0:00:00

Wang: Okay. So, this is an interview with Giuseppe Pennisi?

0:00:05

Pennisi: Yeah, Giuseppe Pennisi. That's how you say it. You say it better than I do.

0:00:07

Wang: ...The interview is taking place on August 8, 2018, and the interviewers are Susan Wang and—

0:00:16

Lesyna: Kristine Lesyna.

0:00:19

Pennisi: Sorry, guys.

0:00:20

Wang: That's okay.

0:00:21

Pennisi: I'll turn it off. Go ahead.

0:00:25

Wang: And then we'll have you introduce yourself.

0:00:27

Pennisi: Okay. I'm going to read this here. My full name is Giuseppe Pennisi, and here we are at Pier 47, the New Fisherman's Wharf, in San Francisco. And the name of my

boat is the fishing vessel, The Pioneer. And, we're in front of Scoma's. It, it says here harbor name. But anyway, the city is San Francisco, and the state is California.

0:00:57

Lesyna: Great.

0:00:57

Wang: Great.

0:00:59

Pennisi: And, I'll let you guys start the questions.

0:01:00

Wang: Okay. So, we just wanted to start off by getting some of your history, and just how you got into fishing.

0:01:08

Pennisi: Oh. Yeah. So, my grandfather started fishing out of San Francisco in the early 1900s—so, like somewhere around 1907, or somewhere in there. And then he started working with boats that were owned by the Paladini Company, and they were doing the paranzella trawling. So, they were using two boats and one net. And so, I've read a lot about it. And so, they used to use really small mesh. They used like inch-and-a-half mesh, and they had these nets that they would set. They kind of averaged about 10,000 pounds of fish a day, is what they did. So, they would just go right out here and they would set the net, and they had a little one cylinder engine, and they had a sail that they would put up. So, they would just kind of like sail, and they tried to keep a little distance between the boats. And, and then when they would bring the net up, they used the little winches, they bring up, and they would, they would not come in from fishing every night. They would actually deliver to a barge.

So, there was some barges they had up by Tomales Bay. They kind of had them

kind of around, and then the boats would go over there and they would drop their fish off to the barge, and then they'd go back out, set their net and sail, and—you know.

But it was kind of an interesting way of fishing, and I was kind of surprised they actually caught that much fish, you know, because they were—I mean, they obviously were not moving very fast, you know—because large fish swim fast. But being they were mostly fishing for flatfish. And the other interesting thing is—I mean, the mesh size was so small. I mean, they only used an inch-and-a-half mesh.

But, anyway, nonetheless, that's kind of another interesting subject because when they started doing that it caused a big rift between the fisherman. The reason for that was the guys that were going out fishing hook-and-line, right, they were getting more money for their fish. But, when the boats starting trawling it drove the price of fish way, way, down and made it much more affordable for everybody. And so, you know, here we are like over 200 years later and we're doing the same thing once again because when we bring fish to the dock now we're selling fish to the public like they were, right? And so, you know, normally fish is quite expensive. It's, you know, upwards of $5 to $20 a pound—or whatever—in the stores. And so we're selling fish between $1 and $3 a pound here, so you know, it's neat that here, two hundred years later, you know, this is happening again where, you know, we're able to drive the fish down for the public by being able to sell fish directly to them. Yeah, I thought that was kind of a neat point, but you may not.

0:03:49

Lesyna: So, you said your grandfather was using Paranzella nets?

0:03:55

Pennisi: Yeah.

0:03:57

Lesyna: In this area?

0:03:58

Pennisi: Right. Yeah.

0:03:58

Lesyna: In San Francisco?

0:03:58

Pennisi: Right. Right here. And then, yeah, their used to unload here on Pier 45, and whenever they were not unloading on barges.

0:04:04

Lesyna: And were they catching Halibut with that gear type?

0:04:08

Pennisi: Well, you know what? They were catching Halibut and all kinds of flatfish. Like you know, out here they have Sand Sole, sanddabs, English Sole, you know. In the summer, you get a lot of the other fish, like Petrale Sole, Rex Sole, and stuff, because in the winter the fish move to the deeper water and in the summer they move shallower. So—but yeah, so Halibut—that would have been a big one because these were small boats and they couldn't go too far offshore, so they were fishing close by.

