

Anonymous- Immigrant Seafood Processing Woman - Interview # 1

25 years old

Female

Seafood Processing-

New Bedford

Guatemalan, Mayan

Interviewer: Patricia Pinto da Silva (PPS) and Corinn Williams (CW)

Transcriber: Corinn Williams

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Interview #1 (I4)

PPS (Spanish) First off please confirm that you agree that this interview can be recorded and that your comfortable with this. Is this okay? Do you have any questions about the process? My name is Patricia Pinto da Silva and I am here with Corinn Williams and our interview is on June 21, 2007. The time is now 6:32 P.M. in New Bedford Massachusetts. We want to know about the life and experiences of our interviewee. To know more about her life.

CW -Basically this interview is going to be in three parts:

1. We want to know your life before coming here to the United States
2. What your life was like in Guatemala, how you came to the United States
3. How your new life is now in New Bedford

It's a long story...

There's a lot to talk about, lets start with the basics- where you were born, your family, your country.

I1-I was born on October 6, 1984 in Guatemala Suchitepeque.

PPS-Where is that in Guatemala?Is this is a big city?

[03:05]I1-Yes but not that big, It's made of different towns.It's a sector. It is beautiful there but it isn't that big of a place. I grew up in a place called Las Canales.

CW-What was like like?

I1-My life in Las Canales was poor but happy. We were poor because we were born without money. My father left when I was four years old. He traveled to the United States and I stayed

with my mother.

PPS- Did she work outside of the house?

I1-My mother would work sometimes but only in the fields. There they cultivated corn

CW- Do you have your own land?

I1-We owned a small piece of land to cultivate corn because when my father moved to the United States it changed our lives just a little bit. What he earned here it went far. It's not like what you earn over there, very little.

PPS- Was your father the first to leave the family? Do you have any other family that left Guatemala?

I1-Only my uncles from my father's side, brothers.

CW- Why did he move here?

I1-Well, I don't know if you heard about the war, I don't know the whole story but I think it was because of the wars and my father was threatened. At that time my father was single and then he married my mother, for that reason.. Also, what you make in Guatemala is nothing compared to what you can make here in America.

CW- So you stayed with your mother and siblings? How many siblings do you have?

I1-Yes, three brothers, one older brother and two younger brothers.

PPS- Did you help your mother around the house?

I1-I went to school during the day but during the afternoons I would help with what I could mostly, not much, cleaning, not cooking because because I was too young to cook.

PPS- Where did the rest of your family live? How were they related to your community? Did your aunts and uncles live in the same place or other places?

[06:36] I1-My family lived in a different place for the same reasons when they killed my grandfather my grandmother got left with eleven children.

CW- And he was the father of your father?

I1-Yes the father of my father.

PPS- You said they also threatened your father?

I1-Yes there were a lot of families in that place. In that time they killed the father of my father

and other men too of the same community.

PPS-Was that a part of politics or the violence of that time in Guatemala?

I1-Yes and for that reason my grandmother had to move to the city because there they paid more for her to take care of the kids and for that all of my uncles had to work since they were little.

CW- Because your father had to move too?

I1-Yes he moved too. He started when he was really little. The truth is I don't know whether or not he started at ten or eleven years old. Then he got married. The rest of my uncles and himself when they were older traveled to the United States.

CW- Well right now your father is a fisherman right?

I1-Yes.

PPS- So he lives here, that's good. So he left when you were four years old. How long has it been since you last saw him?

I1-Well I first saw him again at twelve years old.

PPS-How would you communicate with him?

[08:49]I1-We would communicate from the telephone.

CW-Would he help out he family?

I1-Yes, he helped out although sometimes he couldn't, and we didn't believe him, because of the bills and rent. It was hard to believe. He wasn't a fisherman then. When he couldn't help with the bills, because in Guatemala we don't rent, but we do have expenses so it was hard.

(Phone rings-paused)

PPS- We were talking about your life in Guatemala, Where do your three brothers live?

I1-They live in Guatemala still.

CW-What do they do there?

I1-The two youngest ones are studying and the older one got married and now works.

PPS-What kind of job?

I1-In agriculture also.

