are driving me out and I'm trying to feed my family. And you know, and like all of these very, very valid statements, complaints, concerns, and I'm seeing it from both sides, too, right? Like, I'm like, Yeah, absolutely. They're not like, people aren't listening to you, and academia is totally siloed away from the community and what's going on. And so of course, you don't even know or you know, very little by design around how these management decisions are being made and how they're coming to you versus it being a collaborative effort, right? You know, so in the beginning of my job, I was not well received and, you know, I'm not afraid of conflict, but really, it was like, "Hey, I actually live here. I'm a part of this community. I am a lifelong fisher. I've grown up fishing. I love the ocean. I love fish. I'm not trying to tell you that you shouldn't fish or that we should completely stop fishing or any of that. And this is information that's important for the longevity of the health of both our environment and our communities. And so let's put my scale down. I'm going to put my paperwork down. Let's go fishing." And just started going around and fishing on the boats with them and then building relationships with the captains and the crews and the people on the dock and also communicating to them at points in which they could have input in the management process, right? Like here is a public meeting. Like, I am happy to hear everything that you have to say. And if you want it to be like fully recorded in a matter of record for these regulations, like this is the meeting, this is the time, go here and or write them all them. Make a comment.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:16:32] So, oh my gosh, that is like a really incredible example, like a real life example of, you know, what it takes to engage meaningfully with the communities and especially the fishermen and the fishers. Because, you know, in the nonprofit world and in the marine conservation and seafood space, we always are like, you know, we need to meaningfully engage with fishermen and fishers and workers and how do we capture workers' voices? And you just spelled out a really great example of how you, as one person, was able to go in, build the trust, you know, around fishing, like, Hey, I'm going to put my scale down, let's go fishing and then really get in there and make a very clear case that yes, everyone has valid complaints or, you know, concerns on both sides. But we're really all here together to work together towards, like you said, the health and a vital fishery that will support us forever. So how did that end? I get it. You know, music drew you to California, but has the fishery recovered? Like, how did you leave the fishery, I guess?

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:17:33] Yeah. Well, I worked in that position for about four years, I think. And in that time, I was able to increase the reporting and increase the participation of the fishers along the Gulf Coast from almost nonexistent when I started to over 98 percent of them filling out their reports, turning everything and so significantly increasing. You know, they weren't always happy about it. And I was still showing up to collect the paperwork and in this time connecting with them. And you know, there's lots of concerns around some of the fields in the paperwork, like tell us your fishing area. And if there's one thing we know about fisheries is like, I'm not telling you where I'm fishing.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:18:11] Oh, no.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:18:12] So in that me explaining like, you're actually not telling me if you just give me the latitude longitude for use, you're going to give me a 10 mile radius and like a very general area, right? And so compromising. I'm like, OK, what can we get? How can we like really streamline this so that we're having good data going in, right, to the decision making process of management versus having no data and no input from the fishing community to so being a scientist, what is the data and how do we make sure that it's, you know, like secure and valid and we can actually use it to make really informed decisions from that space. And then, ultimately, it was like I didn't feel I was doing enough personally. I was doing this and still at that time, like the social aspects around the community was still like struggling a lot. You know, people were selling their boats, getting out of the business, not because they wanted to, but because it was, you know, no other choice at the moment or it seemed like it was going to just continue to get worse. And, you know, I just started doing some soul-searching around like, OK, what else can I do and why is this happening? And really came to like, Well, we're pulling these fish out ultimately so we can eat them. And I enjoy eating them and I'd like to continue eating them. And so what are ways to engage with people with my background and knowledge of the fisheries management and biology, as well as working with them fishing communities and then talking and bridging that gap in some ways around conversation with people who aren't in those communities. Simultaneously, I met and fell in love with one of my favorite bands who are now my dear friends and wanted to be in the early part of their career and didn't want to miss out on the early part of their career. And like, this can be amazing, and I have to be like, close and Texas really far and I want to like be around people who really are working around environmental conservation and the issues around the ocean and our food systems, etc. and had a friend living in the Bay Area at the time and kind of like, OK, I'm moving and going to just see kind of what happens here and continue my work in environmental education as I continue down this though process of what now we call sustainable seafood, right. And moved through that and yeah, lived in the Bay Area ever since. It's been 14 years.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:20:23] Wow. So that is quite a journey. And I'm curious as to, you know, how I think you did make a huge impact on that community. And I really hope that they still have the Shrimpooree because I have such images in my head of that, and I really hope they still do it. Do you know if they do?

