

## **Immigrant Seafood Processing Woman -Interview # 13**

Anonymous

27 years old

Female

Seafood Processing-cutter, packer

New Bedford

Guatemalan

Interviewer: Corinn Williams

Transcriber: Andrea Galipeau

Place of Interview: New Bedford, MA

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Immigrant Woman Processor Interview # 13

(note: English intro was not recorded)

Corinn Williams (CW) :(Spanish)

Well, to begin, thank you for participating in the interview. I am here to listen to the story of your life if you are willing to share with us. With every story we listen to, it helps us understand better the experiences of the women working in the fish industry and how the regulations of the government and other factors would affect their lives and the lives of their families. We are trying to get your story out because we know that a lot of the time your voices are never heard. Your story and your reality, in truth, people do not understand well and so your voice is very important in helping us who don't understand the lives of immigrant women in the fish industry and that it is very different from those who have lived here for many years.

As I told you, we will not use your name and you are informed that we are recording this interview and we can utilize this interview for educational purposes as part of a larger archive of immigrant women fish processing workers. If you need to take a rest you can let me know.

I13-Yes.

CW -Let's begin at the beginning. In what year were you born? What is your date of birth?

I13- (01:57)- I was born on the 9<sup>th</sup> of July in 1975. My story is very long because I was alone very young. My mother died when I was eleven years old. I had no one. I had my sisters but it's not the same as having one's parents.

CW-And where were you born?

I13 I was born in Cacabal, Chinique, El Quiché, Guatemala.

CW-Your mother and father died very young?

I13-My mother...honestly I don't know at what age she died because I was still very young and I didn't even realize what she was like or what age she was when she died. What year she was born. I don't know anything about her because I was young. I stayed with my brothers and sisters. My brother and his, well, he loved me but his wife blew up at me a lot. She did that with me since I couldn't cook, wash clothes, or anything because I didn't do that when my mother was alive. But what happened was because she saw that I couldn't do anything, she used to try to teach me how to make tortillas but because I couldn't, she would grab the tortilla and put my hand on the.. hot.

CW – On the comal (griddle)?

I13 - Yes. Coming out of the comal, the tortilla is put like this, and she would pass my hand over it. She ordered me to wash her son's clothes, and if I wouldn't do it, they would throw them at me. What I did was I left. I went to Guatemala City. There I worked for a long time. What they did there was, they didn't give me anything to eat. I did everything, everything that a domestic woman does. Wash, iron, sweep, everything.

CW- So you were eleven years old in a big city? Did you know anyone in the city?

I13 (04:22)- No, I didn't know anyone. I went alone and I arrived at the bus terminal. There a woman asked if I wanted work. Yes I told her because I don't have a mother. I have my father but he doesn't take care of me. So, when she asked me if I wanted work I said yes. I arrived at work and she tells me you wash clothes, you wash everything and that's it. They eat good food and to us they just give a little bit of beans, nothing else. And that's how I was for years. I earned twenty-five quetzales a month.

CW- Twenty-five quetzals a month? How much is that, more or less, in dollars?

I13- Twenty-five quetzals, is about five dollars a month.

CW- And how many hours a day did you work?

I13 I had to work from six in the morning until 8 or 9 o'clock at night. Seven days a week, including Sundays because they don't give you Sundays off. Seven days a week, that's how it was for me – months, days. Then my father called me and told me to go with him. I said “okay” and I went to live with him.

CW- So, your mother died. How did she die?

I13 She, well, -when my dad was alive, my mom, they came, when those things happened over there.

CW- Like the war?

I13- Yes. Later my dad had, like, he was named by those people. I don't know how they are. They took my dad and I no longer knew where my dad had gone. My mom, she died because she heard so many things and, I don't know. It was as if her heart attack because those things that were happening. They took my aunts and uncles and cousins. We saw them thrown out in the street...dead. Dead over there, dead over there, dead over there. And I don't know what happened with my mom but after that day she became sick and died.

CW- She died that day when they took your father away?

I13 – That day.

CW- So, they were taking her away? Because of your father?

I13 - Yes. And then, what my dad did, he was there, when my dad died, we didn't know any more about him. They took him out, they took him away, and no more of him.

CW- How many siblings do you have?

I13 – (07:14) I have three brothers, three sisters. There are six of us.

CW- Six?

I13 – One of my brothers died eight years ago. I only have two brothers. And we are three sisters. Three women, three men. That's how those things are. Where I suffered a lot was in the capital. A lot of work, a little money, and they don't feed you like one wants to eat.

CW- And working at 11 years old?

I13 – At 11 years old I began to work.

CW- And why are there systems like that, that allow children to work. Here it is different, we don't have systems where children are working so young.

I13 (8:10)– I don't know if it's the government or what it is there, because it's very different than here. Because there one doesn't care about children if they're in the street, wandering around the streets, the government doesn't do anything. Look at the little children selling candy– even 8, 9, 10 years old selling candy, making their own living. So, that's how things were. At 11, 12, 13 years I was there. Then at 13 years old I went to a tortilla shop. There I worked for a year and half but I couldn't take it anymore because my hands...

CW- Making tortillas by hand every day?

I13 – Making a quintal and a half of tortillas every day.

CW- [9:10] A quintal is about how many pounds?

