

Interview with INTERVIEWEE [ANON] [Interviewee requests anonymity]
Occupation: wife of fisherman
Port Community: Point Judith, RI
Interviewer: Lisa Colburn [LC] and Azure Westwood [AW]
Date: March 11, 2008
Location: Narragansett, RI Town Library
Women's Oral Histories Project – NOAA Fisheries
Logger/Transcriber: Azure Dee Westwood

Interview

00:00 [Going over the NOAA Release form; INTERVIEWEE FIRST NAME also mentioned that she had been interviewed by Women's Studies at either URI or UMass Dartmouth in the past; Lisa goes over the project objectives]

06:10 LC: Could you spell your name please? Your name is ANON...

ANON: INTERVIEWEE.

LC: And could you please give us your address.

ANON: ADDRESS1, TOWN1, RI

LC: Thank you. And where you born?

ANON: I was born in Providence RI.

LC: So you're somewhat a local.

ANON: Only because there was no hospital back then that did deliveries. So everybody was born in Providence.

LC: So your family is from here...

ANON: My father was born in Narragansett. So I am a long term, true local.

LC: And how many generations of your family...

ANON: Well, my children are the 4th.

LC: And how far back does fishing go in your family?

ANON: My husband's father was a fisherman. And his father was a charter boat captain. So my husband is 3rd generation and both my sons spent some time fishing and decided against it, but they would have been 4th generation fishing if they would have continued.

LC: And your husband's grandfather ran a charter boat... was that in the Point Judith area?

ANON: No, that was in Long Island for his father and his grandfather.

LC: And your husband's father, was that Long Island as well?

ANON: Long Island, yes.

LC: So you're a local Narragansett, your husband is a transplant?

ANON: Yes he is. Graduated from URI in the Fisheries Program and was offered a job right away on one of the boats in Galilee and he stayed. And then I met him after that.

LC: You said that your sons... could you tell me what the ages are of your children?

ANON: My children are 24, 26, and I have an older son that doesn't live with me and he's 41. My two younger sons live with me, one of them has a wife that lives with me, and there's a 4-year old granddaughter...

LC: Is there a failure to launch problem....?

ANON: Do you think?! But why wouldn't they? They have a great situation; we cook, we clean, we do everything for them, babysit all the time. I mean I'd live with me; it's a great place to stay. All live at home.

LC: And you said that both of the younger ones took a stab at fishing?

ANON: Yep, actually the older one did too, but the younger one, we owned a lobster boat for awhile and he and his father did that for a summer. And both of my younger boys have fished on and off and actually, my middle son had gone with CAPTAIN1, our present captain, who is my nephew. He had gone fishing with him for one summer and had intended to make it his life, but too much for him. It was a rough year, he didn't make as much as he had planned to, the weather, he's now a cook, head chef at a restaurant.

09:12 LC: And which restaurant?

ANON: RESTAURANT1, It's in Wakefield.

LC: That's wonderful. My daughter is going into culinary arts.

ANON: Really?

LC: Very excited, having a cook in the family.

ANON: Having a cook in the family is great, plumbers, too maybe...

LC: Electricians!

ANON: Yep, those too, car repair people all those things we love, they can do services.

LC: So he gave it a stab and then he went into, became a head chef. Has he had any formal training or he learned as he went?

ANON: He's taken some of the classes but he's pretty much learned as he's gone along.

LC: And the other two?

ANON: Well the younger one is working on, finishing up his Bachelors at URI, Computer Sciences, and then he also works full time for SON'S EMPLOYER. I always call it that, it's called XXXX or ...

LC: It was PLACE NAME1, or that's the new one.

ANON: That's what it's called. So he's doing very well.

LC: And the oldest one?

ANON: He lives out of state, he's still kind of a free spirit but when we bought, we had two boats for a period of time, and my husband bought the second boat with the thoughts of having one of his three sons or step-son and two sons, eventually have that boat. And my oldest son tried it for about six months. But there's a lot, too much conflict, step-father step-son, it didn't work out.

LC: Now your older son is his step son, and your two youngest sons are?

ANON: His natural sons.

LC: Ok. Was there ever a point in time when... you said one of the sons had a bad summer, he was thinking about it and tossed in the towel after a bad summer... the one that is getting the degree at URI, was there ever a point where he was seriously considering it?

ANON: No. Absolutely not. Absolutely not. He gets seasick. He would go, and he liked lobstering better than he liked dragging, he would go if his father was in a big pinch, but absolutely never considered it. Never.

LC: And what would your husband and your advice be given the current climate of where things are?