PPS-In corn? Where did they live, do they own their own land, or do they work for someone else? How is that, the relationship of the farmer to the land?

I1-Yes, it's the same, the only thing that is different, those who don't own, rent land and those who own land they don't own much of it, but they have some land and my brothers work on the land of my parents.

PPS- Is your mother still living in Guatemala?

[12:06] I1-Yes she is still there.

CW-Is your brother growing enough to sell?

I1-Well some to sell and some to eat, over there they just eat tortillas.

CW- He only grows corn to sell or other things like tomatoes?

I1-Well for those that want to grow other things they can but he just grows corn. That's what they grow over there under the sun that is terrible.

CW-Is it hot over there?

I1- Is it hot over there? (She laughs) Of course it's hot. That's why I always say I feel sorry for those that work in the sun in Guatemala. (over here) we work but in the shade and the cold.

CW-Where is Suchitepeque located , in the south?

I1-Yes in the south.

CW-What else do they grow there?

I1-Well they grow sesame and rice.

CW- Is it close to the sea?

I1-Not really that close like an hour away.

PPS- Do you ever go to the sea and beach?

I1-We are accustomed to go to the beach during Holy Week.

PPS-Are there parties?

I1-Oh a lot of parties. Some people die there.

CW-Why do they die?

I1-They die from the high tides of the sea, they drown.

CW-Could you describe how it is exactly on Holy Week at the beach?

I1-They put on dances; vendors, games, bars. And we eat seafood, seafood soup fish, shrimp, and crabs, shellfish- delicious!- just really good food during Holy Week.

PPS-Only your immediate family goes to the beach during Holy Week?

[15:01] I1-All of the family goes and everybody goes.

PPS-Where do they have this event?

I1-In all the different beaches of Guatemala.

CW-Where do the people stay, in tents or in a hotel?

I1-The people come really early in the morning and go back to their homes at night.

PPS-So it is not a festival for a whole week just one day?

I1-Just one day. It is called the Sabbath of Glory, we call it.

PPS- What type of music is played?

I1- Different styles of music like reggeaton but mostly band music.

PPS-Did these bands played instruments?

I1- It was a D..J. It's a great time- one day if I travel there, I'll invite you (laughs)

CW- In all of Central America is the custom to go to the beach during Holy Week. Do they have fireworks and bonfires?

I1-They don't have fireworks but they do have bonfires.

CW- It is kind of like the Fourth of July like we are accustomed to here in America. Everyone goes to the beach with their families to eat and watch the firecrackers, only it's in July.

I1-Some of these beaches here don't have waves.

CW-Of course they do, some have big and strong ones where there is open ocean.

PPS- Right here they don't because it's a bay, but in other places where it is open ocean.

I1- Like in Miami”

PPS- In Rhode Island there are places where they surf.

PPS- What are other differences between the beaches from here in New Bedford to Guatemala?

[18:06] I1- Here the beaches are filled with rocks and that’s dangerous.

CW- No, close by there is a beautiful beach before you get to Fall River with rough seas.

I1-In Guatemala the beaches are just made up of sand. Guatemala has coconut trees and the waves of the sea are always big and strong. It's delicious to drink cold coconut juice from the tree not like the stuff in the can they sell here.

PPS- In going to Holy Week, is your family religious? How do you practice your religion?

I1- My mother is Catholic, each person knows what they are doing and is responsible for their own lives. In the religion they celebrate Good Friday.

CW-They celebrate with a procession?

I1-Yes, with a procession and in that day they bring bands to play. Everything is really beautiful and it is also done by night.

CW- How is the fiesta done in Suchitepeque?

I1-It depends on the place. In Canales it is on the Friday the fifteenth, which is the second week before Holy Week . In Las Cruces they celebrate on the third of May. They have a dance, games but they always throw a party, on weekends there its very happy.

PPS-Is your father religious too, but not as much as your mother?

[21:04]I1- No not as much as my mother is.

PPS-Are these celebrations tradition or a mixture with indigenous religion just a part of Catholicism?

I1- If it is a tradition? They are a part of Catholicism. Like in every place there are people who believe in the Evangelical or the Catholic (religion). There are two churches one for the Evangelicals and the other for the Catholics.