I13 – A quintal is 80 pounds.

CW- 80 pounds? Wow.

I13 – That's what I used to do. I was earning only 100 quetzals monthly (\$12), and that's what I used to do. Later, I couldn't take it anymore. I left there and then I went to a house to do housework. The lady of the house was a teacher and she would leave her son with me. She went to work and I would stay in the house and the husband would come home and wanted to abuse me. So what I did, I left there. I left again.

CW- He wanted to assault you?

(10:02) I13- Yes. Well, he wanted me to. Well, I don't know. What I thought is that he wanted to rape me. Since one didn't know anything, since he saw that one didn't know anything, he wanted to abuse me. But I didn't let him. I left there, I left the son inside, and I left.

CW- How old were you?

I13- I was thirteen years old.

CW- Thirteen years old?

I13 (10:28) Thirteen years old. And then I left and I arrived at my dad's house. He wasn't there anymore. Nothing. I arrived there and then my brother didn't want me anymore. He said, “what are you doing? I can't be with you anymore because I have my family and I have to support them. And to have more family, I can't do it.” And what I did, I went to the coast. I went there to cut coffee and to clean coffee fields with a machete. You know what a machete is, right? I went to clean the coffee fields with a machete.

CW- And so, how old were you when you went there?

I13 Thirteen.

CW- And how did you get the job? What is at the coast directly or did you have some acquaintances?

I13 No, another man brings you there. He drops you off there. So there, after fifteen days that I had worked there I came down with a really bad fever. A fever I couldn't take. And five days with a fever and since I didn't know anything, honestly I didn't know if it was a sickness or if it was something else but when I felt that I couldn't take the heat anymore because it makes you so hot. I would put myself in cold water and when I came out of the water I went to the galley (galera), they say for, it's a big house where the workers stay. Another day, the same. Another day, the same.

CW- You didn't have anybody that was taking care of you?

I13 (12:15) Nothing. I had nothing. I was all alone if I died. One dies because there's nobody for them. Then I felt that I just couldn't do it anymore. I still had three or four days left before the month was over. I went home. I arrived at my brother's, what did they do to me there? They wouldn't take me in anymore. (He said) "You went to the coast. I don't know what men you were with. So now what are you doing? Because you don't know anything." And so I couldn't take it anymore. They had thrown me in the streets. My brother came and, the one who died, and said, "Come here, and I'll take care of you but in very few ways. If I can, I'll take care of you but if I can't, I can't do anything with you. I went to a health center and they gave me an injection that made me worse. And I couldn't take it anymore. I got to the house. You don't know how many times – since it's far, where we were. I got in the truck and every five minutes they had to sit me up because I felt like my heart was coming out. I got to the house and I lost my memory. I completely lost my memory. I didn't even know what I was doing. They told me that I took my clothes off and I ran off.

CW- And what was the injection that they gave you?

I13 That, I don't know what it was. I don't know. And what they did, one of my cousins, she gave me only hot medicines.

CW- What do you mean "hot medicines"?

I13- Like, some herbs that they have there. Some hot herbs. And they she grabbed a blanket and wrapped me up inside. I started to sweat and to sweat. At that time I felt like I wasn't in this world anymore. I felt like crowds were coming down on me, and people were running to grab me. I ran all over but I couldn't leave. I felt like I was underneath the earth and that I couldn't get out. And my mother spoke to me and my dad spoke to me. And so I said to myself "I'm no longer in this place." I saw that, I left running, at night, I saw that skulls were chasing after me. I took off running but I couldn't. I could no longer walk because I fell. And that's how I spent every day. And, like three times my

cousin did that to me. After three times that she gave me that medicine the whole sickness broke. Do you know of a sickness they call measles?

CW- Yes.

I13- (15:37) Well, that's what I had come down with. But I nearly died. It's a miracle that I didn't die because that illness is very bad. They say that if one doesn't take care of themselves, they die. Thanks to God, that for a miracle of God I'm here. Then I went on. Then, I was alright again. I had to go back to Guatemala [City] again. That was a little better because there, my mind woke up and I knew what life was like for big people. I turned thirteen, I was going to be fourteen, I knew what things were going to be like.

CW- Where you were born, you spoke your language? And when you arrived to the capital, did you spoke Spanish?

I13- Yes. I didn't speak Spanish.

CW- And how was that? Did you learn Spanish?

I13- A woman, by the grace of God, that lady taught me to speak Spanish. I took a while to speak Spanish but I could. By the grace of God, that lady. She has nothing to do with me but that lady began to speak to me with "this is how you say this" about everything. "This is how you say" about this and that thing. And that's how I began to learn because I didn't know even if they mistreated me but I didn't understand anything because I didn't understand that words.

CW- And so when you had just arrived in the capital, you didn't understand any Spanish and when they told you that you had to clean this or wash clothes you didn't understand them?

I13- I didn't understand them. I just looked at what they were showing me..the things. And how it was done. Just by their showing me I could understand how things were done because I couldn't understand anything that they were saying to me. It's difficult.

CW- And do you believe that the difference between you and the houses was that they were Ladinos and not Mayan, right?

I13- (18:07) No, they were only Latinos because there were born in the capital.

CW- And how are they different? Do they take a lot of advantage of Mayans when they come to work?