ANON: Obviously, we would tell them never to do it, not to do it. Anyone getting in this late I think is, unless they could have someone give them a boat with licenses or sell it to them cheaply. I just think it's sad, but it's not a future that I see for people getting into it today. 30 years ago it was great but today, no, absolutely would not think of it.

LC: It's interesting, when I was up in Northern Maine, they're just coming off of 4-5 years of good lobstering, and the parents are buying licenses for their kids as soon as they are able...

ANON: Such a mistake. They are going to be under the same...

LC: ...Encouraging kids to go into it...

ANON: It's a mistake. They're going to be under the same restrictions for lobstering as they are dragging.

12:18 LC: Still at that point, 4 years ago, a great deal of optimism.

ANON: Really?

LC: There's a difference...

ANON: Huge trend, huge swing down, no optimism at all...

LC: Very similar concerns, women, mothers, very similar concerns about other things, but in this regard, many of them... I think all mothers talked about wanting their children to have a back-up. They wanted, I think there was only one family where they were not concerned about that, but all of them wanted them to have a trade or...

ANON: Really, besides fishing...

LC: They were that level of forward thinking but they were O.K. with their kids going into it as long as they had a back-up.

ANON: Yeah, no. I don't think you're going to find anyone thinking that now.

LC: And how long have you and you husband been married?

ANON: It will be 29 years next month.

LC: And in terms of how you and your husband divvy up your life, you were working as a school teacher?

ANON: INTERVIEWEES PAST PROFESSION.

LC: Are you still a INTERVIEWEES PAST PROFESSION.

ANON: I retired from that job and I have worked under EMPLOYER1 as a case manager and I've just applied for another job exactly like that.

LC: Is that in the local area?

ANON: Locally.

LC: When you're doing that, what kinds of services are you providing?

ANON: It's at a not for profit so it's general case management, so they service 650 families, so there won't be any really intense case management, obviously, it's going to be a lot of referral, a lot of referral information, follow-up on that kind of thing.

LC: And who are the families that you're helping. What are some of their issues or needs?

ANON: Well they come there for food, because they don't have enough food to get through the month. And we give them a weeks worth of food. And then they might be referred to me, a lot of homeless, a lot of drugs and alcohol problems, involvement with

DCYF, people without transportation... we're seeing a lot more middle class, people who have \$2,400 mortgages who are having to leave their homes, having to give up their cars, don't have a clue about where to go from there, don't know enough about welfare or what benefits they might be eligible for.

LC: Is this for all of South County?

ANON: We receive food from the PLACE NAME2, we have to service anyone in the state, but if someone drives down from Providence because they heard there were great food baskets down here, we try to hook them up with their Providence food bank, that's a better idea, they shouldn't be wasting gas coming down here. We could possibly service the whole state...

LC: But most of your people are here? And where is the office located?

15:20 ANON: It's the (XX). I haven't gotten the job yet. Knock on wood. Well they called all my references, and I know they've gotten glowing references and it was down to two people so, and I've been volunteering there the last 2 years in the hopes of garnering my, so we'll see what happens within the next few weeks. So that's going to change things dramatically in our household because my husband is used to when he has to go fishing, having me there as the rock. Like my husband left last night to go fishing and he has no idea when he'll be back, so...

LC: Did you go to school to be a PROFESSION?

ANON: No. I was an English major. It was not my intent to do that. Both my sisters have been PROFESSION and one of them talked me into taking the exam and I was 24 years old and I passed it and did really well, and got hired right away.

LC: So you've been working in PROFESSION for?

ANON: For 32 years.

LC: That's wonderful.

ANON: A long time!

LC: And with the EMPLOYER1, are there people that come from the fishing community, whether crew or...?

ANON: Absolutely. Absolutely. In fact that was the XXXXXXXX when I was working for EMPLOYER1. This one here, I see fishermen all the time. I see people who have fished on my husband's boat over the years. So it's a lot of fishing families that are coming there now. A lot.

LC: So does the service that EMPLOYER1 serves, is it a replacement for the fishermen's assistance center that used to be in Point Judith?

ANON: I never knew anyone who went there in all my years working as a PROFESSION. I never knew anyone who used it.

LC: I remember going there about 20 years ago...

ANON: I don't think it was used for what it was intended to be used for, ever. Ever. Do you remember the big oil spill, 10-years ago maybe?

LC: The lobster...?

ANON: Yeah, I was involved in that because I worked a couple days a week with EMPLOYER2, and they set it up as a resource center. So everybody who was affected by

the oil spill came there to apply for any services they might be eligible for. Or to get involved in trying to get some of the money that was supposed to have been filtered back in to help those people out. I don't know why I brought that up just now. Well because I saw so many fishermen over the years.