CW- Do you have the *cofradias* like they do in Quiche, or is it different?

I1-It' s different, the towns celebrate Carnival but we lived on the outer side of the towns.

CW- How do they celebrate Carnival?

I1- Carnivals are magnificent. There they have everything. They have floats it's big-wow! they do everything.

CW- Where you lived did you speak in a different language or was it mostly Spanish?

I1-There are towns that speak in dialect.

CW- What dialect might that be?

I1-I honestly don't know.

CW-You and your family only spoke Spanish where you lived?

I1-Where we lived there are different dialects but we only spoke Spanish.

CW- Your grandparents, did they speak in different dialect?

I1-Yes, but us we don't understand.

CW- Not even your husband?

I1-No.

PPS- Did you both come to America together?

I1- Yes we came together.

PPS-Did you meet him in the same place?

[24:05] I1-Yes , in the same place.

CW-How did you meet?

PPS- Tell us your love story.(laughs)

I1- Well I was studying and I was fourteen years old. After we grew up together we started to like each other and go out with each other. My mother scolded me. My father didn't want us to go out because he wanted me to study. He would say I want you both to study because I don't want what happened to me to happen to you. Here I am working for you. But he didn't understand that we were in love. My father didn't want us to see each other and said he would send me to a Catholic boarding school, but I refused explaining that it wouldn't be best for us. At 15 , we started living together.. And my dad was very mad at me .

CW-Did your husband stay in school?

I1- I stopped going to school and that's why my father was mad. He didn't have too much help from his parents because they were poor but my father gave us both help. Still he stopped studying for a while too. By then he was twenty and in Guatemala twenty is an adult. We has started living together by that time for one or two months, but I was a minor, I was 15. By then my father came down to see us. It had been a long time since he left when I was four. I said, my grandmother would get money to go visit him and I would always ask to go see him, I would go see her at the airport, but she said there was no way she could help me see him. When I saw him at fifteen years old he was furious that I was not studying. So when he came, he was so mad and after he calmed down. He didn't have his papers then, and he said "I'm going to bring my daughter here to see what it is like". So that's why he sent for us.

CW- Was he okay with the both of you coming here?

[27:29] I1-That I would come here? He decided to take us both to New Bedford to work because we didn't study for a profession in Guatemala we could do any job we wanted. That's why we came here. There is no other way to come from Guatemala to America because it is too expensive.

CW- Your daughter was already born right? When was she born?

I1-She was born on October 22,2000.

PPS- Is she in Guatemala, does she live with your mother?

I1- No with my husband's mother.

PPS-How old is she?

I1-She is six years old.

CW-What year did you move to New Bedford?

I1-We moved in 2003 , it's good, more so for work. You can do the same in Guatemala but the work there is more back breaking and you make less.

PPS-If you had kept with your studies in Guatemala what type of job would you be doing there?

CW- If you would have stayed in school what kind of job would you have had?

I1-Well if I would have studied , I would be working in a factory sewing clothes, but that's if I lived in the city. In my town, I would have been housewife because you can't work.

CW-What other job could you has done?

[30:01] I1-Agriculture. I would clean the fields. That is really bad. I don't like it.

CW- Does your husbands family own land?

I1- Yes at one time they did, but his father sold it and he would rent it but there is always jobs like cultivating corn.

PPS-Was it difficult to make the decision to come here?

I1-He wanted to come, it was his decision to move down here. To myself I would say yes, but I would say to everyone else for everything that the people talk about America that it is difficult and there is danger on the journey. Women get raped and that the women get treated poorly. To get here we were hungry and walked for days, that was horrible. Going from Mexico to here it's tough.

CW-How many days were you on the road ?

I1-The trip was one month and two days.

CW-A month and two days!

I1- I thought that I would die walking, we walked through the how do you say it, the countryside through Mexico, but we arrived.

PPS-And were you traveling with other people or alone?

I1-Along with us came thirty-two people.

PPS- And you all made it?

I1- No, well there were one hundred thirty people of Guatemala but in Mexico we divided. We put ourselves into 2 groups. From Mexico to Phoenix came thirty people.