I13- They take advantage of a person because they can't speak (Spanish) and they come from a far away village that is very humble, and poor. And since they have a little, yes, they take advantage. Although they send them off to do everything, they pay them little.

And that's what happened. After months, at fifteen years old, I joined up with a boy. The boy took me to his house with his mother.

CW- Still in the capital?

I13- No, not in the capital. There, close to the villages in Chinique. It's close but not in the capital. Then, he brought me to the coast. There, I don't know what happened, but I got sick again. I swelled up and I could no longer do anything. I couldn't work anymore because I couldn't take my hands anymore like that. I didn't want to eat anything anymore. I didn't feel like eating anymore. What he did, he said, "get out. You're not good for anything anymore. Get going." What I did then, I didn't leave. There I was. What he did, he grabbed my clothes and threw them outside. "Get out." And when I saw that, alright. I grabbed my clothes and I left but I felt like the world was crashing down on me. Because there is nobody for me! And he was doing this to me, this boy. I went back to the capital. I arrived there and pure miracles of God because the woman where I arrived asked me "what's the matter?" and I told her nothing because if I had relations at fifteen years old because they don't want one to have relations at fifteen years old with a man. Because they know that that's bad. And so I didn't tell her anything. And so what she did was, I don't know if I showed it, but what she did was, she brought me to a doctor, and the doctor did all the exams on me and the doctor told her that I had relations at a very young age. And that was bad for me. What she did, she bought the shots and they gave them to me and they took effect. After three months everything was alright with me again. I began to work with that lady.

CW- So, what were the shots for? You were pregnant?

I13- (21:40)No, I wasn't pregnant. Supposedly, I wasn't pregnant but my period stopped. I wasn't showing anymore every month. So that shot that they gave me was so that it would start again. That happened and whatever the lady spent, I had to pay her back.

CW- So, you were working for the woman?

I13- Uh huh.

CW- So she brought you to the doctor to..

I13- Uh huh. She brought me to the doctor and what she spent, I had to return to her.

CW- And earning little.

I13- Four months I worked without her paying me even one cent.

CW- Just paying her?

I13- Just paying her. I finished paying her, thank God, I finished paying her and I didn't want to be a girl without anything. I was 15 years old, finishing up 14 going on 15.

CW- You no longer wanted..

I13- No, I no longer wanted.. I was afraid. And so, like that, I was alone. There was no one to give me advice like what it's like for a women to join up with a man, what it's like to live in a couple, what it's like to respect a man, what it's like.. nothing. I didn't know anything about any of that. And like that, I passed the days. Later when I was well, I came back. I went back to my brother's because only my big brother was around. That boy was coming back. He was going to bring me back but I didn't want to anymore.

CW- The boy who had kicked you out of the house?

I13- When he saw that I was well and everything, he wanted me to go back with him, but no, I didn't go back with him. I didn't love him anymore, because what I had for him was hate. I didn't even want to see him anymore. And so, that's how it happened.

CW- And during all that time that you were working in the capital or working on the coast, that's near the sea, no? Is there any fishing there on the coast?

I13- (24:04) No. There one cultivates coffee. And cardamom, I don't know if you know cardamom, coffee, and bananas. That's everything they harvest to earn money there.

CW- Did you ever eat fish? Or did you know about fish?

I13- No. I never knew about fish. There, there's almost nothing for one to know about fishing fish, shrimp. One doesn't know anything about any of that. Because what one does there is cut coffee, and do cleanings on the coffee plantations. One earns very little. One earns 200, 250 monthly. That's what one earns.

CW- And that's working in the sun, in the rain?

I13- There, there's no time to relax. One has to finish their task if it's under the sun, in the rain, they don't care. What they care about is getting work out of someone.

CW- How much is the area?

I13-Like a cord (4 meters) long. Like that, squared. You know what a "cuerda" is?

CW- It's what you're sowing.

I13-Uh huh. It's big.

CW- Or harvesting, rather.

I13-Harvesting.

CW- But it's not by the bag?

I13- Coffee? It's by the quintal. If one cuts a quintal, it's twelve quetzals per quintal.

CW- Very little.

I13-Yes. Twelve quetzals per quintal. There are others that pay eleven, ten quetzals per quintal and if one does two or three quintals, it comes out very little and if one only makes one quintal, imagine that. There are times where one can't make one quintal when there isn't much harvest. It isn't done. It isn't done.

CW- It's harder to work cutting bananas or, what is the hardest to do in the country?

I13-The hardest is cleaning the coffee plantations. That's the hardest because..

CW- You were cleaning the coffee plantations and cutting bananas, everything?

I13- Uh, huh. There's a time for harvesting, and there's a time for cleaning, and there's a time to just water the product of the plants. And that's what one does there. It's hard, but here we are.

CW- And so, going back. How old were you when the boy wanted you to go back with him?

I13- (27:01) I had turned fifteen and was going on sixteen. Yeah, he wanted me to go back with him, but I didn't want to anymore. And later, I went with my sister and my sister told me that she loved me but her husband, no. It was big my story. Because what happened was, my sister loved me but, her husband, he wanted to abuse me again. And like that, I didn't want to, my sister yelled at me because her husband drank a lot. "It's your fault. He won't stop drinking because you don't want to have relations with him."