LC: Well, this is one of the ways in which peoples lives have been affected. It also dovetails with management, issues and restrictions from management, so it actually is very relevant.

18:17

LC: Can you tell me who... how would you describe people that come to the EMPLOYER1, mostly crew?

ANON: This one isn't the EMPLOYER1, this one is a privately-funded, the one that I have applied for the job with, and yes, it's crewmen.

LC: Crewmen primarily...

ANON: Absolutely, who have had three or four trips that were brokers. And so there's no money so they have to come and get food, but yes, I've seen a lot. And I worked in the EMPLOYER3 office for 15 years and now my niece does. So I see her everyday, all the time, and she talks a lot about that, a lot of fishing families still coming in, hurt on a boat, or brokers, too may brokers, or fired or whatever it is, she's still seeing a lot of that too.

LC: So, it's both the families of the crewman, like the wives would come in, or is it the crewmen that have to come in?

ANON: The husband, if they're married, they have to come in together. Otherwise it would be the wife.

LC: And are a lot of them what you would consider locals? See, I'm from California; I will never be a local.

ANON: You have to be four generations. My poor husband, 30 years in the Point and they still think of him as an outsider. And they all say that to him. Still an outsider. Well it's such a small state, everybody is local.

LC: Not anymore. When I first moved to Newport there were still some people that had never left the island. It was told in terms of tall tell. People had never really left the island and there was an accent. A genuine accent from people who came from local families and I just don't run across that anymore.

ANON: I was a EMPLOYER4 there for eight years, Newport office, and I would find jobs for them. "And you got to go across the Newport Bridge..." "What?! Across the bridge, oh no I can't do that, no I can't do that". What if we give you tokens? "No, no, I can't do that!"

LC: Even, what was it, it was the Newport and then the Jamestown?

ANON: Well the Jamestown Bridge is free at least, but it used to be the old one.

LC: Was that one first...

ANON: Which one was built first? Jamestown.

LC: Jamestown. So the ferry, people would take the ferry across.

ANON: That's how we did it. We'd go shopping in Newport and take the ferry.

LC: The thinking about the inaccessibility of it and the whole island mentality.

ANON: But it's a dollar to go. You know, even my son, he works in Newport, he's like "I just don't like the tokens". And I'm like, my god! It's \$2 a day. What's the problem? I go to Newport all the time.

LC: And if you stop at the transit authority and you buy \$50 worth you get an extra roll. I never have the time, but, it's still, I understand that it's a little added extra expense.

ANON: They're bizarre.

LC: But not as much anymore. When we bought out house in Newport we had some carpentry done and one of the guys was "Oh you can't get that here; you got to go off the island!" But we didn't have services then, there was no, there was a K-mart and a, there were 2 stores K-mart like, and one market, one Stop and Shop and that was it. Seriously.

ANON: I remember. I remember.

22:19

LC: In terms of your family, how involved are you and you husband with the fishing community? There are people I have met and talked to that did not have a social life with other fishing families, that the husband was out there fishing; when he came home the family did there own thing and really wasn't engaged with other families that fished out of Point Judith.

ANON: Probably back when my husband was fishing, back more in the '80's, 90's, we were more involved. But I have never been one of those wives who is hanging around on the dock, grabbing a beer and running out waiting for my husband to bring his boat in. Actually have never been out on his boat, and he's had this boat for 24 years. I've never been on it. There's a lot of negative, and I saw a lot of it through my work, hear a lot of negative stuff, so I kind of, for one thing, they would recognize me, if I was involved, so I try to...

LC: Professional distance.

ANON: Right. To keep myself removed and it still happened in the grocery stores; they'd see you and realize who you were. Right now, the only way I'm involved is that I'll go to any of the dinners, like the other night, I'll do that. The scholarship dinners, they have them at the Elks Club, for the Memorial, or for the scholarship, I'll do that kind of thing, but that's the extent of my involvement with anyone. From going to fish shows, I've been involved for awhile, the Women in Fisheries, the group out of.... Yeah. And they kept emailing me but I never really got involved. My husband's a shore captain now and him being out fishing today, he hasn't been for probably six months, so....Our lives are probably much different. Although my husband is totally 100 percent focus is on fishing. He's at the Point everyday.

LC: And is his, if you look at your social networks.

ANON: Absolutely, his friends are fishermen. That's who he talks to all the time, constantly, all fishermen. All his best friends are fishermen. Absolutely. I don't think he has any friends outside of fishing.

LC: And do you have any friends who are?

ANON: Who have, no. Absolutely not.

LC: No women whose husbands are?