PPS- Of the thirty people were there anyone you knew?

I1-No, we came from different parts.

PPS- Out of the thirty people how many family memebtrs came with you?

[32:54] I1-Only my husband and one cousin.

CW-How much was the trip?

I1-Six thousand dollars for each person

CW- Each person so that's twelve thousand dollars all together?

I1-Yes.

PPS- Could you have to pay before or after?

I1-We paid divided in two parts. Before leaving you would pay half to them and then after arriving you pay the rest of it.

CW-How did you find the money from your father?

I1-From my father.

PPS-Your father saved that money from when he was working here?

I1-Yes. He earned a lot of money fishing.

CW-When you came did you work hard to pay that off?

I1-Yes we worked really hard to pay it off.

PPS- And you paid it all off?

I1- Yes, we're all done with paying it off thank God. I had to work hard at night to pay off the debt.

CW-When you just came here did you start working in seafood processing?

I1-My husband started yes in fish, but I didn't start until a month later. It is hard to work when you don't know the customs so I stayed at home closed up.

PPS-In those first days what were your thoughts?

I1-I wanted to go back. First I didn't have money for the ticket and secondly, I didn't know. It was terrible. We came in August and I wouldn't go out anywhere. My husband was the one who had enthusiasm for everything. I wouldn't even go to the store. I stayed in bed the whole entire month. I cried and didn't eat, I was sad about my daughter. My husband would say "hey let's go to the store its right around the corner" but I would say no you go ahead. Then he would suggest something else with my father because they had a car, but I would say "no you guys go ahead". I would not get up from bed. I'd only get up to go to the bathroom and go back to bed

PPS-Your daughter is the daughter of your husband also?

[36:17] I1- Yes.

PPS-How did you and your husband decide that leaving your daughter would be the best choice and to come here?

I1-We came risking our lives. We decided that if something were to happen to us we were

mature enough to handle it but not the child. It is best that she stayed but last year we tried to bring her here the same way we came but it went bad because she couldn't cross the border in Mexico.

CW-She arrived in Mexico?

I1-She made it all the way to the border but she got scared she said, "I want to leave". Since she returned now, she says she want to come back.

CW- Did she come accompanied by someone?

I1-She came with an aunt.

CW-They would have already arrived but immigration caught them?

I1-Yes.

I1-When immigration caught her she started to cry and scream. She got scared. She didn't want to eat and she missed her grandmother. It was terrible for us and for her. Maybe one day we can bring her but who knows.

PPS-Did you get your job in fish processing because you father is a fisherman?

I1-He had friends who told us that this company is hiring, we went and stayed to work, which is what we wanted the most. Whatever it was to earn dollars.

PPS- How long after you arrived did you start working? After that month what made you get out of bed how long did it take you to finally get out of bed?

[39:30] I1-For work and the debt and my daughter needed money also. I said to myself "well now I'm getting up and I'm going to work".

PPS -Were you living at your father's house?

I1- Yes wher he lived.

CW- Just with him?

I1-With my father and a couple of his friends.

CW-How many lived in the house?

I1-Six or seven in an apartment with three rooms.

CW-What company did you work at first?

I1-At (name of company).

CW- It's all men working there.

I1- I lasted awhile even though it is a company full of men, I was the only girl. They fish herrings.

PPS-They freeze fish it's a freezing factory? What was the job like?

I1- I would pick the good fish and the bad ones would go to the trash then I would go to the freezer to work and pick the ice blocks of frozen fish. On top we would get the fresh fish that arrived. Its too cold. I always thought that (other company) is cold, but not like this.

CW- It's in such a windy place, right on the bridge.

PPS- What was your schedule like?

I1- I didn't have one. The company liked the way we worked because they could call us at two in the afternoon to six in the morning. Or 3 in the afternoon to 6 PM. It was a lot of hours. It depended on the season for more hours when the boats come in.

PPS-In this season everything is closed.

CW- Are there different hours depending on the season?

[42:35] I1- There is work when it is cold. Now work is slowing down there is no work.

CW- But is there a of of mackerel in December?

I1- When there is fish there is a lot of work. But in the simmer there is no work.