Halibut—it's, it's always been a fish that we've fished off and on throughout all the years. But, it was quite often—I mean just part of one of our bottom fish trips, like we would be coming from Cordell Bank, or the high spot, you know, above Point Arena, and then we would make a few Halibut tows on the way down the hill, you know, going back to either unload in San Francisco, or Monterey—or something like that.

So, we used to always just kind of blend our fishing, you know, and it kind of depended on the weather, too. So, if the weather was rougher offshore and we could find a little protected spot closer to shore then we might fish a little Halibut and then, you know, work our way to—like if you get down below Pigeon Point

and it's northwest, you know, you know you'll be able to fish for some rockfish down there because the weather gets a little bit better when you have those certain conditions. And we used to fish the three-mile line. We used to—we used to do a lot of Halibut fishing years ago, and we used to fish inside the Farallones, and up around—there's Duxbury Reef and all that so.

0:05:41

Lesyna: How old were you when you started commercial fishing?

0:05:44

Pennisi: Well, I started fishing—I was probably about between six and seven years old because my birthday's in the summer, and it's in July, and so my dad—his crew would always go to Alaska to go fish salmon in the summer. So, then out of three boats he would take—He would always have one old man, one old Italian guy, and then himself, and then it would be me and my other two brothers, and we would be his crew for the summer. So, we were all shanghaied because there was nothing you could do. It didn't matter how seasick you got, it didn't matter what you were doing. You had to work, and you had to show up.

You know, I mean when my dad would pound on our bedroom doors, I'll never forget because he had this—he had really big hands and his wedding ring would—when, when he would slam his hand on our bedroom door it would make this really loud noise and you could hear the metallic noise, and it would be like 1:00 in the morning. And when you're a little tiny kid, 1:00 in the morning is like "what's that," you know what I mean? [laughter]. That's the only hour that you would get up in the middle of the night in case you wanted to steal some ice cream out of the freezer, you know. Not to go get in a truck and then drive down to the pier and then meet 10 guys down there that are smoking cigarettes and all yelling in Italian, and then get into a bunch of little skiffs and row out to the boats, because that's how we had to do it, you know? And then climb across a railing that had—that was coated in seagull pooh.

And then get lucky enough to land on the pelican pooh. But anyway, once you got on the boat, you know, then it was old diesel stoves and diesel engines. And it was quite the thing to just—the mental thing—you know, knowing, *Oh my God, I'm*

going to go through all this, and then get on a boat, and then my dad would make us hold two hours of wheel watch, you know? So, being nauseous and then, you know, doing two hours of wheel watch—I was a little kid—because my dad would put two of us at the same time at the wheel. And so, you know—and then his bunk was right behind the, the wheel, so he—but, oh my God, you did not want to let him catch you sleeping [laughter]. That was a bad thing.

So he'd—some of his tortures would be he would make us scrub everything on the boat, starting from the upper cabin. So, there's always lots of bird pooh to—So, if we were caught sleeping or if we did something wrong, you know—so we'd be seasick, and I didn't even know how he did it because I was a little kid like that. I mean, it's the boats roll around a lot, especially those old wood boats, and man, he—it's like I would have been —like nowadays I would never put one of my kids up on the roof with a water hose and a scrub brush, you know, because one of them might fly off, you know what I mean? [laughter].

But yeah, it was different times back then. So, I don't know if I answered your question or not, but—

0:08:36

Lesyna: You did. Did you grow up in San Francisco?

0:08:41

Pennisi: You know what? We used to fish out of here a lot. I used to come up here a lot with my dad because we used to take the boats to Hunters Point for the shipyard. You know, a lot of my dad—because later, too, my dad bought a fish—a fish market and processing plant. So, we used to come up here all the time and drop fish off, and then my dad's insurance agents were all up here for the boats and everything, and the plants. So, that was Dan Bone Insurance, and there was another guy there, I'm trying to remember his name. But, we were here all the time, and we used to come in here with the boats and offload fish at times, like to General Fish and things like that because when you're, when you're fishing up and down the coast, if the weather gets bad or something like that a lot of the fish that you're bringing in, you know, if you were going to send them to one of these markets anyway, and you can't make it down to Monterey because the weather's too bad, you can just drop

them off, you know, wherever.