ANON: No. I've had in the past, but now no, absolutely no.

LC: But this is pretty typical for now a days in Point Judith.

ANON: There is very little cohesion among the wives, I think. It's nice when you go to the fish shows, coming up in April, and I'll go up maybe a day with my husband if I'm not working. It's nice, see all the husbands and wives and 'how ya doing', but that would be it. Fishing families tend to not, tend to keep to themselves more, because when your husband does come in, you want to be with him. And you never know when it is, so it's hard to make any kind of plans, on the chance that he comes in. When my husband left last night, it's like, will you be home tomorrow night; we're babysitting. "No, I don't think so." I said "you're not going to be able to call me?" He says, "No, I'll far out". I said, "Will you be home for Thursday, I want to play bingo with my sister?" "No, I don't think so, don't make any plans." So it's just so different, so I'm just on hold waiting for him. I don't really do anything because I'm waiting for him. And that's basically I think what you'll find women doing.

25:49

LC: What was it you said about some wives who would be down there waiting for their husbands to come in? Is that typical now a days or was that something more characteristic of the past?

ANON: You still see them down there.

LC: And are they captain's wives, or the crew wives?

ANON: The crew wives, girlfriends, I mean there is still a different element down there, and I shouldn't say anything, I met my husband at PLACE NAME3. He had gotten off a boat, and I was sitting there having a drink, so I'm no different than them, but I don't know. Enough of that.

LC: I think in truth... [LC explains that she can turn off the recorder at any time if she would like to express something off the record and that she will be able to review the transcription and make changes if she chooses.]

27:10 [Recording turned off]

00:00 LC: How long has your husband been fishing, you said about 30 years?

ANON: More than that, he started when he was about 10 or 12 working on his dad's boat. He's been here in RI since '74 I think.

LC: You said that your family's success in fishing was made from squid, is that the accurate way to put it?

ANON: That was probably the major product over a 10-year period.

LC: If you could give me a chronology with the kinds of things that he did when he started out. Could loosely remember from the beginning to where you are now?

ANON: He fished for his father; his father was a trap fisherman in Long Island. Then he came here to go to URI, graduated from URI and got a job on a boat out of Point Judith as a mate. He was making really good money. He and I got married, and that boat was gone long periods of time.

LC: What year was that?

ANON: We got married in '79. The boat would go to Maine, and it would just be gone for a week and I didn't like it so I talked him into taking a job on a local boat, inshore, day boat. And that didn't work out because the pay was terrible. It was like a tenth of what he'd made, it was crazy. And so he decided to buy his own boat, so he boats, 1979,

the year we were married he bought a boat and he fished just that boat until 1983 and he built a boat. He actually moved himself to North Carolina for six months and built a boat. And when he came home, he started fishing that really hard and in 2002 or 01 he bought a second boat and somewhere in between he also owned a lobster boat for a year that he worked with his kids. In the beginning of 2000 he bought a second boat and he ran than and he had a crewman for the other boat so for about 3-4 years we had 2 draggers. And then when I retired he decided that he, I actually think I forced him into selling the second boat because I wanted him to spend more time with me because at the time I was sick, I had thought I was going to be home forever, but that didn't work out. So then he became a shore captain and got a lot more involved in the politics through the different associations.

03:16

LC: It sounds like it's been squid, it's been lobster, then groundfish...?

ANON: It's never been lobster except for that one very short period. Lobster is a byproduct of fishing. He's a dragger; he catches groundfish, flounder, things that swim on the ground. That's been his... and then there's a period of time, like right now, he's out for squid. And they have to go further out, I think it's, I don't know what he said, 8 or 12 hours steam to get there and then be there for a couple days and come back and hope you've had a good catch. But squid, yes, definitely, probably for 8 or 10 years. He said that was probably the most important product for us.

LC: Could you start at the point when you were here, when he was just starting out and you could look at the typical things that got better, more financially secure, more secure? When did that begin to change? Or has it for you, because some families are doing ok.?

They're strategizing, they're fishing less, but they're holding in there. So for you...?

ANON: Well, the beginning was terrible for us because the first boat we bought ended up having a huge hole that hadn't been seen. They didn't do X-rays of boats back then. So that cost us thousands and really put us in the hole for a couple years to a point where I didn't know if we were going to go into bankruptcy or what. And then he got the second boat and things were good for everybody in the '80's. Probably around the time when my husband got rid of the second boat is when we... first I thought it was because we didn't have the income from the second boat, but I don't think that was it, that was more when the restrictions became such, so probably 3-4 years ago. We thought we could live on my retirement and his boat share but one of the reasons I want to go back to work is because I don't think that is possible. I mean everything is so much more expensive, and our income never increased. Our income is the same and now with fuel with \$3.55 a gallon...