PPS- Do they also fish squid?

I1- Not there, just herring and mackerel, just in the winter.

CW- What do you do in the summer? Do you get a few hours?

I1-I clean the offices for the same company. I clean the offices and the cafeteria, the bathrooms all of that.

PPS-Do you get paid more in the winter than the summer?

I1-Yes (yawn) I'm tired.

CW-Have you worked for any other seafood processing companies?

I1-As soon as I came here, in that year, no I did not. I just waited for the winter (cold season) to go back.

PPS-How many years did you work there?

I1-Two years.

PPS-You said you were the only woman there how did that feel?

[45:03] I1-I don't know. The treatment from others I liked. There was a secretary and another lady who came in at night to clean. The secretary worked in the daytime. Since my husband worked with me I felt better.

CW- So you worked together.

PPS-After working in that factory for two years where else did you work?

I1-I worked at another company. I don't know the name...(remembered name) .There we worked with flounders, greysole, cod . I didn't last long there, only days, I liked it, but there weren't enough hours. They'd give us three or four hours then there were days when we didn't go. Then I got the job I'm at now.

PPS- You always worked in seafood processing?

CW- Yes that is why it's a good interview (laughs)

CW- Why is it better there? Do they give you more hours?

I1- Yes they give good hours. Lately because the summer is ending we get more hours. We go four days and have one day off.

PPS- Now is there enough hours at that factory?

I1-Yes,right now we work more than 40 hours. There is a time when the hours drop and we don't even reach to 20 hours. I applied and I got the job where I am now.

PPS- Your saying that when there is less fish you make less? So there is a direct relation between the availability of fish and your well-being?

I1-Yes.

CW-Were you working when you were pregnant with your second child?

[48:33] I1- Yes. I worked until the end of the pregnancy. I left 20 days before. It helped me

because when he was born the pain was hard but it was quick and easy.(laughs) She's nervous (PPS is pregnant).

PPS-(English) Don't even tell me!

I1- She doesn't know

PPS- I don't want to know (laughs).

PPS-Who takes care of your son when you are working?

I1-A babysitter.

CW-Is she Guatemalan?

PPS-Is it a woman who cares for many children in her house?

I1-She takes care of her child and mine in her apartment.

PPS- that's nice, there are others from your community, that you have someone from your country.

I1-Yes. We met each other here but not in Guatemala. She is really nice.

PPS-How much does she charge?

I1-She charges me, for being her friend, sixty dollars a week.

PPS- \$240 per month.

CW- Does it change when you have less hours?

I1-No it's still sixty dollars a week, it's the same .

PPS-Does your husband work with you?

I1-No he doesn't work there he fishes.

PPS-, what does he fish?

I1-He is out fishing for eels. My father fishes for scallops.

CW-How many days is your husband gone for?

I1-He's been gone since Saturday and he hasn't returned yet.

PPS- The trips are several days 7-8 days.

CW- To fish eel how many days is he gone?

[52:09] I1- He is usually gone for eight to ten days. Right now he is leaving for Virginia. Tomorrow he is leaving for one month.

PPS- For eels?

CW- Are there a lot of boats in New Bedford fishing for eels?

I1-He is leaving because the boat is from Fall River, but since there isn't any more fish in the area.. They have to stay in Virginia where there is product.

PPS-Where does your father live now?

I1- I live with my aunt and her husband, and my father lives apart from us, he lives on his own now with a friend.

PPS-Does your husband work during the entire year does he take a rest?

I1- Well, during December when everything dies down yes. In December and February when the weather gets bad.

PPS-Are you worried about him being out at sea for that long?

I1-Yes of course. I watch the television and I get scared.

PPS-Do you have a way to contact him?

I1-When he is out yes, but out fishing no.

PPS-There is no phone on the boat?

I1-No, but sometimes he calls me from the emergency phone over there to see how I am .For now everything has been o.k. Thank God.

PPS- Does he fish with other Guatemalans?

[55:09] I1-No. On other boats there are Hispanics but on the boat he goes on he is the only one. He fishes with Americans and Chinese men.

CW- Is the boat big?

I1-It's more or less big-medium sized.