CW- But she was alright with that?

I13- She was alright with the two of us, but I wasn't alright with it. I'm not alright with him.

CW- And you lived in the house with them?

I13- Yeah, I lived there because there was nowhere else to live. I went with my brother, my sister-in-law didn't like me. I went with my sister, my brother-in-law took advantage of me. There was nowhere to go!

CW- And at your brothers', their wives didn't.

I13- They didn't like me! My sisters-in-law. No. There wasn't a life, a good life, let's say. That's how it went but in any case. Later months and days passed, and thank God, I went to the capital again and there they paid me well. I was there for some very nice

days. Later, I came back to the house and as one gets bored, because one works every day of the year.

CW- You say the job was “nice.” How was that?

I13- The job I was doing there was just doing house cleaning. I washed, ironed, but that's all that I did. The food was good. The woman left the food already made. She said, “Eat. but I want you to eat.”

CW- Not just beans?

I13- No, there they gave me everything. It was different, I saw, because there they gave me everything. “Go and get bread. Leave it there. If you want it, eat. There, there are things to eat. Whatever you want, eat.” That's what you're working for. Okay, I eat and I earn 250 Q. That's why I say it's different. But one gets tired! You get tired because there's no rest. Everyday, everyday, throughout the year. She gave me permission to go to my house, let's say, but since there was nowhere for me to go, I went and arrived at my sister's house and what my brother-in-law did was force me to be with him.

CW- Your brother-in-law?

I13- (30:12) My brother in law. He came right at me, grabbed me by force, and what I did to him, I bit him really hard so that he wouldn't touch me again. So, then he stopped, he calmed down. He didn't do anything else to me anymore. But I was afraid if he were to even dare to touch me again because he didn't respect me at all so I was afraid. At that time I was seventeen years old about to turn eighteen. Moving forward. So what I did now, I thought really well, I thought about things. What would happen if he were to touch me and I get pregnant? Because now I already knew what it is to get pregnant, it's to have relations with a man. That day I already knew. So what I did, I thought, “what am I going to do now?” Then I met my boyfriend, the one I have now.

CW- How did you meet him?

I13- On the coast. I met him on the coast. One year we were like that. Boyfriend and girlfriend, nothing else. One year. And later..

CW- You met him when you were working there? And when you returned to the capital, you still kept in touch?

I13- Uh huh.

CW- He's from Chinique, too?

I13-Yes, he's from Chinique, too. So, that's how we met and later my brother-in-law saw that I had relations with him, well not “relations” but we had contact, I already had trust with him. My brother-in-law came, and saw that it was like that, and wanted to grab me

by force. What I did, was flee again. I fled again because he tells me “You don't respect me. You're mine, and mine.” What I did, I left, I left my sister's house again.

CW- The other sister's?

I13- Yeah, the other sister's. There he arrived. My boyfriend arrived. He told me, this is the last time they're doing this to you. We'd better go without saying anything to them because I love you and I don't want you for just some time, I want you until where God gives us life.” Trusting in him, I didn't think about how many days, I left. I left with him. I arrived with him, some five months, five months we were good and everything. Then he began to drink.

CW- Where did you go?

I13- (33:10)To the capital. There we were like, six months. Then we went to the coast. From there we went with his mother. When we were with his mother they began to drink. My mother-in-law, him, his sister, they all drank. Then, well, he, for the grace of God, although he drank he never lifted one hand to me. He drinks, he yells at me, but no, he doesn't hit me. But, one of his sisters and his mother, didn't want to see me with him because I was already, how do I say it; I had already had a close boyfriend. And he is the youngest of the family, so they didn't want to see me with him. What they thought was to separate us. But he loved me and didn't listen to them.

CW- You two lived in the same house with the mother and the sisters?

I13-There we lived together with them, in the same house. When they drank, they threw similar words at me. You can imagine how they speak and all. But what I did, I took it. I took it because he didn't do that to me. He loved me. He didn't do anything to me. He gave me everything. He used to go to the coast and he would give me money. “Look, this is your money. Take care of it and buy whatever you want.”

CW- So during this time he went to the coast and you stayed in the house?

I13- (34:50) It's like that. And so, that's how it happened. And after three years, no, a year and a half of being together, we had the first son. And when we had our first son, they began again to do so many things that I couldn't take.

CW- Your mother-in-law and your sister-in-law?

I13- Yes, my mother-in-law and my sister-in-law. I left the house. And he cried and came with me to the house with my aunt but I didn't want it anymore. Because I told him, we left them because they didn't care for me. We're better off leaving and going someplace else because no more excuses for them. But he said, “I can't leave because I'm the only man and I have to support my mother.” There I thought..

CW- And his father?