LC: Your income has been the same since...?

ANON: Or gone down, since probably 4-5 years it's been the same.

LC: And do you depend on your work for benefits or are you guys doing that through the Point Club?

ANON: Oh no, I have retirement benefits from the INTERVIEWEES PAST PROFESSION.

LC: Health insurance?

ANON: That's the INTERVIEWEES PAST PROFESSION. Mine is free and I pay for my husband's.

LC: That's at least one thing.

ANON: Yes. Thank God, I'm very lucky that I have the retirement from the INTERVIEWEES PAST PROFESSION, we would never have survived. I would have been back in a full-time job.

LC: And if you look over time, from then when you were first starting out, you have a professional life, over 30 years, what percentage of your income was you verses fishing? Wife, husband split?

ANON: Well the first 5 years it was 90 percent me. Then maybe for 10 years, during the '80's, it was good, he doubled my income easily. Maybe into the '90's we were probably 50/50, and now which is really odd, I think my retirement brings a little more into the house than him. He can draw from the boat. He can take money from the boat, but it counts as income for him.

6:55

LC: And how does that work, being that he's a shore captain in terms of his share?

ANON: He doesn't really have a share, the boat is not incorporated so if he needs to pay an electric bill, he might pay it out of the boat account, but that counts as income. So when you go to do your income tax, whatever the electric bill was that counts as personal income for us.

LC: And in terms of you've now got a captain, and is there crew?

ANON: Yes, there's a crew and the captain gets a captains share, and extra percentage for him and the crewmen get, however they divide up.

LC: And the boat owner gets a percentage?

ANON: Whatever is left in the account, he can take some of that but there are many months where there is nothing left in the account.

LC: Do you happen to know what the captain share is approximately? What the percentage is?

ANON: It's ten I think.

LC: It's ten and then he gets double that because he's captain and the crew gets?

ANON: It gets divided in half. Well no... Well it depends on how they have it. They have a clear 50, a broken 50, a clear 55, a broken 55, there's all different ways of doing it. Some people pay all the expenses on top and divide up the rest. I'm not sure. My husband's doing the Broken 55 right now which means, well the expenses are paid, I'm not sure, I'm drawing a blank on how it's done right now. I'm not involved; my son does the books for my husband, so he would be the one to know.

LC: So your son does the books, you don't use an accountant?

ANON: Yes we do use an accountant, my son just does, if my husband's away, we go away a lot, we have another business that we do and my son does all the settlements. So he would know what it is better than I would, whether it's off the top with the expenses or if it's after the 2 crew, I don't remember.

LC: It's helpful, there's a lot a different ways.

ANON: Yeah, it's so confusing, there's a million, oh my god. But CAPTAIN1, our captain, does very well.

LC: In terms of the split, are you aware that there's a standard in Point Judith or individual boats, the way people make that decision?

ANON: Well some people try to pay their boat person like \$10/hr. That is a real big no-no I guess. I've heard people who've tried to do that. You are supposed to do the split, whether it's a clear or broken, you're supposed to share up. Some people might have half shares because they're new, and they go to a full share after a year.

LC: But there's a system in Point Judith, you do this, this, or this?

ANON: Right, they get shares which is why very frequently they'll have brokers. They go out for ten days and they don't make enough money to even pay their fuel. So they're in the hole. All the crewmen get nothing. You have to be a good budgeter to be a wife of a fisherman. Because you can go, we've gone 6 weeks without seeing a penny.

10:08 LC: You really have to be thinking in the bigger picture.

ANON: I don't know how people do it without a second income. If we didn't have a second income, we never would have made it, it would have been too hard.

LC: I think those who left the industry over time are the ones who struggled with the bigger picture.

ANON: End of the year, no body took out taxes. My very son, fished for my husband a few years and this past year the IRS caught up with him and he owed big bucks. And he said, "Why didn't you tell me?" We said, "We did tell you, you should have been saving 30 percent all along." "Nobody told me that" "Oh yes they did!" He's finally straight with the IRS but he was pretty angry about that, they got him for like 2002, 2003, 2004...

LC: How big is your boat?

ANON: 58 feet.

LC: And what's its name?

ANON: *BOATI*.

LC: And you've got this captain that is a nephew. How old is he approximately?

ANON: CAPTAIN1 is 42.

LC: And you're hanging in there, you're doing Ok?