CW-How many men are in the crew?

I1-About six men go.

CW-From Fall River?

I1- Yes from Fall River.

PPS-When he comes back do you go to the port to pick him up?

I1-When he leaves from Fall River I pick him up there. But since he is going to Virginia I'm leaving him at the airport in Boston.

CW- So he will be flying because the boat is in Virginia.

PPS- I didn't know that, I thought the would go by car, it's about seven hours from here.

CW- Does he always fish from the same boat with the same crew?

I1-Yes.

CW-Since when?

I1-Last year.

CW-Does he like his co-workers?

I1-Yes.

CW-I know that in tax season its complicated with deducting his expenses, to figure it all out how to pay taxes as a fisherman.

I1-I know , but he doesn't get paid that much.

PPS- Do they pay your father better?

I1-Yes he does but it depends on the production that they bring that's how he gets paid. I know that the scallop he brings is more expensive and you earn more.

PPS- Does your father work on the same or different boats?

I1-It depends on where he is needed.

PPS-We want to know more about how you adapted here in New Bedford. Did you make friends? If so how and where? Do you go to church on Sundays? What are your relationships in the community? Where did you meet friends?

[58:42] I1-I have a few girlfriends but I don't go to church (giggles) . I met my friends at work. They come from all places like El Salvador, Mexico and Guatemala. That's more so my mother, she is more religious than me.

PPS- Five years from now would you like your life to be the same or what would you change?

I1-I hope its better, I would like to eventually stop working so much maybe even learn English to stop working at these fish companies.

CW-What type of work would you look for?

I1-Something like a pharmacy or just somewhere warm for the cold winter, that's how you get sick.

CW-Do you get sick from working in the cold?

[1:00:21]I1-Quite a bit, I've gotten the flu, my bones hurt and fever.

CW- Where you worked have you ever gotten hurt on the job?

I1-At this moment where I worked, I haven't gotten injured.

CW-But with working over there are there any problems?

I1-Only with a co-worker, not all of them, but with the same guy, from well I don't know. Look- he is Guatemalan and he is a manager now but he was a worker just like us and now he exploits us, he just yells at us all the time for no reason. I was really upset actually I am upset with him.

CW- Yes I know you called me today and you were really upset. You called from the ladies room. What happened?

I1-I really don't even know. When I started working there I wasn't pregnant and he thought I was single and he was single, so he started to bother me saying that he has everything in Guatemala, like a house and land. I told him "how nice for you but I'm not interested". After a while he saw that I was pregnant and he stopped bothering me. This is still when he was just a worker. When he became manager he became exploitative, yelling not talking things like "work faster, don't talk, the fish is too dirty and shut up or I'll send you home because I have the right". He is not the boss but he doesn't understand that he can't treat us the way he does. He works just like the rest of us and only the boss can do that. The other day I came to work and it's been 3 months since I came back, he asked me to be his lover. He's married and I'm married so why would he ask me that? Only a crazy man would ask a question like that! First thing in the morning!. Could you imagine? The Monday before, I was walking and he asked if I needed a ride but I said "no thanks", so the next day at work he told me that I was going to regret rejecting

him. He threatened me. "Be my lover and I'll give you a lot of hours at work"- as if he was paying me, I have to work for it.

He bad mouths us to the boss and other managers because he knows a little bit of English and they yell at us too to shut up and hurry up but one begins to get bored with just standing there cleaning until break time which is only fifteen minutes. They didn't pay me last week and I know I amongst only a few get treated poorly the most but I don't have sick days even though I always get sick. Also I never take a personal day even if I have things to do because they don't give it to me nor do they give me permission to leave if I have to. If I have an appointment they get mad. I tell them what can I do I want money also but I have other things to do.

PPS-Does the babysitter ever call in sick, what happens?

[1:05:06] I1- Sometimes if the baby gets sick and (the babysitter) can't take care of my child , and I call in and they get upset with me, but at least I let them know ahead of time. They have rules that when a worker can't go to work he or she needs to call and I understand that. That's the same way I told the boss although he didn't like it much. He called this lady who works here too, she is Cape Verdean, and she speaks Spanish and English. She asked me what is happening and I simply said , he bothers me by threatening me saying that "I'm going to send you home" and if he keeps saying this to me , why don't you tell me yourself, he is not the boss. Why don't you guys just talk to me instead? If the way I am doing my job isn't good enough for you come and tell me. And that I was going to tell (name-manager) .