And that was kind of the nice thing about years ago. There was a lot of processing plants, and everybody kind of worked together. If somebody was short on a little bit of fish and another market had it, they would share some of that fish to make sure that all the customers were covered. They had good relationships. Man, that was back in the day.

And then when I had my big boats we used to fish for all the markets here, you know in San Francisco. But then one at a time as they kind of closed and, and no longer processed, you know, any local stuff, that's pretty much what happened. And then in 2000 they really shut everything down. Then it just—everything dried up. There was no local fish anymore, so all the cutters went away and all the, you know, the people that were trucking fish, and all the processors and all—Everything just kind of got dismantled. So—

0:10:15

Lesyna: So today there's fewer processors, and fewer people who—?

0:10:20

Pennisi: Yeah. You know, I kind of describe it like if you had a mirror and you were holding it in your hands, you know that would have been like the fishing industry years ago. Then if you drop it on concrete and it just shatters. So now we have all these fragments of processors, guys that only have maybe two or three, you know, people in a plant that might cut. And most of the time they're cutting salmon and Halibut and tuna, because tuna and all that's become such a big thing because of the sushi bars and all that, you know. It's no longer bottom fish. It doesn't even rate anymore.

It's—so the customers that we have that we sell to, you know, they buy, you know, a little bit of fish from us. But, they don't have—they don't have the manpower to, to process. And, and we, we sell to about 35 different markets, so it's no longer that, you know, you sell to one market in California. Now when you get up north in Oregon and Washington it's very different, and even Eureka—they got that

Pacific Seafood plant over there—because you have to do volume in order to make a living anymore with this. I mean—well, we're doing the opposite. We're just bringing in a small amount of fish, but we're selling it directly to the public, so we're trying to step out of, you know, that arena that we've always been in for all, you know, of three generations.

0:11:41

Wang: So, could you tell us what your experience has been with the California Halibut trawl fishery?

0:11:47

Pennisi: Yeah, you know what? I used to love fishing Halibut. And it's kind of a neat fishery because, you know, you're, you're not, you're not dealing with like 30,000 pounds of fish. You're only dealing with maybe 300 to 1,500 pounds when you bring the—the trawl up, right? And so, so it's, it's more of a fishery, like right now if, if you see who's left, it's more of a retirement fishery because, you know, the older gentlemen that loved fishing, you know, they don't—There's not—The workload is much less, right? I mean, if you're coming in, you know, you've only got 1,000 pounds or 1,500 pounds of fish that you're offloading. So, you know, they could fish close by. Within a short time they could be back at the dock. They could really pick their weather windows better, and the—They're not dealing with volume, so it's easier to find a market that will actually buy their fish. So, these small markets here, for them to buy 1,000 pounds of Halibut or 1,500 pounds it's not a big deal.

But what's kind of changed is, though, is the government allowed these small boats to be able to go out and catch Halibut with hook and line, you know, like fishing poles and stuff. So now, it's kind of starving the Halibut fishery out—the guys with the trawls—because these guys can fish from the beach, anywhere, you know, out wherever they want. So there's, there's hundreds and hundreds of these boats now that are out there fishing with hooks, and so they're kind of like bringing the population way down, and these small boats are bringing in like 400 pounds a day, you know, between 200 and 400 pounds a day. And sometimes they'll have a big day and they'll get over 1,000 pounds. But, they're catching them right in the surf or right in the beach, so before these fish even migrate out into the deeper waters

outside three miles, where the trawlers can catch them, you know, the numbers are way down and so they're thinned out. So the guys are really having a hard time just trying to even make any money now just because of these hundreds of boats now fishing hook and line.

0:14:00

Lesyna: Is there any overlap in their fishing areas, or are they pretty much separated between trawlers have to be three miles out and the hook and line guys are closer to shore and in the bay?