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:20:38] They still do it.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:20:39] Oh, that's great. I want to go some time. OK, we need to do that. Let's put that on our list of things we're going to go do. So essentially, you followed a band to the Bay Area, which I think every good movie like I've seen starts, many good movies that I've seen start out with that kind of phrase, "They followed a band to the Bay Area."

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:20:57] It's been a good movie.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:20:59] I mean, it's a good movie.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:21:00] Look at my life. I would say I've enjoyed it thoroughly.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:21:04] That's great. And that's important that you've enjoyed your life. So I'm happy for you. But you made it out here, and I know you've had a couple iterations of your current company that you founded, or I guess it's a company, right? So you want to tell me a little bit about Seaworthy and I'm interested in the founding of your own company.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:21:21] Yeah, Seaworthy has existed for a while. It used to exist underneath Fish Revolution, which was a fiscally sponsored nonprofit organization that focused on sustainable seafood education with individuals, with chefs, with businesses. A lot of purchasing policy guidance and a lot of purchasing policy development. Achieved lots of things. Created with Future of Fish and, at the time, Vulcan, which is now James Beard's program Smart Catch, under Fish Revolution. Very proud of a lot of things that Fish Revolution accomplished over the years, 12 or so years. Seaworthy was a part of that to begin with. But in a lot of my own personal work over the last five plus years and just examining the nonprofit industrial complex, my role in it, what is my role as a nonprofit worker, scientist, science communicator, etc. in perpetuating some of these inequities and injustices that we say as a movement, the sustainable seafood movement, that we're trying to solve for. And so it got to a point where it didn't feel like being a nonprofit, as my structure was actually in alignment with the change I wanted to see and with varying interests of who I am and what I do, and having the amazing experiences traveling the world with musicians and bands and hearing and sharing stories in different communities, right? Seeing an opportunity to capture and meld my lives together as one to still work towards more environmental and social justice within ocean communities and extending outward right and around food systems specifically. And so all these iterations coming through doing a lot of the same work. But Seaworthy designs immersive experiences and emergent storytelling strategies using the creative mediums of sound and food. We create multi-sensory learning environments that build community and increase our connection to the natural world and expand critical thought. And our team works with individuals and organizations that seek to drive change. And we do this by supporting their development of their storytelling strategies and organizational policies through a postcolonial and radical scholarship lens. All that to say it's the ocean, too, is part of this evolution of my work and things. It's like we can't solve ocean problems without looking at land. We can't solve land and ocean problems without integrating people. We have to look at our food systems. We have to look at everything as one and we have to talk about all of these things and all of these intersections in ways that things cross and aren't actually siloed, even though they're very much treated so. In the sustainable seafood movement, it's like, here's the academic knowledge we know over here and we're going to publish things and put them on the shelves and the general public doesn't ever get to see them until somebody goes through it and decides to share it. And then we have people in fishing communities struggling and struggling to hear their stories be heard as well. And just all of this mess in between and so creating environments such as podcasts and or dinner and dining events that bring people together to have these conversations and share in space and in thought process while enjoying ourselves and food.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:24:34] That's really incredible, and I think that, yeah, you said you're not a nonprofit, but it's a mission, right? You're definitely, I would say, a mission-driven organization or company and I fully support that. And there's so much to unpack in what you just said about the postcolonial and radical scholarship lenses. There's the creating the platform or the bridge between the intersections or the nexus of, you know, the different ocean conservationists or the academics or the people on the ground. And that's really, you know, to bring it back to SAGE, not that it's about me. This podcast is about you. But I do want to say that, you know, SAGE has a home with you at Seaworthy