I know that he gets mad. I say to myself that I know that I can't do that because we could both lose our jobs. For me that isn't a problem because I have my husband who works and pays the rent- but he is a man and he needs to think that he is going to take care of his wife. His wife is pregnant.

CW-Does his wife work?

I1-No she doesn't work there. I mean he needs to think about that. He has a family to support but he doesn't think about that. All he thinks about is himself. Who knows what he's thinking, he's a crazy man. I mean the other day they fired another guy and I didn't feel good about it. We are all the same. We are all here for the same reasons to work and we want money. I cant do that to him. I just don't feel good about it but him with me he has no consideration for. I told them not to send (supervisor's name) to me just that if you need me to do another job tell me yourselves and I will go and If you don't want me to send me home. I understand because I am a human being not an animal. He told all three of us that we looked like an animal he mentioned the name. I told him that I have the right and that the animal is he because he never understands and he never stops to bother me. I've been telling him don't bother me because I don't want to have problems. If I complain they say it the way they want to say it not the way that I say it because they don't understand Spanish.

CW-So they say it the way they want to. When I spoke to him he was telling me that this is the first time he ever got complaints.

[1:09:34] I1- That's because everyone is afraid to lose their job. I'm not afraid, I tell them that I

will leave right now. I have hands that I can work at any place with. I don't like that they do this to me. I don't need insults or to be exploited. He exploits everyone because they don't get paid on holidays. My aunt rests, she is a stitcher and she gets paid holidays but we don't. We all need to work only one day a year do we get off which is Thanksgiving and the only people that get paid that day is the ones who work part of the company. We work with the temp company so we don't get paid.

CW- You work for a temp company, why don't you work through the company?

I1-Because I worked one year for the company before I had my work permit. But I left because my son would get sick a lot so they told me to stay home to take care of him. I stayed taking care of him for a couple of months. After the year was over my son was happy and he stopped getting sick. I came back to ask for work and they gave it to me. If they gave me work it is because I need it and they know me that after all, that they tell me that if I don't do it well they will send me home, and that the boss should tell me not you. This guy said he would talk to him because I already told him that if you don't understand than I will take it to the boss or the lady from Boston or they fire me or fire the both of us but I am fed up with all this. He never heard a complaint until today from me.

CW- That's what he told me that he has never heard a complaint and that he will talk with you.

I1-As I said before everyone is afraid to lose their job.

PPS- Fear of losing you job, is there any other reason that they are afraid to speak up?

I1-No it's just the job, because we put up with the hours that they give us. Today he talked to me at lunch saying go ahead and talk to them. I told him that I am not afraid of him and if that is what you want then that's what I will do. I am going to do what I want to do not what you demand because we are the same he doesn't have a right to order me around. I don't know what he said or what they will say to me tomorrow but that is just wrong.

PPS- What is the best thing about your job, is it just the money that they pay you that you like about your job?

I1- Packing.

CW- Why do you like it so much.

I1-When I first got there, I was inexperienced because I worked at the other company. But it is something that I have always liked. I didn't have experience, but I would practice anyway and then eventually they would send me to go pack and I liked it.

CW-What would you pack, fish that was cut by hand?

I1-The machine cleans and cuts the fish. We would clean what was left and send them downstairs to be packaged. The best fish goes to Stop and Shop other stores too. Founder,

greysole, cod. He ignores me now though. Instead of sending me to pack the fish he prefers to send other people who don't know what they are doing, they have no experience.. I get so mad with him and I tell him why do you ignore me please tell me. He tells me I don't pack the fish well and I look at him like well then how come you have waited all this time to tell me?

PPS- What part of your job is the most difficult?

[1:15:59] I1-They don't pay enough.

CW- How much do you make?