0:14:11

Pennisi: Well, the hook and line guys, yeah, they usually fish closer to shore because they're smaller boats. And you know, Halibut actually are closer to shore most of the time. They're all within the surfline and maybe a half a mile. I mean, that's—the only time that the guys will catch them outside that is like if we have really rough weather and that pounding surf. That will drive the Halibut out into the deeper water. So, and then we also—So if you have that mixed with the wintertime, because in the winter the fish go deeper, then the guys fishing with the trawls will do better. But it's—The numbers are way, way down and the guys are really struggling to try to even pay their, you know, their few expenses. They don't have to have observers that are paid for by the, by the—They're being paid for by the state, so you know, so the overhead is way less and they don't have to give eight percent to the federal government like we do, you know, whatever your boat gross is, because it's—Yeah, it's a lot, a lot different. But you know, because of all these boats now are bringing in all this Halibut, these small boats, you know, I don't really see these guys fishing Halibut in the future too much with a trawl. It isn't going to be done.

0:15:29

Lesyna: And what's your participation level like in the California Halibut trawl fishery now?

0:15:37

Pennisi: What we do, we do fish Halibut—Like when, when we have issues, like last year. I'll give an example. We have these vessel caps on, on what we can bring in per year, right? So, we're like 96,000 pounds of bocaccios per year, things like that. So, last year we had experienced such a large amount of bocaccio that went into our fishing grounds that we could not, we could not set a net anymore. So, for four-and-a-half months we fished Halibut while we were inventing these new type of trawls to be able to open these panels and release the rockfish. So, it took us four-and-a-half months, and then we—because we're only allowed to switch in and out of the Halibut fishery every other month, and it has to be at the end of the second month. So, there's so many rules that, you know, trying to even make all these new adjustments to our trawls and we—I mean we, we actually figured out how to separate different rockfish right out of our trawls, which is—I mean, so you know, even though it almost made us go broke and we were fishing Halibut and we're, and then coming up with all these new nets, and then in between we would stop and then we would try to, try these other trawls, and then we put the cameras in them and lights, and all that, and like stuff like you see on the screen here.

And anyways, it was really tough. And so then finally, you know, we were able to start just, you know, fishing bottom fish again. And, and one of the reasons why I don't target Halibut is because I have some of my older friends that fish Halibut, and you know if I'm out on the Halibut grounds and I'm competing with them, this—You know, they're in their retirement ages, right, and if I start competing with them and I start catching Halibut, it's just going to make it even less fish for them to catch, you know? And, you know, I want to preserve my relationships with a lot of these fishermen I've had for, you know, over 40 years. And so even though, you know we were basically shut down for a lot of times and we weren't really aggressive at fishing Halibut too much because I was watching what they were bringing in, and you know I—So I just do, I just do a mild amount of Halibut fishing, and mostly it's like whenever I know my friend Nic and them, like if they go on vacation or something like that, and then I'll go out there because I have my friend Candy, Nic. There's Johnny and a few guys. And so I don't know if that sounds like [laughter] it's a good enough reason for someone to, you know, not really be aggressive at something. But you know, to me, also, you know, bringing fish in here, bottom fish, and stuff like that for the public, and then we do a lot of charity stuff like Glide Church.

So, you know, by mixing it up it's a little more fun for us and we can still do some

Halibut fishing. But you know, our friends aren't getting mad at us because that's not what we're trying to depend on for a living. And then we have come up with all these new things, you know, selling to the public and then selling to certain wholesalers. So, mixing it up is a lot better and it's retaining our relationships with our friends. So we're good. Yeah.

0:19:04

Lesyna: And how about your, your trawl net? Do you use the same one for ground fish as you do for Halibut, and if not, could you describe the differences?

0:19:21

Pennisi: Yeah. Well, we build our own nets and we—our nets are, are very unique. They're not like anybody's trawl nets that probably have ever fished, anywhere. What we are really good at is, we're good at manipulating the nets and making all these little sorting chambers. We use lights and stuff to help separate bycatch and to draw fish to the sorting panels. And, our nets are really, really light. So, we don't even have any chain in the front of our nets at all. We just have two-inch poly dacron rope with plastic and then some conveyor belting so that you can see this now on the TV. It's actually going up a hill. So, it's really super light.