and this is exactly, you know, the kind of effort that I'm trying to accomplish with this podcast is to really, again, you know, bring out the different distinctive characteristics that make us who we are and make the oceans who they are and make communities and people who they are, right. And so looking at all of those and understanding that it's not just one thing that makes us. It's a combination of things and being able to really embrace that is really important to me. And so I'm really fortunate to work with you and I really, really appreciate your effort and will support you, obviously, in any way I can. The same thing I wanted to say about SAGE was that I also really feel like, you know, a goal with SAGE is to be a platform also for kind of building that bridge between, for instance, what is done kind of in academia all over the world and bringing it back to the sustainable seafood conservation community here, specifically in North America because there's so much, there's 40 plus years of academic research and, you know, field research and community-based research that is not making, for some reason, it's just not being studied here, and it's not considered when we're trying to develop solutions, quote unquote, for problems that we're not the closest to, right? You know, I really want to make sure that we make an effort to include these things because otherwise, what are we doing? And again, it goes back to that colonialism, which is still very, very, very much a system that we're still engaged in or like underneath, right?

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:26:46] Absolutely, and you know, I think we'll probably get into it a little bit later, but like environmental colonialism, that is a direct result of the sustainable seafood movement, period. But just to touch back on what you just said about information that we have that isn't making its way to inform our actions, right, around our stated theories of change. And I think that theories of change are both for nonprofits as well as for profits. And to underscore this, I think that we say nonprofit, but we always leave off the word corporation. Nonprofits are still corporations, right? And so when we look at for profit corporations. So to me, across the board, it's like you can be a corporation for profit and still be working to drive change. And that was important for me informing Seaworthy and getting out of nonprofit mode for my personal work because a lot of things I see are nonprofits perpetuate these injustices environmentally and socially, because they, by design were formed to hide money of the exact people who were causing the problems in the first place. Right? And, and then create this greenwashing environment of like, Oh, look at us, you know, like we're oil companies are, you know, saying, look at all these efforts we are doing to help the oceans. But at the same time, leaking oil and destroying the oceans, you know, and partnering with nonprofits to cover it up, right. So for me personally, I couldn't continue to justify, like one, not paying taxes as my own organization and me benefiting personally by collecting any sort of paycheck or money from that cycle, right? And not to say my business is, you know, like a for profit business now and all of our money because we're existing in capitalism is doing that. But I'm also making sure that I'm paying taxes to support the social programs that come into play to prevent these injustices from happening and look at them in a way that corporations are contributing to it, right? If my business is hosting a dinner that is selling seafood, I am benefiting from the destruction of the environment. Period. There's no zero-sum fishing, right? So, if I'm using seafood as a platform to talk, I'm benefiting from the injustices that are associated with the seafood industry, period. Whether I like it or not, I can feel good about myself as I want to my work. But that's still a fact, right? And I need to be honest with myself about that fact. And so I think that in this idea of rooting into facts and why, like I have looking at things and using radical scholarship as a framework which is really focused on actually rooting into the knowledge bases that we have from diverse scholarship across all lines, rooted deep in history. The term and concept, radical scholarship, is mentioned in a book called *The Futures of Black Radicalism* and is rooted in a scholar named Cedric J. Robinson and the article in which it highlighted it was a lot of framing of my work is called *Class Suicide* and