ANON: We're not doing like we used too, definitely not. We'd always have new cars and a house that was all up to date. A lot of things have gone by the wayside; both of us drive older cars and definitely the house isn't kept up and we don't make the trips, we used to travel a lot. We had plenty of play money. We bought a house in New Hampshire, a summer house, and my husband bought a sports car, things were good in the '80's, definitely different. Back when you could go out and take whatever you wanted. My husband was pretty conservative back then but now, definitely over.

LC: But you're saying that in spite of all that, you're boat is doing pretty well?

ANON: We are doing pretty well probably compared to other people in the Point. But my husband always knew this was coming, he knew it would happen, he knew things would get tighter and tighter. It wasn't going to stay a giant free-for-all. Everyone go out and take as much as they wanted. It's tough on the younger guys, I know that. They feel like the older guys got to have all the fun. My husband didn't become a millionaire but we know quite a few people who did. And I think a lot of the younger guys are really resentful of that.

12:35

LC: Your husband saw it coming. How long ago do you think he began to think that far into the future?

ANON: Easily ten years ago. Because that was when he was going to either buy a bigger boat, have two smaller boats, or get out of it all together. I think he knew that the writing was on the wall. He was always very involved in the politics, the conservation of it, that was always very important to him.

LC: So he's always sort of strutted the middle line trying to understand both?

ANON: Yep. He's never been greedy either. He's never taken so much more than he needed. We've had a good living, we've lived well, but I used to bug him, "I want so and so is so rich, she doesn't have to work, etc." And he never felt that way he always said "this is where we're at, take as much as you need, we've lived comfortably, I'm not going to fish 24/7." When my kids were small, they never saw their father. When I had my kids calling the Coast Guard trying to find him to come in to take me to the hospital, he didn't want us to live that way. He wanted to be there for them, so when they got older he made a conscious choice not to fish that way. The other thing he did that everyone thought was crazy, he started taking weekends off. When his kids were 8... 6, 8, and 10. And all the other fishermen would make fun of him, "I can't believe you take weekends off, you're such a jerk"

LC: I've heard this; this isn't the first person that wanted to be home at night.

ANON: Yep, absolutely, that's why he had a day boat, that's why he didn't get a trip boat; he wanted to see his kids. Believe me, there were plenty of times that I needed him when he wasn't around and that's really hard. If something happened to any of us to him today, there's no way I could get a hold of him.

LC: Now why is that, I thought there were satellite phones?

ANON: There is but where he is, it's too far for reception.

LC: So there's nothing? Now can boats talk to each other?

ANON: They can talk to each other, I suppose they could radio the Coast Guard and have the CG tell you something, and I've had that happen to me. Basically there's no way of knowing, I don't know when he'll come home and I don't know where he is and I can't get a hold of him. I'm not used to that anymore and I don't really like it.

LC: What was that like? Can you describe it, what kind of stress was that for you?

ANON: Always stressful. Things would happen, one of the kids would get in trouble at school, I was the only one that ever had to leave work and go and deal with that. They had activities after school and it was always me that had to take them, because he was never going to be around. Doctors' appointments, he'd never make any of them. It was just hard. One time I was in the hospital, they thought I had a heart-attack, they couldn't

reach my husband. SON1, my son was fishing with him, and my other son didn't have a cell phone. I just sat in the hospital for eight hours because they couldn't reach him, and that's really hard on you, he's my family, it's not like I have other family, that happened a couple times and it's very frustrating. I went through a lot of times in my life that I just hated fishing. "Why don't you do something else, I just hate this".

16:02

LC: You hate his absence?

ANON: Absolutely, never knowing, never being able to make plans, never knowing when he'd be home. It seemed like he was always gone when something major would happen, you know? The pipe burst in the basement, was flooding all over the house, and my husband's a million miles away, I don't know any plumbers, always having to deal with that kind of stuff.

LC: It's almost like you're a single parent.

ANON: Absolutely. It was just like being a single parent, which was something I had trouble trying to explain to people. "Oh, you've been married 28 years!"

LC: Married but single!

ANON: Yeah, you really are and now he makes comments about the way the kids are and basically he wasn't there for a lot of that, so I guess I'm to blame if they have any attitudes or anything else, because I was the one that brought them up I suppose.

LC: That's the worse stress of all.

ANON: You hate hearing that! It was hard. I really hated it. I hated it.

LC: And when he did come home, it's like you look at family dynamics...

ANON: I'm home at night, my husband's home at night; in fact we're too home. He works at home! We're there and because he's home sometimes he has to take things on, I'm in TOWN1 and all of that.

LC: So when he was home, when he was not doing day trips, when he got home, what was he doing, was he the easy-go-lucky dad and you still were the disciplinarian? Or did he get into the guts of it?