I13- His father doesn't exist anymore, either. He died. That time is when it happened, those things, his father, they killed him, too. So, he suffered because he was small when he was left. His mother did everything for him so that he could grow up. So he didn't want to leave his mother because he knows that his mother suffered a lot for him and now it's his turn to take care of his mother. So I thought about it, and what I did, I left. I arrived at my aunt's house, he arrived and said, "Why did you come?" "For so many things you do to me," I said. And he doesn't listen because he's drunk, too. What I did, I said to him, "If you really love me, let's accept the gospel so that you stop drinking." And so there everything will be resolved. "No" he says. He didn't want to. "Well if you don't want to, there's nothing." I was there for three months with my baby. He came in three months and he said "I'm going to take the boy away from you. I'm going to take the boy away from you. You'll be alone." "Take him away from me, if you have the right, take him away from me, I won't give him to you because wherever where you go, my son has to be with me because you drink a lot. What are you going to give him? And he's still very small, no. I would give my life for my son but I won't give him to you." And so, after two and a half years I went back to him. I went back to him.

CW- Two years later?

I13- (37:27) Two years later. Two years, my girl was two months when I went back to him. I arrived there with him. "Let's accept the gospel."

CW- What does that mean?

I13- Accepting , it's not a religion. It's a, it's like, it's a, how could I tell you. The gospel is about salvation of our lives for us that already know the truth. Because it allows one to stop drinking, to mistreat people, to criticize people, it lets one not do all the things that are bad, that don't suit God. That's what one does is to accept the gospel. So that time he accepted the gospel, he stopped drinking. He wasn't drinking any more. And then he realized that it was true; his mother and his sister treated me badly, very badly. And that time he tried to leave his mother but his mother refused. And that's how we were until now. Later, we had the second son, we're the same. He drinks, he wasn't drinking anymore. But his mom was drinking. So, he stopped drinking. He wasn't drinking anymore and we were like that for the second, third son. They began to drink and they, they, he couldn't take it anymore. He couldn't take his mom anymore. He was fighting with his mom. He didn't like her because she mistreated me a lot. What he said to her was "She is mine. She is my wife and you have nothing to do with that. I looked for her and I love her and no more for you. If you don't like her well, it's okay, I'll leave you here and I'll go with her." What his mom did, she kicked out his sister, she sent her somewhere else, so she made her live with someone else, and she remained living with just us. There everything changed. There everything was fine.

CW- And your mother-in-law stopped drinking too?

I13- (40:04) Thank God she stopped drinking now too. And now everything was all set. Then, when the third child was born, I fought with him, he said to me that I wasn't, well,

his mom put so many things in his head and he, I imagine that he already couldn't take it. He thought they were true some of the things that his mom said to him.

CW- What did she say to him?

I13- (40:35) His mom said to his daughter, to her son, and he told me off. I cried, I told him that I'll leave again but I thought if I go, with three children, what am I going to do? Just with one..

CW- And you had land with your mother? With your mother-in-law?

I13- I had land.

CW- But it was his?

I13- [41:00] It was his.

CW- But if you left, you had nothing.

I13- Nothing, nothing. At that time we weren't married, just living together, only that. Like that, that's what I thought about. I go or I don't go. I go or I don't go. Later I didn't go but my daughter died. As we were on the coast she died of a sickness that they call pneumonia.

CW- Pneumonia.

I13- [41:25] Uh huh. My daughter died at nine months.

CW- On the coast?

I13-1 On the coast.

CW- You went to the coast?

I13- [41:33] Uh huh, as I didn't want to be with his mom anymore, what I did I left with him. I left with him for the coast and my daughter got sick t here. She couldn't be cured and at nine months she died. And what my mother in law said, "You see, that woman isn't good for anything, send her away, send her away. For you there are pretty young girls. There are pretty girls. Not ones who have been with other men. I want a very young girl for you. What my husband did he didn't listen to that. My daughter died, she died. But everything died, we all die anyway whether at two, or three, or however many years. My child died but only God knows why my daughter died. And now, leave things in their place, and I remain Evangelical. We're not fighting. At that time, it was a very nice life. Because then, I overcame everything that happened like I didn't have my mother, everything. I overcame everything.

CW- And, well, passing time, how was it that you came here to the United States?

I13- [43:06] Well, when he came..

CW- He came first?

I13- [43:11] He came first.

CW- Why did he make the decision to come here?

I13- [43:15] Because he had his two sisters, his mom, and he took care of us; there are seven of us that he's taking care of, alone. And he can't because he was earning very little there. The house was old and we were afraid that it would fall because the house was very old. He wanted to fix it but he couldn't fix it because it was a very old house. And he earned little, just enough for the food. And so what he said, "here we can't do anything, having a business is good but we have no money .I'd better go there. There I can overcome things and I can't support my mother. What else can I do for my mother except take care of her and all because she did a lot for me and now it's my turn to take care if her".

CW- But he knew people that were already living there?

I13- (44:24) His cousin. So he began to talk to his cousin and he helped him to come and he came here. And thank God he came safely. After fifteen days he was already here. He's here and he started to drink again.

CW- He lived in the house with his cousin and other men?

I13-1 [44:48] They lived, I think, eight in an apartment.

CW- Eight men?

I13- [44:42] Eight, only men. Eight men lived in one apartment. And all those men drank but only he didn't drink so he began to drink again. He began to drink and then after three years he was here, his sister called him on the phone and told him that I already had another man.

CW- And it was a lie?

I13-[45:15] And it was a lie because I didn't have anyone. So I listen, he calls me, he says "You have another man? You'd better leave my house". He's not there. I have four children. How would I take care of them?

CW- In his mother's house?

I13- [45:34] Well, yes.

CW- And the sister?