And so, you know, we're, we're trying to—and it's not really for any reason, but it's just that we're trying to be, you know, good stewards of the ocean, and we're trying to reduce our bottom contact. So we—It's really amazing stuff that we've been doing. We, we've—I mean, saving fuel and then—oh, our bycatch is next to nothing. It's just a few small lingcod, and then a couple of crabs, you know.

So, we've been getting a lot of recognition, and stuff like EDF, and we've been on a lot of magazines and everything. So, we invite people to come fish with us so they can actually see it for themselves. I don't kind of like try to, you know, make up peoples' minds, but it's—So, we're doing something that's totally different, and I think it's kind of cool. But you know if—Just trying to survive, also, and this is a really difficult industry, and you know we have all this foreign influence on our industry and all this foreign fish is constantly coming in. We're competing with fish farms, competing with fish from Mexico and Canada and China and Vietnam and everything. So it's, you know, kind of been one of those things where we had

to make a lot of tough decisions, but ultimately though our—or my goal—is to kind of pioneer (I'll just say that), pioneer this whole new trawling, light touch trawling thing. And so I do a lot of—I share a lot of my information with gear shops and with other fisherman.

So, we have the cleanest record probably in all of the United States for fishing clean. I mean, nobody fishes, nobody does it as good as we do. I mean, when we come in with a 30-, 40,000 pound fishing trip and we only have maybe a five-gallon bucket of, of bycatch, I, I don't think anyone can claim that, you know? And sometimes it's even less than that. So, kind of cool stuff.

0:22:10

Wang: Wait, So, how many—How long have you been fishing, total, since you were six or seven?

0:22:24

Pennisi: Yeah, I've slowed down. I'm 54. I just turned 54, so way too long [laughter]. Yeah. But you know, we, we have to have—All of us on the boat have two jobs, you know. So, we fish and then when the weather is bad my buddy Gregor, he, he drives for Uber. Joeleen, the deaf lady who's our deck boss, she actually manages horse ranches. She has—She is deaf, and so all—she has a bunch of deaf employees, and so she sends everybody to these rich peoples' ranches in Carmel Valley. And so, you would not believe how much she has going on. And then I do refrigeration work and contracting in between. So, that's how we are able to make it, because it's that difficult to try to stay in the—in this industry in California.

0:23:10

Wang: So I guess over 50—no, not 54, but like 40-some years you've seen changes in the—

0:23:16

Pennisi: Oh yeah.

0:23:17

Wang: ....equipment, and you know, technology.

0:23:18

Pennisi: I'm kind of like—yeah, I'm kind of one of the last of that era, you know, because I remember, you know, all the old wooden boat stuff from, you know, when I was kid because my dad had a fleet of boats. He had his own marine stores. He had—We always built all of our own nets. You know, he had his freezer plants. He had his processing plants.

And you know, my dad was the type of guy where he was pretty adventurous, you know, and we went all over the place, and he really specialized in fishing gear and, you know, he, he taught us a lot of stuff, and a lot of the same places where we fish now are, we have all these maps and stuff here from like where my grandfather used to fish and where my dad fished. And I'll show you the—you know, they started off as landmarks and then they went to LORAN readings, and then—so kind of if I show you some of these books here you'll see like all these different tows that are written in here, around—these are, you know, places that my grandfather fished or my dad fished. But this is the cool book here that has like all the details. Like if look over the LORAN readings, all these—I mean, I, I don't even know how many hundreds of thousands of his snags and what's here, it's a rock or bad bottom, or a sunken barge or an airplane, or—you know.

But you've got to remember, for every single one of these little numbers in here, I mean, somebody had to tow the net, hung up, had to bring the net up, or if they might have lost the net, and then they brought up a chunk of something, you know? So, it's kind of interesting how many pages and pages and pages of little marks, you know, of things that people ran into the ships, you know. Yeah, and so this is all stuff from my grandfather and my dad.

0:25:13

Wang: That's really cool.

0:25:14

Pennisi: Yeah, it's really amazing.