ANON: No. I was like nuts when he'd come home. I'd make him do everything. Because I was so pissed that I'd been doing everything, its like, "you do it!". I'd make him cook, I'd make him do anything, running around with the kids, and I'd make him do it.

LC: So that was you're time to recuperate?

ANON: Absolutely. But I think you could probably divide the women in half. A lot of them had a lot of girlfriends, people that I knew of all through the last 25 years. And they'd keep busy with them and then their husbands would come home and they'd be with them. I didn't have a lot of girlfriends, because number one, my husband wanted me to be there when he got home. And he would make it miserable if I had a lot of girlfriends and he comes home suddenly and one of them is there, he just would make it miserable. But it's a two-barbed knife, because it's like "you better be my best friend when you're home, because I've given up everything else for you. So when you're home you better be doing things with me and the kids and nobody else". Plus I would save up everything that happened that went wrong. And as soon as he'd come in the house!

18:47 [Turn off recording]

00:00 LC: So you were just talking about some of the relationship issues that you saw over time with families that sometimes husbands would come home and they wouldn't actually come home, they'd be doing something else.

ANON: Well it was so hard to keep track of when they would actually come in. Maybe they would go and sit in the bar for a few hours, or maybe they'd visit with a girlfriend, maybe they might spend time with her. It was really hard to believe sometimes that they would be gone as long as they'd say. When I was first married, I used to go down and check where his truck was ever night. Just to make sure that he was indeed still out and that his truck hadn't moved.

LC: I think that whole climate of uncertainty, there are so many aspects of it which are uncertain; financially, the whole communication component I think would be incredibly difficult. What would you say, out in the community or in any way that you want to describe it, this family stress? What things do you see that people struggle with? Is it divorce, drugs, stable relationships?

ANON: Probably a lot of that but I think the original thing would have been the stigma. When I was growing up in this area, we felt sorry for the fishermen's kids. Because their parents were fishermen. And everyone thought fishermen were drunks, and were raping the oceans and were just very unsavory. And when I started dating my husband, my mother actually said, "I don't want a dirty old fisherman in my house." And my husband had a degree, and was probably the nicest most respectful, most honest person I'd ever met, yet she didn't want to meet him in the beginning because he was a fisherman and that was not something... There was that reputation that fishermen were drunks and dirty. And the one I found most in my work was that people believing that anyone could do it. I worked at EMPLOYER2 and they would always say "you know what, we can't find any other job for someone, and we'll send him down to the Point and have him get on a boat and go fishing." And I'd say "you don't realize how complex fishing is; you can't just send somebody on a boat and think anybody can do it. It's not like putting a rod and reel out". They have to be able to read all the instruments, they have to know, it's very complex, the job. It's not something that just anybody can learn to pump gas, it's not like that.

LC: Isn't that one of the issues now a days, that crew used to be long-term, loyal, crew had experience and they worked their way up, whereas now a days...?

ANON: The biggest problem is finding experienced crew.

LC: Is it college students showing up and not having the work ethic or...?

ANON: Not knowing what they're doing. Which is a huge danger. That's happened to us, having somebody come on who doesn't know what they are doing and getting hurt. We're very lucky that we've had our captain and our crew for years and years and years. I think a lot of people are probably jealous of that because it's a wonderful thing. And we hear about other captains complaining about having no regular people, it's just this constant turn-over, people wandering in and out,

LC: Boat hopping?

ANON: Right, one bad trip, they're gone. People always ask my husband about being his captain, if my nephew ever doesn't want to do it because my husband has had the same

person for so long and he's pretty stable, and it's made enough money for a good living for us.

4:05

LC: So your nephew is the captain now. How many crew are there? Family?

ANON: Right now there's just one. And no, all our crew on that boat in the last 10/15 years have stayed for years, each one 3 years, 4 years, 5 years. I mean he's had really good luck with crew. They don't go like crazy; some people go crazy, like 10 days in a row. Just never stopping, not getting enough sleep, it's just crazy, but CAPTAIN1 doesn't fish that way.

LC: I apologize if I don't have this straight, your husband was a day fisherman, but your nephew isn't?

ANON: He is still a day fisherman.

LC: So he will come in?

ANON: But because of all the restrictions, you have to go further to get the kinds of things that you can catch. They used to be able to make a living, time in the summer when they could just fish a long the beach and have a short day of it, but everything has changed with the restrictions. My husband and CAPTAIN1 fish the same, it's just that now they probably are going longer, and with diesel at \$3.50, you're not going to spend, how many thousands to fill the boat up, you're not going to spend that to just go in and out. Find out it wasn't a good day.

LC: So they still look to have a shorter trip verses...