I13-[45:38] I couldn't do for him because I told her I would go." I'll go to the town council, in front of the judge, I'm going to show that there is no one. And because we are married, if you agree, leave all of your belongings to your children, well, fine. But for me it's fine if you tell me I have to go, I will go, because I feel like I have nothing." (he said) "Get out then, leave". So he made the decision, "If it's not true, come here then." I came here. I arrived here".

CW- And so it was, if he didn't believe you, you had to come? Or how was it that you?

I13- [46:30] If it wasn't true, then I'd do whatever I'd have to in order to come here with him. I have to show him that to show that it wasn't true. So, because I know it's not true, I came. If I didn't he would have me thrown out in the street and what am I going to do with my four children?

CW- But your mother-in-law agrees to take care of your children?

I13- [46:53] Yes. I chatted with my mother-in-law and told her about this and this and since she's not drinking anymore, she knows the truth. She knows very well how it is. So she told me if you two make the decision I can't oppose you two in your decision. You know what you do for your lives and I can take care of your children because you send money to care for your children. You're not going to forget your children? No, of course not I tell her. So take the decision. If you want to go, go. That's how I came here. I'm here.

CW- But how was it to come here, the way? How did you get to come here?

I13- [47:51] I called a guy who sends people here.

CW- In Chinique?

I13- [47:54] There in Chinique. I talked to the lady. She said they were leaving on such and such a day but that I had to pay so much money. I said okay. I gave her ten thousand quetzals (\$1,200 dollars), I made my way, I came here. Arriving in Mexico they asked for more money. The deal we made with her is leave ten thousand there, coming here, and then in Phoenix, paying all. But she didn't do it like that but I left ten thousand there, arriving in Mexico they were asking for more. So what my husband did was call the lady and ask why so much money? It had to be what we said. When she arrives in Phoenix I send so much money. Okay. I came through Mexico, stayed for one week in Mexico. Closed up in a room.

CW- With a lot of people?

I13- [49:02] With a lot of people.

CW- A lot of people waiting.

I13- [49:06] A lot of people waiting. God, that week felt like a year. The days didn't pass. We were in Mexico for one week. Then got on our way. I stayed with some lady for four days. Then little by little we passed through Alta Sonora the desert. The desert is hard.

CW- How long were you in the desert?

I13- [49:36] There we were for like five days. Four nights we walked because you can't walk during the day. A lot of sun. A lot of heat. You feel like you're burning! And there's no more water. Thank God little by little we passed through the desert without any problem. We passed, we arrived in Phoenix. Then I arrived in Phoenix like the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 2005. At 8 o'clock in the morning I arrived in Phoenix. Calling my husband I say, I'm here. Okay. He sent the money. I was, one night still there. Then they sent me here. They sent me here, I arrived here the on the 11<sup>th</sup> of July, 2005.

CW- And what did you think when you arrived here?

I13- [50:40] What I was thinking about was, my children. My children; that's what I was thinking about. I'm with my husband now but I wasn't thinking "I'm happy, thank God!" No, I was thinking about my children. What are they doing? What could they be doing? Do they be giving them food to eat, not giving them food?

CW- Had you left your children previously to go to work or...?

I13-[51:08] No. No because he always sent me money; I wasn't working. He always sent me money, thank God, but... In the end, I arrived here and everything was fine. And that's how we are until now.

CW- But, when you arrived, did you get work?

I13- [51:33] I arrived here as he was working in scallops. It's going to be four years now that he's been working in scallops. He talked to the boss and the boss gave me work there. And when I began the first days they gave me work all week. Later, later they weren't giving me all week anymore. They were giving me two, three days a week. Two, three days a week. Three hours, four hours a day. And those that were there they give all day and those that are just beginning they give them very little. Very little but there I was until like.

CW- But how was the work? Like, I asked if you knew shrimp or fish, or was it something new?

I13- [52:20] No, no.

CW- What was the job that you were doing?

I13-1 [52:26] I arrived there, I didn't know if it was, what was the job. I arrived, the boss told me, "Come here. If you don't know, I'll show you what to do."

CW- He speaks Spanish?

I13- [52:40] He speaks Spanish. He's from Chinique, the boss. "Come here, I'll show you what to do." He's good, he's good. The guy is good. "Come here, I'm going to show you how it's done, how this is worked, and this, and this, and this. But then, there, we were but the girls, when one enters first, they don't like someone."

CW- Why?

I13- [53:13] Because they already know. They have a lot of experience on the job. They already know very how the job is and one asks them how the job is done. "Ask your boss."

CW- Why do they say it like that?

I13- [53:29] I don't know.

CW- Was it for something? Did you take a lot of time, arguing?

I13- [53:35] No, it's because one doesn't know anything. And one asks them, since they already know. They don't care that you don't know. That's what they do. And that's how I began to work there, thank God the boss has a lot of patience with one. He taught me, and taught me, and taught me but it was tough for me to get experience in that. First, when I began to work there it was just taking out pieces, taking out pieces.

CW- How do you mean 'take out pieces'?

I13- [54:09] Take out little pieces. Like scallops. Do you know scallops?

CW- Yes, yes.

I13- [54:12] Well, the scallop comes whole and in little pieces so one has to take out all the pieces. All the pieces. Only the whole one passes. Then that, like I spent months like that. I did only that because I couldn't do anything else. Only that.