0:25:16

Wang: We know you're, you're busy today, so we wanted to ask you just what you think your future role in this fishery will be.

0:25:23

Pennisi: Well, it's kind of a tough question because as much as I love fishing and stuff like that, you know, there is no, there is no future in this industry. I mean—I'm the last federal groundfish boat in San Francisco. And San Francisco used to be the hub, the mecca, of the West Coast fishing industry, you know.

And you know, we're so over-regulated and we have—A third of my income from the boat goes to paying the federal government for something, and there's—that's not sustainable when you own a boat. You can't—you can't give up a third of what you're making just to try to, you know, pay your government stuff. And, and I don't, I don't mind observers. I think observers are great, and I don't mind at all having them on the boat. But like here the other day we had an observer that was on the boat three months and a week ago, and he added almost 3,000 pounds of bocaccios to our, our harvest that—From three, over three months ago, and it put us in a deficit. A couple of hours before we went—we were going to go fishing, and we had to stay in from fishing to clear the deficit.

You know, when you have, when you have observers that have all this power that can shut you down, or when you have the federal government—like we've been threatened over 30 times to get arrested over here, just trying to bring fish to the dock. You know, it's just an over-reach. And then, you know, I don't want my kids having to go through this, you know, standing in the parking lot for three or four hours and being told, "If you move you're going to go to jail," and they go through all your stuff and then they do it again the next week. You know, it's just harassment. So. And I hate to say that, but that's how it is.

Now, I, I've told all my kids that. That's why I don't hardly take my kids fishing now. I take one or two once in a while—I'll just maybe throughout the summer just one time so they can see what it's like a little bit. But you know, it's really sad.

It really is. But you know, the cost of permits and to deal with all this, and then what you make at the end—and then I don't even have enough money afterwards to even take my boat to the shipyard. You know? So I got to work two jobs, my crews all got to work two jobs, and we're getting good money for our fish because we're selling them to the public. You know, we're getting between a dollar and $3.00 a pound for our fish. If it was like the old days getting $.30, $.40 on average for a lot of our fish, and then lease rates, everything else—you know. Because you know, the way this whole thing is managed is just ridiculous. I mean, why don't we just adjust our trawl gear and fish clean, you know? Have—We could have observers, that's fine. But, being over-managed and, you know, destroying an industry, and then what happens? You know, I mean then, then nobody has access to fish because up until recently, until I had my first receivers license, and I was fishing for other markets, when I'd bring fish to the dock, I couldn't even take any fish home unless I asked the fish market that owned the first receivers license if they would please allow me to, to, you know, put some fish on their tag and write "for personal use" so that I could actually have some fish to take home. And you know what? I think that's wrong. I mean, we should not have to get permission from a fish market to be able to take some fish home ourselves personally when we just came in from fishing and we caught the fish. You know? So—I don't know.

0:28:55

Pennisi: I don't think you'll put that in the little write-up.

0:29:02

Lesyna: Do you have anyone in your family, then, that you plan to pass all your fishing expertise off to? Or, do you hope that they don't participate in the future?

0:29:12

Pennisi: No, I've made it really clear to my kids I don't, I don't want any of them to be involved in this. And, if it wasn't that I had so much salt water in my veins, you know what I mean, I would not even do this myself because, I mean first of all it's so dangerous. This is like—I mean over 25,000 people a year die in commercial fishing, and it's almost like close to 30 times more dangerous than being a cop, and there's no retirement, and there's so many laws, and boats are, you know, a huge

liability. I mean, you know, you can't imagine what can go wrong when you just lock the door and go home even, you know, let alone when you go out fishing. And you know, if, if we didn't have so much overhead where we were able to afford to put some money aside for shipyard and making the boats safe, because safety is, it's paramount. It's the most important thing, you know? And that's why I've always been, you know, kind of laughing at the fact that, you know, here the government sucks all this money out of us and then, you know, they're putting observers on our boats, and even though we do a safety check and stuff—But you know, you know, how can, how can a boat be all that safe?

