

The Philadelphia Inquirer

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Aug 20, 2008

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Robin Scott is one tough lady.

So tough that many customers at her Margate, Atlantic County, marina call her "The Oyster Cracker."

"I can get a fishing hook out of someone faster than Shore Memorial Hospital," the 56-year-old single mother of two said.

So when Scott felt that her family business, Ray Scott's Docks, was being threatened by the city recently, she fought back.

On Aug. 15, a New Jersey Superior Court judge in Atlantic City granted Scott a temporary restraining order against the Margate Police Department.

The order bars police from stopping or impounding any of Scott's 16 small boats for being unregistered, so long as they are properly registered.

The court action came after a series of events that Scott claims was an effort by the city to deep-six her business, which her father started in 1958, in order to make way for tony waterfront homes and to cut off water access for the average blue-collar worker or day-tripper.

Scott's marina is an oddity in a beach town of million-dollar mansions.

The impetus for the restraining order happened Aug. 9, when a police patrol boat stopped one of Scott's rentals for going too fast in a no-wake zone.

It turned out that the registration for Scott's entire fleet had expired on July 31, something she admits was her fault.

"I have no excuses for that," she said, as her black lab, Dock Dog, chewed on bamboo leaves. "I'm the mom running a mom-and-pop shop."

Margate Police Chief David Wolfson says that his officers made Scott's rentals return to the marina and forbade her from renting until she could register the boats, which wasn't until Monday. Wolfson said that he could've issued summonses and impounded all the boats,

Scott said that she lost a crucial summer weekend's worth of business, and even though she refunded everyone's money, she thinks she lost customers, too.

"How many of those people do you think will come back here after that? They were scared to death," she said.

The way Wolfson sees it, though, the department let Scott off the hook with a warning.

"I went down and talked to her myself," he said. "I said, 'Your boats are unregistered. Your renters are breaking the law.' It was a liability issue."

The restraining order forbidding police to pull over properly registered boats for not being registered is redundant, Wolfson said.

"It doesn't make any sense to me," he said. "If it would have been the marine bureau of the state police, they would have issued summonses and impounded the boats."

Trooper Stew Smith, of the State Police's Marine Services Unit, said that it's an officer's discretion as to whether to issue a summons, impound the boat or make it head back to the dock for an expired registration.

City Solicitor Mary Siracusa said that there's no need for the restraining order, but the city will appear in court in Atlantic City today to hear the matter.

"It's all very strange to me," she said.

Mayor Michael Becker said that the city isn't trying to force Scott to sell out.

"I can assure you, as the mayor, that the city has no problems with Robin Scott," he said.

In 2006, Scott was fined \$1,000 by the city for storing a boat over 22-feet long on her property. Rob Herman, her motorcycle-racing attorney, appealed and got the order overturned, but Scott claims that things have smelled like rotten fish ever since.

In August 2007, Scott says that about 10 of her customers' cars were towed away to make room for a music festival, more than four hours before a posted sign said they had to be moved.

"They've been trying to get Robin for years," Herman said. "She's sitting on some very lucrative property."

A seven-bedroom house two doors down from her marina is up for sale for \$3.9 million. Multi-million dollar properties surround her.

Packing up and selling would be easy, but Scott, who also raises endangered diamondback terrapins for Drexel University, said that the business was never just about money.

"I represent the only public access to the bay," she said.

The marina her father started is now the only small fishing-boat rental business on Absecon Island, which stretches from Atlantic City to Longport.

The Margate that Scott grew up in has changed immensely, but Ray Scott's marina has stayed the same, down to the faded green linoleum floors in the tackle shop. Robin Scott hopes that her kids will keep it that way.

"I've had countless kids who spend the day out here, with no video games or text messages, who are screaming 'cause they caught a flounder," she said. "I can't give that up." *