CW- And how did you find it, difficult or easy?

I13- [54:36] It's difficult, it's difficult. Difficult to, well, for that part of taking out just the pieces, it's a little, not difficult; it's a little... better. But then when they began to give me the other job to pick out what's U10, U20, U12, or 10/20 or 20/30, that's really tough. Because, it's by the size of the scallop.

CW- You're looking at the size of the scallops.

I13-[55:13} Uh huh, uh huh. To be looking like that, how the belt goes, you can't just be looking. You have to take it out. That was very difficult to learn.

CW- So you're looking at three sizes? Or..

I13- [55:30} Yes. When they put out the 10/20, the one that has the sticker, if it's 10/20, one has to take out the U10 and the 20/30. The 10/20 passes on the line. That's what they take first. So the 10/20, the 20/30, they take it out. And the U10, they take out, too. There are three classes of scallops that they do.

CW- And where does the scallop go?

I13- [56:04} What company does it go to?

CW- Uh huh.

I13- [56:08} That I don't know, which company it goes to.

CW- They send it in a truck?

I13-[56:14} They send it in a trailer. A trailer comes to bring it and they take it. But I don't know where it goes to.

CW- And they come from the boats?

I13- [56:22} They come from the boats. It comes, when it comes fresh, it comes from the boats. It comes from the boats. They put it in water. That's done in another part. The men do it. Then when it arrives, it's already in water. They put it in the tank and one has to take it out. Then after three years that I'm working there, thank God now I know everything, it's okay.

CW- And you're working more hours? They gave you more hours with experience?

I13- [56:54} More hours. With the experience one has, they're giving them more hours. They're giving more hours.

CW- You always did the same job?

I13- [57:07} No. Now I learned about all the types of work. I learned to pick out, to weigh, to receive, or to put labels on the bags, to stamp the bags, or to match up the scallop that doesn't go with the others in the rush. There one has to be separating the scallops. Everything now, I know how to do all the jobs there.

CW- And you only worked in that company?

I13- [57:39} I've only worked in that company in the five years that I'm here. Yes, only that company.

CW- During those five years. Well, in the beginning you weren't working many hours. It was because you didn't have much experience or because there wasn't a lot of work?

I13- [58:03} It was because I didn't have experience in that. Because what they do, the one who has the experience is the one who stays. Because they know how to do everything. So that one who doesn't know how to do anything or who knows very little, they send you home early. And when there isn't any (scallops), what they're do now is, when there are scallops to be picked out, everybody works. And if when there is sorting work, the one who doesn't know how to do it goes home. And those that know how to sort are the ones who stay.

CW- But the work varies? Are there weeks when there's more work or weeks when there's less?

I13- [58:51} The type of work is like this. When it's summer, there's good work. In the winter, work goes down. There are only 20, 25 hours in the week. One works, sometimes, three, four times a week. It goes down a lot.

CW- But your husband's working still?

I13-[59:13} He, thank God that they give him his hours. They give him work all week.

CW- And still in the same company?

I13- [59:20} In the same company. For the seven years that he's here, he's been working in the same company.

CW- Well, so, you're a little used to living here? Was it hard for you to adapt to living here?

I13- [59:46} Well, what I feel is, the most difficult part about living here is not having my family. That's the most difficult for me. If I had all of my family here, well, one adapts to living here. But without the family.

CW- You have your children there?

I13- [1:00:11} Uh huh. I have my four children there.

CW- And the girl?

I13-[1:00:13} And the girl here. And when I begin to think of my children I get sad and I think, Do I go? Do I not go? Because I have what I have here. I have the right to put (my

daughter) in school so that she learns. And those that are there, what am I going to do with them?

CW- And do they going to school?

I13- [1:00:43}They're studying. They are studying but it's not the same as being with me. It's not the same as being with me. What I think of now, God willing, is that God, that God permits me to, I don't know. Bring them all here, or for me to go there. I still don't know.

CW- Well, if you could bring all of them, it would be, well, I don't know if it would be enough with the money you're earning now?

I13-1 [1:01:17} It's enough, it's enough.

CW- Yeah?

I13-1 [1:00:18}It's enough.

CW- Because you're supporting them, the kids. How much money do you have to send each month?

I13- [1:01:26}We're sending one hundred dollars every week.

CW- One hundred dollars every week. Four hundred dollars a month.

I13- [1:01:37}A month. Four hundred dollars a month.

CW- And that's supporting the children and also your mother-in-law.

I13-[1:01:45}My mother-in-law. The four children, my mother-in-law, and the girl taking care of my children, makes 6.

CW- You have someone taking care of your children?

I13- [1:01:58}Uh huh. I don't want my mother-in-law to suffer because of my children. I'm sending money so that the girl, she does everything difficult in the house.

CW- Oh, she does everything difficult in the house?

I13-1 [1:02:10}Uh huh. Because I don't want my children to suffer. That's why I'm here, to give them to eat, to give them the good for them, to give them the most sufficient education that they can get.

CW- But the best would be to reunite with them?

I13- [1:02:26} The best to me would be to be together. That's what I want most in this world. To be together. Because there isn't any other like just being together.