I mean, I know I spent a lot of money on this boat here. But I know how to weld. I know how to wire. I have a lot of different California state licenses. So, my boat's in a lot better shape than most. But a lot of these boats are in really bad shape because they're not making enough money to be able to, you know, take care of the boats properly. And, you know, they're putting observers on these boats and it's just like really, you know, I mean, to see these boats go further and further in disrepair and to know that, you know, that these observers are on there that don't have, really a lot of times they're not really that boat-wise, you know? They've just been in school and things, and they come out, and you go through your safety stuff. And like—This is probably one of the only boats on the entire coast—I carry two life rafts. I have a portable AIS, plus I have my VMS and my GPS and my EPIRB thing. I mean I, I have probably twice as many fire extinguishers and twice as many survival suits, and plus I carry, you know, personal flotation devices for all the crew plus anyone we take, because we take a lot of reporters. A lot of people come out with us, you know. And I have nine bilge pumps, and I have three backup pumps that are portable. So, you know, I have two generators, and I have a hydraulic engine plus my main. I mean, this boat has a lot of safety stuff. I have double alarms. I have cameras throughout the entire boat, like right behind you there. This is my lazarette, my engine room. This is the deck, so I can keep an eye on the crew, and that's by the winches, plus I have cameras on this, on this other screen over here as well.

So, I consider this boat to be a very safe boat to work on. But, you know, this isn't the norm, you know, and so I think that it's interesting how, you know, it's this whole industry is just being swept under the rug.

0:32:29

Lesyna: Do you have any hopes for the future of the fishery?

0:32:33

Pennisi: Well, you know, I used to be really optimistic growing up, and I stayed optimistic. You know, that's one of the reasons why, you know, I have the boat in this kind of condition, because I've turned my boat into a fishing boat fish market. So, I have a blast freezer downstairs. I have my own ice machine. I can make almost 6,000 pounds of ice a day. I, I've created this hoist over here on the side that has a 30-inch hydraulic ram and it swings out over the dock. And, I built all my own portable unloading equipment. That's my forklifts over there. I have my own delivery trucks, and stuff.

So, you know, I've gone to the extreme to, to stay a fisherman, you know, and to try to fish really clean. And, that's why I put all these cameras on my nets and I've come up with all these really amazing nets. And—But unfortunately there's no future in this, and anyone who thinks there is, they're kidding themselves because I got all the generations of fishing in my family. So when—I mean, that helps when I go out fishing to be a lot more precise and also to be able to tow around these, you know, sunken ships and barges without losing my nets. Right? So, that's an important facet, too.

And then when you're dealing with all the legal stuff and the permits and everything else, I mean there is zero incentive to do this, zero, because the liability is so high, and also the danger. I mean, this is an extremely dangerous job. And so, you know, I have to say the one thing that actually helps me to stay motivated is just seeing all the happy little people that come on the boat. If it wasn't for that—Those people there, they think that I'm doing something for them. They have no idea what they're doing for us. You know what I mean? And then whenever I bring fish to Glide Church and I get to share with the community, and all those people that are standing in line, and they know it's Fish Friday coming up, you know, because you usually cut the fish like on Thursday. And I mean, they light up like Fourth of July. They are just like--It's Fish Friday has become like the most popular meal at Glide Church. And they normally would have a line like two-and-a-half blocks long for lunch or dinner, and now the lines are over six blocks long when they know it's Fish Friday. And so—And they even have to do Fish Saturdays sometimes just

because they have to call me and I'll have to bring them a double load of fish. So, we're bringing like between 2,000 and 5,000 pounds of fish a week to Glide Church and, you know it's not like extra fish. More than half the time it's fish we put aside for them because I don't want to disappoint those people.

So you know, we're not going to get rich anyway, and you know what I think—especially I'm 54 and I've got a bunch of kids—and when I see those people I think, "You know what? That could be anyone's kid. It could be my kid." You know what I mean? You see these people, they've got problems.

But you know, it's just one of those kind of things where, you know, wherever you can see something positive you need to stay focused on that because the rest of it's not at all positive, you know? And so, that's kind of my story.

Lesyna: Thank you so much.

0:35:45

Pennisi: You're welcome.

0:35:45

Wang: Thank you so much for your time and for sharing with us.

[End recording at 00:35:57]