ANON: They would want to but this time of the year its long trips like this.

LC: And long trip for him is?

ANON: Three days.

LC: Three days. With your nephew, he's married, has a family?

ANON: Has three little boys.

LC: And how long has he been in the fishing industry?

ANON: He came to work, worked with my husband when he was 17, his whole life.

LC: So he has made it a career. He's from your side of the family?

ANON: Yes he is. So he's a first generation fisherman. A true one. And I'm sure he hopes one of his boys will fish with him, but I doubt his wife would agree with that. She'd be a very good person to talk to.

LC: You think she'd be willing to talk to us?

ANON: I think she would be because it's very different for her.

LC: Young kids, what are the ages of her kids? She's in her 40's so...

ANON: What are they; they're 5, 7 and 9. And they're real boys.

LC: I have two of those!

ANON: You know what it's like!

7:07

LC: How we doing on time, this is about a little over an hour right now, and I'm thinking there's going to be more questions that are going to come, but I feel like I've asked...I'm wondering if there's anything that you think...

ANON: Is important?

LC: Yeah.

ANON: I'm just worried that my perspective is dated a little bit because my husband hasn't fished on a regular basis in three years. I worry about that now, for your study, but on the other hand, look at his, he's out, and I don't know when he'll be back, so I guess....

LC: I think your family is in many ways, your family represents a place on the continuum of people have fished, and a certain generation of fishermen. Gen X, Gen YY...

ANON: Gen Millennium.

LC: I haven't even heard of that one. We're looking to get every body's perspective. And you have a much longer perspective than your nephew's wife is likely to have. Who jumped in at a different point in time. Talk to the folks up in Maine, there are high school students making \$15,000-\$20,000 for a summer of lobstering, and of the 100 kids in Jonesport, ME high school, I think well over 50 percent were going to go into fishing, it was significant.

ANON: That's so scary to me, don't they know?

LC: That was 4 years ago.

ANON: Oh, Ok.

LC: And that was coming off of 4 or 5 really strong years. There had been a recovery, people were doing really well, high optimism, the way they described it was that they're constantly looking over their shoulder at the Cape; they're waiting for the lobster disease to turn the corner. They're always looking over their shoulder, but they're moving forward.

ANON: Unbelievable.

LC: But that was 4 years ago, I really need to visit them again.

ANON: How about the scallop guys in New Bedford and Fall River? They've just come off 4 or 5 years of the most fabulous... they'd be good ones to talk to as well because it's going to happen to them too. I don't think anyone in Point Judith thought that this would happen back in the '80's. I think everyone thought it would just continue. And if you were willing to fish night and day, you could have all the money you wanted. That's sad about the kids. Are you going to go back up to interview those kids?

LC: I would very much like to go back up. In fact over time, it depends on how much funding we get for this, over time, but talking to you, I would really like your blessing to call you when I have questions, and just talk on the phone. Talking to people a year or two, after something big, maybe after your husband goes into retirement, it's over the course of somebody's life, how this affects and there's ripple effects, even if he completely retired and your nephew is running the boat, the uncertainty of your retirement, that takes with you into the future. People make different decisions based on what's happening versus what they thought was going to happen.

10:49 ANON: He could never retire from it because the way the government has set it up to sell a boat. It's 100 percent profit to you that you're taxed on. You can't turn it over into another business. So he could never sell the boat, he will always have to have it. Even if he moves to Florida and talks to CAPTAIN1 once a month, he will have to own it. And I asked him if he died what he wants me to do, he said he wants me to keep it and have CAPTAIN1 fish it. I don't want you to ever get rid of it. That to me just seems like...

LC: And it used to be that it would have been somebody's retirement, no?

ANON: I don't think so.

LC: They used to have value.

ANON: Oh, yeah, I mean, no, he could still get \$500,000 but we'd be taxed for it all. That's what screwed us up when we sold the *BOAT2* a few years ago. We didn't invest, you have to put it back into another boat or a general construction fund to build another boat and we didn't do either.

LC: I wonder if they're going to chance that, given that fact that they're making it harder, all the restrictions.

ANON: They won't let you get a license, people want to go out of business, and they should; that buy-back was a joke.

LC: Biggest back-fire mistake.

ANON: So what are you going to do, now you're telling us now we can't even sell the boat because you're going to tax us on it, we'll end up with less than half of it, if you tax us on it, so what's the point in that? Just keep it. We didn't realize we were going to be 100 percent taxed when we sold the other boat, so that year was really hard. Because he had to pay all that income tax and we weren't expecting it. That's it. I'm getting hoarse.

12:30 END OF INTERVIEW