CW- And are you in communication with them? Do you always call them?

I13- [1:02:42} Always.

CW- How, how do you call? Do they have a cell phone, or at home?

I13-1 [1:02:51} They have a cell phone and they have a phone in the house. They can call here whatever time they want and we call there. It's not all week. It's during the week. When I think of them I grab my cell phone and call them. "How are you, sons?" "Fine." And then I'm calm because when I don't talk to them for a week I feel like it's years that I don't talk to them.

CW- Yes. How are you doing? Are you well? But yes, you have the ability of talking to them.

I13- [1:03:26} Yes. Like I'm doing with this girl now. I always call them. The best for me is to hear their voice. "Are you alright? Yes? Okay then". That's the main thing for a mother to know that her children are alright. Because if they're not alright there, I worry too. If they're sick or if... That's why I call.

CW- And, well, and talking about work again. Have they commented on what I mentioned to you? That there is government management saying where one can fish and how many days and all that. Do they talk to you sometimes about that?

I13- [1:04:13} No.

CW- Nothing?

I13- [1:04:15} No, what they talk about there is the product. That if it's going well or not.

CW- Only the quality of the product.

I13- [1:04:23} Uh huh. They're only talking about that because, because one has to respect what the product is because it's food. And food is sacred to one because it's food.

CW- One can get sick.

I13- [1:04:41} Uh huh. That's it. So, what they talk about is what one has to do there in the company. Do what they have to do in the company; wash their hands. Every time that one goes to use the bathroom, wash their hands. Use gloves. Change gloves every so often. And watch the product that no garbage gets into it. That's what they talk about. But those are company rules.

CW- Uh, huh. Yes, yes. What's the name, HACCIP?

I13- [1:05:29} Uh huh, yes.

CW- There's a lot of that. Taking care of the food. And the work conditions? Do they yell at you a lot, or do they treat people well?

I13- (1:05:43) No. For me to tell you that they treat them badly, no. The boss is a very good person. He's a good person. I know. He gets angry. There are times that he gets angry and yells at someone because one doesn't do things like he wants. And there are times that he sends someone to do something and they don't do it. That's when he gets angry. But people do things for that reason. That is why he gets angry. Because he is very friendly.

CW- He's from Chinique, too?

I13-1 [1:06:34} No, the boss of the company is American. He can't speak Spanish. He can't speak Spanish. He's the boss of the company but we're in the is that what's the (name of the temp company). yes, the (name of the temp company). That's where we are. Because if we were with the company, there you have to pay the, like the, every year. They give one vacations. But there, no. Because we're in the (name of the temp company). That's what he says. "Now it's not my fault for all of this because you're not working for a company. If you were working for the company I would give you your vacations. And the vacations I have to pay you. But since you're in the (temp company), and I can't do anything".

CW- Do they give you enough breaks?

I13-1 [1:07:40} The breaks, no, the breaks are only 15 minutes. Now for lunch they give us a half hour. A half hour. It's enough.

CW- But are there accidents in the job sometimes?

I13-(1:08:04) There, if there are accidents, thank God, the boss of the company worries about one. Because, once, a knife passed through my finger once, here, and it scratched it a little, and it took out a little piece of my finger. I took it out. And when I took it out it really affected my finger. What I did, I wasn't going to tell anybody because I didn't want them to worry for just a little thing but I couldn't take it. So I had to tell him because I couldn't take it to work with my finger like that. And so what he did, he said, "Why didn't you tell me before? That finger, if you hadn't told me, you have to lose that finger. And do you know what it is to lose a finger?" What a fright it gave me. He sent me right away to the clinic where he has his clinic. He sent me there. Thank God he paid me. He paid for that day I lose. Yes, he paid me for the day I lost and the hours I spend going to check on my finger, he paid me for those hours. Thank God he's like that.

CW- And other guys? When there are problems like that?

I13-1 [1:09:22} The same. The same. That's how my husband did too because he works with the trucks. He worked with the trucks, with the pallet jack. He was going to leave some things inside the truck and lowered the thing on the truck and left his finger there and it came down. Pressed! Right away it took the nail off. And he sent him quickly to the clinic, too. Yes. With all that, yes. And he pays him his hours. Although that happens, an accident, he's always responds to that.

CW- But does he teach one how, how to be careful? How to avoid accidents?

I13-(1:10:13) He teaches. He teaches everything. How to avoid accidents, how to do things to not have accidents, how to use things so that one isn't going to have an accident, too much. He teaches. He teaches how to do things, so that there aren't any, to avoid accidents. Yes.

CW- So, well, to finish in general, do you feel that working in fish has been a positive or negative in your life?

I13-1 [1:11:02} To have the job, for me, fine. It's good. Because without work, imagine. And that, although it's a little hard. I don't say it's very easy because it's hard, that because, to put up with everything, all day to be standing there, the feet get tired. Once the afternoon comes one doesn't want to even stand up a little bit more. But what I'm thankful for is that I have my job. That's all.

CW- So, do you have another topic that you want to talk about?

I13-1 [1:11:44} Just that.

CW- Okay, well, thank you very much. I hope that everything comes out alright with the recorder. Sometimes I have problems with the recorder but I hope not. But, thank you very much for sharing your story.

I13-(1:11:56) You're very welcome.