I1-We get paid eight twenty five an hour. Could you imagine having to do that kind of work and not talk, only to get paid eight twenty five an hour? It's a lot that I do there. I clean, I pack cod fish, I pack everything. It's not a lot but there are people there who get paid nine dollars an hour, or \$8.50 or \$8.75. After a year I got the extra twenty five cents because they told me it was convenient to work for the company and because I left to take care of my son they consider me new again. My experience they take into consideration but the time lost they don't.. I explained to the boss that I worked here long enough and that I want the benefits that come with working for the company like the vacations, holidays and personal days. I need them and that they should give me a raise. Then they said they would talk to the supervisors and the three of them are going to talk to see what they could do, but I still haven't heard anything from them.

CW- Are the majority of the workers from the company American or Hispanic?

[1:18;18] I1- The workers are Hispanic. .Mostly everyone works for the temp company except for some if the Salvadorans who work for the company directly. The Guatemalans and the Hondurans work for the temp company.

CW- What temp company is it?

I1- I don't know.

CW- Is it here in New Bedford?

I1- No from Boston or Taunton.

PPS-In the household who takes care of the financial matters?

I1-The both of us but now that he is going to Virginia, it will be up to me. I am lucky that my husband includes me because not all guys are the same.

PPS- Is that common?

The men in Guatemala are the same as the men from here. Some are machos that don't include the women and there are men like my husband who do not mind.

PPS-Do you have friends that have children that stayed in Guatemala?

I1-Yes I do. A lot of families are separated.

PPS- Did they leave them in Guatemala thinking that it is easier to work here without them and to leave them with family?

I1-It is not easy to be here without your family. We miss them a lot. We are here for money so that our children can study at home and have what we didn't have. We sacrifice a lot. It is better to have love than things. When I was In Guatemala my dad would send me toys and clothes but I wanted my father around to take me to buy an ice cream and to play. I don't want to study and be alone.

PPS- Do you have any plans to return to Guatemala?

[1:21:40] I1- Yes, when I am able to get my papers settled to allow me to travel sure I would to see my family.

CW-Can your father travel now?

I1- Yes he fought real hard to be able to and now he is planning to go home because my mother and my grandmother is real sick.

CW- And your mother?

I1-My mother has diabetes but as of now she is doing better.

CW- How old is your mother?

I1-She is forty-three years old.

PPS-Do you have anything else to comment on?

I1-No , not really we already talked about a lot of things.

PPS- With so many of your family involved in fishing, what are your hopes about the future of the fishing industry?

I1-To leave it! I don't expect anything out of it anymore. This job is too hard.

CW-Would you want more hours and more fish to come in?

[1:24:06] I1-Oh of course I would. The majority of Hispanics work at the fish and they are the only ones working at the fish houses now. Other companies where its warm inside to work only give forty hours but here at the fishing companies they give fifty or sixty hours. They pay little, that's all.

CW-One last question, were you working when the Mexican woman died in the fire (worked at same company)?

I1-I never got to know her, but I think I was hired to replace of her even though they weren't hiring employees. Could you imagine? It was a tragedy and the children. She lived in the north end but she was fighting with her husband so she moved to the south end just for that. I say how can that man deal with this if he has a conscience. It was his fault well maybe not his fault but destiny, what was meant to happen happened, but if he hadn't fought with her this wouldn't have happened.

PPS-How were you affected by the raid, how did you feel?

I1-Very nervous-I'm not in danger because I have permission to work but the rest of the workers who have family here and in your country, and those who just got here with all that debt that you bring with you they must be desperate and disillusioned. In the U.S. with the way they treat us innocent people, exploiting us all the time and then to just take us away like that. We are the ones working in fish, I don't see any American people working here. I think we are the ones who work the hardest so why if they need us so much why do they choose to treat us harshly? I don't understand, I know there are other people in the world who are not like that, and who have big hearts.

PPS- Thank you so much for participating. We are also going to write this out so we can have it on file and Corinn Williams is going to give you a copy digital and a written copy on a CD so that you can give a copy of it to your children and grandchildren to know more when they grow up.

PPS-How old are you?

I1-I am twenty-three years old.

PPS-You have already lived too much having only being twenty-three.

I1- I've lived a lot!

End

[1:29;15]