explores the idea of radical scholarship and how within academia, our job as academics, our job as scientists and people working in scholarly areas is to continuously question against our own good, right, like to really like murder our class privilege for the betterment of everybody, right? And so that concept is really embodied what I want to see is like we all have to self-reflect and we have to look at the ways in which we're benefiting from these systems of injustice. And then we have to go out and we have to like actually dismantle our benefit from that system of injustice so that we do have equity and justice because none of us is free until we're all free, right. Mm-Hmm. Black folks have been saying that, Black scholars, for time immemorial, and it's true like, you Julie are not free until I am free and I'm not free until you're free, either. So that's the framing of it and using scholarship as a way to root into here's this fact and it's not just this feeling of like, I want to do good, therefore I'm saying I'm doing good and like don't question me. It's more like I want to do good. I want to say that I'm doing good, but I'm going to question myself to make sure that I'm actually telling you the truth about the impact and how I'm testing my specific theory of change for my business, right? Which I see is a disconnect in nonprofit spaces a lot as we use this word theory of change. But that's a scientific concept. And the only way you come to a theory is by continuously testing hypotheses that lead you down a way and when you're testing hypotheses, you're actually trying to prove yourself wrong. You're not trying to prove yourself right. And so there's this like we use this word theory of change, but we actually don't incorporate like scientific methodology into how we test it and report out what we're doing. And so I think that that then also brings back in the audio aspect of things as a way of capturing oral stories and traditions and knowledge from various communities that we can then share and point to as, like, this is scholarship. Everybody's voices should be heard and not just the three or four main voices that we see in certain areas, right? Yeah.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:31:58] Yeah, so I don't want to do disservice because it's really, really important to understand what you're saying and how you're conducting yourself because, you know, I've been enriched by our conversations with you and, you know, just how the world is today and I don't think it's possible for us to continue as a society to continue to live the way we lived with almost these blinders on. And I think to your point of constantly questioning ourselves and our motives and our activities and our work and confronting what we're doing and why we're doing it and how we're doing it is really important and it's really hard. And so I think there's probably some sort of other podcast there that would offer some tools around that because I don't know half the time what I'm doing and I think that comes from being so immersed in a system that you don't recognize as a system of oppression. And as someone who is directly benefiting from that system. So it's really, really important. I think that your words are so critical and I just admire you so much for living those words. And again, this is a conversation that I think should be given a lot more.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:33:17] I think we could talk about it for

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:33:19] attention to

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:33:20] decades. And we, you know, the conversation has been happening for decades. You know,

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:33:24] it has been, and I think I can probably guarantee you that this is a new conversation for a lot of our audience members.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:33:31] Definitely. And that's also what I admire about you and this podcast and the space that we share around our conversations is like, you're completely willing and always, you're like, I'm part of the problem and you are willing to ask and engage in the conversation. And we do this a lot, right? This is part of like our like behind the scenes, like let's have a meeting and like now let's, you know, like completely zoom..

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:33:51] Let's talk about what happened. Yeah.

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:33:52] Zoom all the way in and or if we go off on tangents together too. And it's like let's really dive in and break this down and you're also self-reflecting along that, you're not asserting at all that like SAGE has the answers. And I think that what you've communicated to me about this podcast is part of your journey to learn and ask questions and gain different perspectives, for, one, your own learning, but then to apply to your work through SAGE and so.

**Julie Kuchepatov** [00:34:19] Exactly. Yeah. And I think that I'm of the age where I just like to learn about other people. And, you know, like you said, engage and question myself all the time like I do anyway. But really hearing about and providing a platform for people to actually talk about themselves and what they've learned, I think it's super helpful for other people because, I mean, it just especially now in this like really isolating time because of the pandemic. We're sitting at home. Maybe some of us are alone and we're thinking, you know, I don't have anybody to talk to. How are other people facing these struggles or these challenges that I'm facing right now. So that's why I think this is really important. And you know, it's not just about what I know or don't know or my accountability, but it is about creating a place where we can have a conversation with people that might know something that we don't know, right? And I think you're a really good example of someone who knows a lot about a lot of things and is willing to share. So I'm really, really happy that we're having this conversation. So Crystal and I dug in deep in this episode, so deep that we kept the tape rolling and ended up with two episodes. Tune in for part two of our conversation where Crystal and I continue our discussion. Thank you for tuning into the Conch Podcast. It would be amazing if you could take just two seconds to leave a review and share this podcast with your ocean loving friends. Thank you!

**Crystal Sanders-Alvarado** [00:35:37] The Conch Podcast is a program of Seafood and Gender Equality, or SAGE. Audio production, engineering, editing, mixing and sound design by Crystal Sanders-Alvarado for Seaworthy. The theme song "Dilation" is written and performed by Satan's Pilgrims. Funding for the Conch Podcast is generously provided by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation.