



NEWPORT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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KEVIN TUTTLE

THE FISHING INDUSTRY IN NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND, 1930-1987

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Kevin Tuttle has worked extensively on offshore draggers since his graduation from the University of Rhode Island's Fisheries School. His manuscript is filled with information about the work of fishing, life at sea, boats and equipment, safety, offshore fishing grounds, species sought by draggers, marketing, and fishing as a dangerous occupation. Mr. Tuttle has thoughtful insights concerning depletion and conservation and speaks at length about the relationship between fishermen, biologists, and government officials and how they affect the fishing industry. He includes his perceptions of fishing as a way of life, the kind of person who is attracted to the fishing industry, and the affect of fishing on family life.

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Interview with Kevin Tuttle for the Newport Historical Society's Oral History of the Fishing Industry in Newport, Rhode Island, conducted by Jennifer Murray on May 13, 1987

MURRAY: Is it all right with you if I tape this interview?

TUTTLE: Yes, it is.

JM: Let's start out, Kevin, with where you were born and grew up and went to school - those kinds of things.

KT: I was born in Framingham, Massachusetts, and I resided in Bellingham, Massachusetts for nineteen years - outside of Woonsocket, Rhode Island.

I decided a year after I got out of high school that I didn't care to work in a factory. I wanted to go to college, so I went to a two-year program at U.R.I. [University of Rhode Island] for the fisheries. It was the only thing I found that I could dedicate a hundred percent of my work effort into. Everything that I did before, I found ways to get around doing this and that. But fishing, it seems like it was interesting enough to work as hard as I had to.

JM: How did you get interested in it?

KT: That's funny. It was in a catalog. I said, "I'm not ready for four years of school. I think I'll go two - something with a technical background," which the program offered. It was actual work experience. They have their own small dragger

that they work in the Bay. You have a lab class once or twice a week. You learn the diesel mechanics, electronics - actual practical application, as far as what you could see you would be doing in the future rather than just reading theory in a book.

No one in my family, that I can recall, has ever been to sea before. So it was quite a step. First hand at a twine needle, I was almost completely lost.

JM: Was that at school?

KT: Yes. It was like a baby picking up a spoon. He's all thumbs -- it was like a club. Definitely, you don't handle twine needles like clubs. It's all fingertip control.

JM: Where were your parents from?

KT: My mother was born and raised in Milford and Bellingham. My father is from Bellingham. He's a lifelong resident of Bellingham, Massachusetts.

JM: What did he do for a living?

KT: He is still employed. He's a Salesman, Vice President, and Treasurer for Varney Brothers concrete business in Bellingham, Massachusetts - ready-mix concrete. My mother was a registered nurse for a while.

JM: Did you go directly from high school and work to

the program at U.R.I.? Or did you do something in-between?

KT: I worked in a factory for about a year and a half. I was a stock clerk. I didn't like where I was leading to.

JM: There's a lot of that in that area.

KT: Yes. It's a very industrial area. There was a great industrial age in Woonsocket. You can go up there and see all the old mills. There was a lot of cow farms and stuff like that in that area.

JM: Did a lot of your friends end up staying and working there?

KT: Yes. A lot of my old buddies, high school friends that I keep in touch with -- one's a teacher; one's a policeman; one owns his father's business, a pizzeria his father started. Most of the friends I have that I keep in touch with are in the same area, up that way.

JM: Was religion very important to your family, growing up?

KT: I was born and raised a Catholic for sixteen years. When they started asking for a quarter for your seat when you walked in the door, I walked too. I didn't think that was necessary.

JM: Independent.

KT: The Catholic Church is one of the richest

institutions in the world. Their views don't always coincide with mine. I believe in God. I'm not a practicing person. I would like to think that if I called on Him, He would hopefully help me. But I saw the end of it right then and there. I didn't like it.

JM: How about your wife? Did you meet her --

KT: I met her at school. She's from Cranston, Rhode Island.

JM: What is her name, just so we have that?

KT: Her name is Susan. Her maiden name is Robitaille. She's of mixed descent - German, Swedish, Scottish, Irish (all the wars mixed together, I guess). Her parents still live in Cranston. I met her at college in 1975. We went together on and off. I moved away. My first job fishing was at Provincetown on the Cape. I missed her too much, so I decided to come back to fish out of Point Judith. We were married in 1980.

JM: What kind of a boat were you on in Provincetown?

KT: I was on a sixty-three foot eastern rig called the Captain Bill. At that time, back in 1977, I'd say she was probably somewhere between twenty-nine and thirty-five years old. The skipper had changed over and I went scalloping on it for about four months. Then, I decided I wasn't making

enough money. Because I had friends from the U.R.I. Fishery School fishing out of Point Judith, I decided to go down there and look for a site.

It took me about a month to find a site. I said, "Oh, no. What am I doing here? I'm unemployed." But then I got on a boat and I fished there for eight months. Then, I got on a boat called the Sundance. We used to unload at Parascandolo's. It was easier. Rather than steam the boat back to Point Judith after unloading our fish at Parascandolo's, we decided to tie up here. That's why I've been here ever since.

JM: You've been on the Sundance?

KT: No. I was on the Sundance for, let's see, probably from the end of 1978 until the first of March, 1980. I ran the Mister Bill from then on, until just recently.

JM: Are they owned by the same person?

KT: Yes. There's four boats that he owns up here - the Charlotte G., the Sundance, the Fair Lady, and the Mister Bill.

JM: Who owns those?

KT: His name is William Granau, out of Freeport, New York - Long Island. He's been in the fishing industry since after World War II. He has quite a few boats down there, too.

- JM: Long Island?
- KT: Yes. He's a self-made man. He started out in a skiff, clamming. He's got three or four clambers down there and one dragger too. He's a hard worker, that's all I can say. He works every day -- he's sixty-three -- seven days a week. There's no need of it. He should learn to relax.
- JM: How did you meet him?
- KT: Through a friend that I went to fishery school with - Matthew Smith. Matthew asked me to go as engineer on the Sundance. We did rather well fishing then because that was after the Magnuson Act was passed - the Two Hundred Mile Limit.
- JM: It must have been right after, wasn't it?
- KT: Yes. It was September, 1978 when I started on the boat. We caught some fish. That was when butterfish were around and there were decent counts. That was the first year the Japanese started to sign that Guaranteed Price Contract with the different ports here. It escalated from there, actually. The owner built the Charlotte G. and Matthew and I went on there. We didn't get along, so I went back to the Sundance with Peter Stockel. And then, Peter left the company. I ran the Sundance. The owner built the Mister Bill, and I got the Mister Bill in March of 1980.

JM: You were a young man to have that responsibility.

KT: Let's see, when I first started fishing, I guess I was twenty-one. I started running a boat when I was -- that was 1977 and I was twenty-one, so in 1979, I was twenty-three.

JM: Is that unusual?

KT: Yes. It seems like it is [according to] the old school. I think, from what I've seen in my brief career, that most skippers don't get their boats until they're thirty-five or thirty-seven. But now that's changing too. Guys that are born and bred in the fishing industry, like the old Portuguese families, they're fishing when they're twelve years old every summer. When they get to be fifteen or sixteen, they quit school and they go fishing full-time.

With all this modern technology, it's a lot easier to fish. You've got electronics that just can't be beat these days. I don't know whether it's good or not. It's a dangerous occupation. You know that.

JM: Yes. When you were fishing out of Provincetown, that was before the Two Hundred Mile Limit?

KT: No. It was just that year. I graduated in June and I went to work right after.

JM: So you didn't see the factory ships out there?

KT: No. In the wintertime, we saw the offshore foreign trawlers that had the permits from the government - the GIFA permits, I guess they call them.

JM: What were they?

KT: It was some kind of permit that the government -- GIFA is initialized for whatever it stands for. That's what the abbreviation of it is.

We saw the foreign trawlers back then, mainly well offshore, around the sixty fathom contour or deeper - just in the wintertime. I can't say I have seen the foreign trawlers. I wish I was born a hundred years ago sometimes. I wish I was born and raised out on the ocean because it's there and very relaxing, working on it. I mean, it's no fun when you're getting beat up in a storm. But it's knowing you're your own boss. When you're on the boat, you don't have to drive to work; you're there. It's all around you.

JM: How far out did you go on a boat like the Sundance?

KT: We went all the way to North of Corsair Canyon -- grounds that we've lost to the Canadians now since the World Court decided to mess us up.

JM: On the Georges Bank?

KT: Yes.

JM: And how far East do you go, or did you go?

KT: To Corsair Canyon, which is now part of Canadian waters.

JM: How long does it take to get there?

KT: Twenty-four to thirty hours, depending on the tides.

JM: How long do those trips last?

KT: Anywhere from a minimum of four days to nine days. That's a day going and a day coming back and seven days fishing.

JM: Let's talk a little bit about the work of fishing -- when you're out there, what the different jobs are. Maybe you should tell me what species, mainly, you're going after.

KT: Then, at the height of it, which was good fishing, we were five handed. There was the captain, the mate, engineer, a cook, and a deckhand. Usually, the captain and mate worked the six and six watch. The crew worked eight and four, where you had two men up and one man down, sleeping as time off or whatever. We fished around the clock. We were catching yellowtails in the summer, codfish and haddock in the spring when the (closed) spawning areas opened up. There were some scallops to be caught. Mostly yellowtails and flounders and groundfish.

JM: Was there much haddock around then?

KT: I would say back in 1981, 1983, yes, there was. There was times when we had quite successful trips. I remember one trip back in 1982 or 1983. We were out nine days and had fifty thousand pounds of haddock. We caught the market. That was seventy-five cents a pound. It was the biggest trip I've ever had in my life. It was a forty-two thousand dollar stock. Nine days. The crew shared up about thirty-one or thirty-six hundred dollars for nine days.

JM: Do you ever catch anything like that now?

KT: Not in a long time. But I guess my style of fishing has changed. I haven't been down there in the same time frame. But then again, fishing is so strange. I keep a log book. I've got years of where I've been. I write down what time I set out; where I was when I set out -- the Loran bearings; a general description of how I towed, whether I followed a contour or Loran line; the time I hauled and all that. You can't go back for the same day, same time. The fish will be there, but they won't be in the same spot. You've got more searching to do. I can honestly say that the haddock isn't around like it used to be, nor the yellowtails. We did it ourselves. We ruined it

ourselves. When they had quotas on us, there was -- well, there's night riders. You can unload your fish at night in New Bedford or any port. There was a seventy-five hundred pound limit, five hundred overage. You could honestly see boats. You'd go down there, grab your limit, fish a day for your limit when yellowtailing was good fishing.

I can remember when I was with Matthew on the Sundance even, going down on the Southeast part of Georges Bank. If you found a thousand weight a tow for an hour and fifteen minutes, you looked harder. You could find two thousand pounds for the same amount of time - an hour and a half, an hour and forty-five minutes. You kept searching. Anywhere you towed down there, there was fish just about. Better some places than others. Now, you go down there. If you find two bushel an hour, you shut your radio off and you don't do no talking at all.

Anyway, back to that -- I'd go down there and grab my limit, and then go try chasing whiting or something else, just to put some time in and get some weight aboard the boat. We all like to see a lot of weight. You go in and take out and come back, the same boats are fishing there on

yellowtails.

So, between the government and ourselves -- it's hard to regulate us. A man has a boat to pay for, you can't really blame him. Back then, we were catching the eleven to thirteen inch yellowtail. The biologists, I guess, have proved that that's the size they're spawning at. So, back in 1981 and 1982, we wiped out the spawning stock. That's why there's no yellowtails now.

JM: Do you think it will ever come back?

KT: I don't know. I always like to think it is. I'm thinking of owning my own boat again. But I just don't know. I think the key is diversification. With the media, fish has become like a staple for people. They've all decided that you have to eat fish. Who can afford to eat fish when it's \$8.99 a pound, fileted? Chicken and beef is cheaper a pound. But that's what helped keep prices on whiting up and squid. They're still around in great amounts. You can catch [them]. They're school fish, but it seems like the schools are bigger. When you get into them, you can catch a lot more of them than you can cod and haddock right now. So, if you're going to go out and catch nine thousand pounds or twelve thousand pounds of codfish, or fifteen thousand pounds --

which right now, in the wintertime, fifteen thousand pounds is a big trip of groundfish -- when you can go out for a day and catch forty or fifty thousand pounds sometimes of whiting and squid and butterfish. That's the big difference in the prices of whiting and butterfish. They fluctuate a lot. I would say codfish, haddock, yellowtails, flounders and pollock can be more stable. But when you're doubling the number of pounds you're catching, you're always willing to take that chance because you're out for a shorter trip -- three to four days. Whiting, scup, squid, and butterfish are all perishable products. You've got two days to fish on them and then you have to run in. So, if you don't catch them, it's not like you're running up a great expense. You just go home and take what you have out, and then you go back for them.

JM: Is that what most people are doing?

KT: In different ports. I can see a change coming. That's what I'm going to be doing a lot of if I do own a boat. You have to diversify. I'm known as a Georges fisherman. When the yellowtails are around, I chase those. I would chase cod and haddock if they were abundant, but they're not. Money talks, that's all there is to it.

I would say the fellows chasing whiting, squid, scup, butterfish, they're doing quite well. Quite well. There will always be a select group of fishermen doing real well on still fishing codfish and haddock. There's no doubt about it. There's better fishermen than I. I don't doubt that for a fact. But for what I want to do, I think I could do real well by being diversified.

JM: What about people who, for whatever reason, cheat or have to cheat? What happens to people like that?

KT: Some do big, others break even. That pays for their boats. I can see that conservation is something that is necessary. If you were to tally the number of boats built since that Two Hundred Mile Limit was passed, it would be astronomical. The technology has just increased. I mean, I think we have better electronics on our boat than the Coast Guard does on theirs. I know it for a fact.

JM: Tell me about your first trip out onto the Georges Bank.

KT: I can't say I really remember how many pounds we had or anything like that. I remember going out there and picking up the yellowtails. The fish were just huge. They were just incredibly big.

JM: How big?

KT: There was some large yellowtails. Let's see, that had to be close to two foot long.

JM: You don't see that anymore, do you?

KT: Those that you see now are called "groundkeepers." We call them groundkeepers because there's so few of them. It's funny. When you went down there back in 1978 -- when I started going down there -- it was all large - hardly any small yellowtails. Fish back then, [were] eighty, ninety count to a hundred pounds, or larger the way they sell them. Now there's ^a better sign of smalls. Maybe that's a sign that they are coming back. Then again, back then, you didn't catch any skates. You hardly caught any skates -- the trash. Now, everywhere you go down there is all skates. I don't know whether they're taking over or whether we've destroyed the grounds. I know it was like venturing -- you felt real proud going to Georges because it was part of something -- you fish Georges Bank. But now, you think nothing of it. Everybody goes to Georges.

JM: What would be the count today for a hundred pounds of yellowtail?

KT: You can still find those eighty, ninety counts, but it's very rare. It's not like you could go

down there this week and find them and be assured of coming in with forty, fifty thousand [pounds]. If you fished and had ten thousand pounds -- eighty, ninety count yellowtails, you'd have as big a trip as if you had thirty thousand back then.

See, back then, when I was running the Mr. Bill and when I was on the Sundance, we used to go down there and fish five, six days. We'd come in with anywhere from thirty-eight or thirty-seven thousand up to fifty thousand. If you average forty cents on the trip, you had a real big trip.

Now if you go out and you get twelve to twenty thousand, you're going to stock the same money, if not more.

JM: Really?

KT: Yes. I would see large yellowtails. I can remember in the summertime, yellowtails being twenty-five and fifteen cents. The winter before last, it was hard not to average seventy or eighty cents -- back in 1986, 1985.

JM: Has the wage stayed comparable for people?

KT: Then again, if fish is not as readily abundant, we decrease the number of crew. We're four-handed now because there's not enough work. You're making longer tows to catch less fish.

JM: How long are your tows?

KT: Now they're 2-1/2 to four hours. I would say on an average of three hours.

JM: How long were they before?

KT: An hour and a half, an hour and forty-five minutes.

JM: Are you catching about the same amount?

KT: No.

JM: Or less?

KT: A lot less. Too much less. I would say three-quarters less. If you could work on a third, you'd be doing fine. It's over-fished. Who knows? Maybe the scientists could point to the warming trend, the greenhouse effect of the earth. Maybe that's changed it. I know there's been a lot of boats down there. Back in 1979 and 1980 and even 1981 and 1982, that gave it a pounding. It really did take a pounding. I don't blame a man. That's why a man goes to sea - for the adventure, for travel.

We had the Southern boats.

JM: Are they still out there?

KT: At different times of year. Yes. Their fishing down there dropped off, so they had to do something to make a living. They came up and they went yellowtailing. We fished right alongside of

them. Fine people. I got to know a lot of them. A lot of them are good friends. Their fisheries sort of came back. I guess the shrimp have come back down off the Carolinas and in the Chesapeake and all that area.

They helped to over-fish it with us. Primarily, it's the fact that fishermen are independent. You can't get them organized. When a man has a living to make, he can't take the time off to attend a meeting. It's sad, because it affects his livelihood.

What the government is trying to do to us now -- I mean, for conservation effects, I can understand this closed area South of New England and the others. They want to increase the mesh size to six inches. That's ridiculous. They made criminals of us before; we can be criminals again.

I can understand the conservation end of it. I really don't think the biologists know what's out there.

JM: And how can you follow rules when you don't know a good reason [to follow them]?

KT: Yes. I'm not an ignorant person. I do agree with conservation.

JM: No one I've talked with has been.

KT: I could see quotas again. I could see if what

they did was by tonnage. What they had before then was per man. But then, different nationalities would bring more people over from the other country. Because they had a chance to make two hundred dollars or a hundred dollars a week, which was more than they could make in their own country, you'd see a boat with ten or fifteen men on it, or nine or ten people, just because it was five thousand a man. Well, that was a trip. Nine men, that's a lot of fish.

So they would have to stop that. They would have to stop the night riders. What they ought to do is raise the size of the fish. Yellowtails are now twelve inches. They should go to thirteen. They should make it virtually impossible to sell. They should not try and police us out there by having fisheries boardings with the Coast Guard.

When you've got some kid from Kansas with a sawed-off shotgun in his hands --

[end of side one, tape one]

When a kid from Kansas comes over the rail with a shotgun, and he's never been to sea before, and he's waving it at about waist level, it's no good. What they should do is hire enough people and place a government agent in every fish house where you sell your fish. That would be the way to

regulate it. If a man can't sell an eleven-inch yellowtail, then why is he going to stop it and keep it? You can't stop fish with a six-inch cod end. If they go to eight, that would be even more ridiculous. They're going about it wrong.

JM: It would save them a lot of money to do it the other way, too. It must be expensive, getting people to check way out there. Are you checked very often?

KT: Oh, on the average of once a year.

JM: That isn't very much.

KT: No.

JM: What happens to people who break the law?

KT: Now, they're getting stiffer. They're getting fines, forfeiture of catch. I remember seeing one fellow back in (it must have been) 1980. They had no limit in Rhode Island and a seventy-five hundred pound limit in Massachusetts in federal waters. Well, this fellow went down to Georges Bank. He put on ninety thousand pounds of yellowtails in about six tows, because they were just plentiful. He steamed all the way back and came into Newport. They followed him in. They made sure they watched him. He didn't set his nets, so he couldn't claim that he caught in Rhode Island waters. Well, they took away his

groundfish license for a month. That really hurt him. He was stuck.

The fines have increased, forfeiture of catch. How many guys are going to go out for a week -- and they know what they're doing. You see fines on illegal scallops now. I guess there was a boat just fined sixty or sixty-five thousand dollars. It was in the Commercial Fisheries newspaper. That crew -- I mean, they can complain. But they knew what they were doing. I don't know how many men there were, but they probably lost out on a couple thousand, three thousand dollars a piece. But while they were doing it, they had to know they were cutting small scallops. Where do you draw the line? Greed sets in. That's the way it is.

JM: Did you look at trips out onto the Georges Bank as an adventure at first, or do you still?

KT: I did then. I used to love going down there in the summer, because you always had the chance of spotting swordfish. You still do. Swordfish are around, but they're not around as often as they were.

JM: Did you catch them?

KT: Yes. I've harpooned some myself.

JM: How did you learn to do that?

KT: You talk to different fellows, and then you just set yourself up and you have someone steer you on the fish. You all take a whack.

[chuckles] We were driving along. I had one fellow with me. Every time we saw a fish finning he'd put a slash in front of the compass. If I missed, nothing else. If I got it, I got the X. After a while, it got to being his turn and me driving the boat, because I was missing. It's just who's hot that day, I guess. I mean, other boats go with the same striker all the time: But we weren't really rigged out for swordfish. We didn't have a pulpit or nothing. It was like a Chinese fire drill. We had a bunch of net floats tied together the first time we went on them. And we got that one - the first one.

That was a different one. Oh, boy. It wasn't that big a swordfish. We were coming across the Sou'west part. We ended the trip just so we could ride along and look for swordfish. We spotted one and a big mad scramble to get on the fish. We drove him home. We threw the floats overboard and said, "Now, keep an eye on them floats. Don't lose them, whatever you do." Well, the fish was strong enough -- and it just took them right underneath

the water.

I was fishing near the old Elizabeth Christine, Bobby Ruhle's boat. I told him what had happened. He said, "Come over." He was rigged for swordfishing. He was doing it. He said, "Come on over and get another lily and a ball." We did and we rigged out again. We're going along, looking for swordfish. All of a sudden, the floats floated up. The floats on the other swordfish we stuck, we thought we'd lost them. You know, it just tired him out, pulling all that resistance through the water. He came back up, and we nabbed him. [chuckles]

JM: They're pretty powerful, aren't they?

KT: Yes. That really started me off on it. I called the owner and said, "Hey, can I buy some gear for this?" I've got some line, some extra darts, and floats. I put some weights on the line and stuff.

One summer we had six. It was good.

JM: How fast do you think they swim?

KT: I don't have no idea. I know when you come up on them, if they don't like the looks of you, boy, when they thrash their tail, they're gone. They're beautiful in the water.

JM: I'll bet they are.

KT: They're just incredible in the water. They just

sit there. You think they're stupid, but they're not. They see you. They're eyeballing you the whole time. They lay on their side. They just move enough to keep afloat and sun themselves. I've seen them breaching. What they're doing is they're trying to knock the parasites off themselves. That's what I've heard. I don't know what sticks to them, whatever organism gets on them. But they come up like the dolphin shows. They go up, and then they land on their sides. It's pretty to see - very pretty to see.

JM: Are they migrating when you see them there?

KT: The Gulf Stream comes up to the Southern edge of Georges Bank, and then up near Corsair Canyon. They show up.

I guess years ago -- you hear stories of them just steaming right out to Menemsha Bight. You get your trip right there. I have seen them South of Nomans. I've seen them out near the thirty-one fathom mudhole. I've seen them down near the Corner Buoy, the Lightship. Mainly, where I saw a lot of swordfish was out on Georges. You know, I think there's different pods of fish that come along with each Stream.

JM: Pairs or groups?

KT: Groups. Different schools, I think. You talk to

different longliners. They'll be hitting what they call "pups" - under a hundred pounds. They move on. They have to search for bigger fish. I've heard guys in recent years catching eight pounders. That's no good. They realize that. That ain't making the money.

JM: I've heard that the males and females travel separately. Do you know anything about that?

KT: Not that I know of. I don't know enough about swordfish. I know if I saw one, I'd want to harpoon it. There's no big challenge there. It is a challenge, but it's not like Moby Dick. People ask me about that. I don't find that that's true at all. You don't feel no remorse. You do when you hit one and you lose it or you injure it. But other than that, I feel no remorse. It's there; it's part of life. Survival. That's the way it is.

JM: What else do you see out there?

KT: Usually, in the summer, just out here off of Brenton Reef, you see turtles.

JM: Sea turtles?

KT: Unbelievable. They're just -- oh. I'd seen one or two, but this was a whole bunch of them.

JM: Like how many?

KT: We were just steaming. We were going fishing. I

think we were going to go fish South of Block Island, whereas usually I go by Nomans and go east. I bet you we went through them for an hour and a half.

JM: Oh, you're kidding.

KT: Oh, it's beautiful.

JM: Millions.

KT: Well, not millions.

JM: Thousands.

KT: Could have been.

JM: How big were they?

KT: On an average, four foot across. You could slow the boat down and go up on them like you do on a swordfish. When they felt the bow wave, they just went down, which was interesting.

What else do I see? A lot of dolphins. I'm tending to fish offshore more now, out in the deeper water, from December on through March. You're out forty fathom or deeper. The water's warmer. So there's always dolphins and pothead whales and pilot whales and all that always around. I've seen finbacks or sperm whales. I'll bet it you it was fins. I see them on Cultivator Shoal in the summer. It seems to be some kind of mating ground that they're always traveling through. That's pretty interesting.

JM: That's where it's pretty shallow, isn't Cultivator?

KT: Yes. It's shoals up there, too. Well, the Northeast peak, they say, is one of the richest fishing grounds on Georges Bank. Cultivator can be pretty fertile too, at different times of the year. I don't think that's what it used to be, either. You used to be able to catch yellowtails there. I don't think I've seen a trip out of there in a long time, myself, personally, catching them there. Now it's more a mixed-up species of grey sole, dabs, wolffish, codfish, haddock, pollock a lot. You can get some pollock there at different times of the year.

JM: What's the worst part of being out there?

KT: Away from your family. In 1978, 1979, even into 1980 -- Well, up till 1983 before my first son was born, Jeffrey [Tuttle]. Hah, "my first son." I sound like I'm going to have more. I have a boy and a girl. Oh, no. My wife would like to, by the way.

I would say, yes - being away from your family. Then it was okay, because she worked and everything. I guess every time I go fishing now, I tell them the night before. I give them fair warning. They always ask why. I always say,

"Well, why does Daddy go fishing?"

"To make the moola to buy me toys."

So that's the worst part about it. The steam home, too. You wish it was a hydrofoil then, when you're steaming twenty-four hours. If your gear's torn up, you can mend your gear back together and clean up the boat or make another net, I suppose. Even that seems to be going by the wayside, too. There's repair and net shops around that will build a net for you. I wouldn't say I'm real old school, but I have built nets on deck, steaming in or steaming out.

Also, if you make shorter trips and you're making more trips a month, your time ashore is so valuable that you're not going to -- I wouldn't enjoy it myself, even as a crew member - having to work twenty-four hours a day on a boat when I'm ashore. Where's my time off? If you make a five-day trip, you need a day, a day and a half, off. You need a day off. Then, if you have to get ice and fuel, then leave that night, that's okay. Ice and fuel and whatever. Your supplies shouldn't take all day to do. In that sense, when you're making more trips, the boat owner hopefully will see more money. He's willing to buy a net rather than have the crew make it. The nets are a lot

fancier nowadays.

Before, when you went flyfishing, you had a net that didn't tend bottom so well. You put more cans on it. You put your smaller mesh cod end on it. Your twine might have been graduated. But you didn't catch as much bottom. You tried to get it light so you wouldn't get all the trash with your fish. If you went bottom fishing for yellowtails or flounders, even codfish and haddock, that was what the net was set up for. It was all large mesh. Now twineshops build combination nets, where you could have your net designed with a lot of height and cans. All you have to do is adjust the sweep, and you can catch both.

That led to a big downfall. If a guy decided to go whiting fishing and he was catching a thousand weight fifteen hundred to three thousand pounds a tow, and he happened to see a bushel of flat stuff on deck with that, he'd want to see five or six. That really hurt the industry, too - Trawlworks making the combination net. In essence, that's what it is. It's a combination net. I have them. I've used them. That's been a big factor in destroying the nurseries south of New England, Nomans and Martha's Vineyard and

Nantucket even in the spring and late summer, early summer. It's a spawning area for yellowtails flounders. There's also whiting and squid and everything that all march through there and migrate. That hurt a lot of the yellowtail stock - the fact that those combination nets could do both. You have three different twine sizes in the nets. There was no government regulation for west of seventy degrees for the large mesh. East of seventy degrees, it started at five and an eighth or five inch cod ends, five and a half, five and an eighth. Now, it's five and a half. Back west of seventy, they could tow anything they wanted. You didn't need a three-inch cod end to catch a large yellowtail back then. There was large yellowtails right South of here. There still is at times.

I've only been fishing since 1977. I can remember working all summer long on yellowtails south of Martha's Vineyard. I don't think you could do it now - not in a boat in the seventy-five to eighty foot to ninety foot range -- the boats with the bigger horsepower -- I'm talking over, say, five hundred horse. The smaller can still get by - boats with low expenses. They'll do all right. But the boats with the big

horsepower have to catch volume. And it's not there -- not south of New England like it used to be.

JM: So where do they have to go?

KT: A lot of the boats now are fishing the Northern Edge and going to Boston. Fishermen will go where the fish are eventually. That's the good thing about it. There's been a great influx of boats from Southern New England that are unloading in Boston. Not a great one -- there might be five or six. But that five or six has to affect that port of Boston. They're taking the gear from down here and doing well. The boats out of Boston see what these guys are doing. Pretty soon, that might be mopped up. Who knows? It's tough.

There's Joint Ventures now.

JM: Have you been involved in any of those?

KT: No. Like a fool, I didn't do it. I should have, because the squid season last year -- south of Nantucket -- was fantastic. Easy work. You go shorthanded. Instead of four men, you go three. Some boats went two. You're transferring your cod end. You never dump it on deck. The big factory ship lays off...

JM: It saves a lot of work.

KT: Oh, yes. You go out and you make long tows -

three or four hour tows. You go over and pick up their ball with a cable on it, snap it into your cod end, and then they take it aboard, dump it, and tell you how many tons you had and whatever. You shut the engine off at nine o'clock and you go to sleep.

I missed out on that. I wish I hadn't. I got offered that -- oh, it must have been three or four years ago -- by Sea Harvest out of Cape May. He (William Granau) knew the owner from Cape May, the owner being so close to New York. The owner told him, "Go up and see me." I was loading a rock hopper on the boat, at the time, to go down to Georges Bank. I had just put twelve or fourteen tons of ice on the boat. I was all set to go try this new sweep, this rock hopper job.

JM: Was that on the Mr. Bill?

KT: Yes, it was on the Mr. Bill. I said, "Gee, I'm all rigged out to make a trip for a week." I wanted to do it, so I did. I missed out. That was a pretty good summer, too. It wasn't nothing fantastic, but it seems like it was paying the bills for everybody. Some made more money than others. And last summer was fantastic, I understand.

JM: It must be hard to know.

KT: Oh, yes. You've got to be willing to change. That's for sure. I, stubbornly, was still a Georges man. That's why I've decided to change a little bit -- diversify. When the price on whiting and squid and all that is up, go chase it. See, true whiting fishermen, they'll stay with it year-round. They hit the highs and hit the lows. That's how the intermediate range is making it.

This last winter here of 1986-1987, phenomenal prices for whiting - a dollar, \$1.05, I heard one time. At those prices, a two or three thousand pound tow, boy, you're grinning. Real good. That made your day. You can't guarantee yourself that, because whiting fluctuate incredible. They hit them up off of Gloucester or they hit them down the Ambrose Light off of New York. It's a volatile market. Hopefully, maybe the Food and Drug Administration or whatever agency governs the publicity of fish will do some good advertising for the more under-utilized species. People look at squid and they say, "Ugh."

JM: In this country.

KT: Yes. It's delicious. It's got to be cooked right, that's all. If you go to the gourmet restaurants right here in town, fresh squid is

like \$10.99. There's no reason for it because squid, to the boat right now, might be thirty cents a pound.

That's another killer - the marketing end of this business. Whoa!

JM: Yes. And you have no control over that, really.

KT: No. When I first started unloading at Parascandolo's in Newport, back in 1979, I was deckhand on the Sara Marie. That was before I got on the Sundance with Matthew. We used to get paid New Bedford board prices at the auction or a nickel under. Now it can be as much as a buck difference.

JM: Here in Newport?

KT: That's maybe exaggerating, but I've seen it as much as seventy-five cents. They call it "over the road fish." New Bedford dealers, if you want New Bedford prices, you bring your boat to New Bedford and go on the auction board.

JM: Do many people do that?

KT: I have. It turns out I made out okay or I've lost money. Maybe not lost money, but I've done the same as going to Parascandolo's. Because I used to tie the boat in Jamestown, I had to steam four and a half to five hours, depending on the tide, to get back. At the end of the trip, you

don't want to do that. You just want to tie it up, get off, and go home. That extra steam coming back didn't thrill me at all.

The over the road prices really changed drastically -- is what I wanted to say -- as far as from New Bedford to Parascandolo's, even Point Judith. It's increased, if anything, since 1978, since I've been taking out of Parascandolo's. It seems like it gets larger all the time.

I think back in 1984, it was at least a thousand dollars a trip difference if you'd gone to New Bedford and gone on the auction board.

JM: That's a lot of money.

KT: Oh, a tremendous amount of money. A thousand dollars or more. Sometimes that's a fuel bill. Well, when fuel was cheap. [chuckles]

JM: How many other boats are there like the ones that you go out on in Newport?

KT: In the same horsepower range, you're saying?

JM: Yes. How long, how big, are those boats?

KT: It's anywhere from seventy-five to eighty-five foot. That's the average class in Newport right now - the offshore draggers.

JM: And about how many of them are there here?

KT: I would say ten, maybe fifteen.

JM: What's life like on one of those boats when you're

at sea?

KT: It depends on the boat. I used to work around the clock. When we were four-handed, you worked three tows up and one down, so you're always rotating a man in the bunk.

JM: One man sleeps while the others [work]?

KT: Yes. You have one man in the wheelhouse and two men on deck, running the gear and hauling and setting, picking the deck, and icing the fish down.

It's pretty nice. Now it's pretty laid back because of the longer tows. Usually, when you haul back, it's dump the fish and then sort it and ice it. It's usually done in an hour or so. It might be longer when you go groundfishing, codfishing. But other than that, it's all right. It's a comfortable lifestyle. You get used to it real quick. Hopefully, you've got a crew that you all get along with. If you don't, you get back to the dock and that guy's gone if he's difficult. You find out right away what kind of a guy he is.

When I first started running a boat, I took friends and friends of friends and business is business. It didn't necessarily mix. I learned that one right off. You have to pay attention when you're running a boat. I decided I could

have business friends become my personal friends. I found that I was better off to maintain my privacy when I'm home. Very, very few people I will spend any great deal of time with at home.

It's funny. When you get ashore after you've been to sea even five or four days with that crew -- I spent more time with them, at that point when I was running the Mr. Bill, than I did with my family. Twenty-four hours a day. If you're wondering where a guy is, you go check his bunk. If he ain't there -- on my boat, we had a signal. If you're in the bathroom, the door's closed. When you're not, the door's open. So, if I didn't see him in his bunk, I automatically knew he was in the head. If a guy was going to go down the lazaret and check the steering gear or anything like that, he always told you. I made it a point, a rule - no matter what you did on the boat, you always told me. If you go down and change the fuel over or if you're going down to grease the bearings on the shaft, let me know. That way I know where you are all the time.

I'm probably more of a safety conscious person than I probably should be, but that's just the way I am.

JM: How could you be too safety conscious?

KT: Well, the guys start repeating the rules to you. [chuckles] There's a great deal of ball busting going on out there. Oh, yes, I would say. Tying your oil clothes sleeves closed. You wake up and you've got a broom in your bed with you because you've got no girls. They draw a face on a pie plate. You're sleeping with Lorna Doone. That's what you call her, the leftovers. A guy climbing out of the forepeak area. His first step is into a pan of shepherd's pie or something. It's just a lot of fun. You keep it loose. You've got to keep it loose.

JM: You would go crazy if you didn't.

KT: Yes.

JM: Is it hard to find a good crew?

KT: It's getting tougher. Although, there's a lot of good men around. There's a lot of guys that won't do things that I was used to doing. Now there's the age of conveyer belts. There's no more fish picks.

I just sailed on a boat. I saw one fish pick on board. That's not because he doesn't have them. But the type of fishing we're doing, the conveyer belt -- there's a sump built into the deck. The deck is all stanchioned off. You stick the deck hose in, wash it over to the sump, a

conveyer belt picks it out of the sump, and then it dumps it on another conveyer belt or it travels up and it takes it level. So you're standing up, picking, instead of on your hands and knees or bent over with a fish pick. That's going to go. Not only does it make it easier for the crew, but you can pick the fish up in a third of the time. I could see that already. I only made one trip on that so far.

But when you get into the schools of fish like the butterfish, the squid, the scup, you can fish on a multi-catch type thing. It's much easier when you sort it. You can pick in the baskets; you can pick in the totes. The totes stack. You can pick thirty-five hundred pounds, four thousand pounds of fish in forty-five minutes. All the trash is directly washed right overboard. It just keeps traveling on the conveyer. There's a hose at the end of the conveyer and there's a chute. It just washes right through the scupper.

Again, the technology is just incredible.

JM: So there will be people that will expect that all the time?

KT: Yes. Crew.

JM: Where do you get your crew?

KT: Mostly barrooms.

JM: Really?

KT: No. [chuckles] I'm only kidding. We used to.

JM: [chuckles] I'm going to owe you one after that.

KT: When I used to fish the Mr. Bill out of Jamestown, we said, "All right, I'll see you in the office." Well, the office is the Narragansett Cafe.

JM: The good old Narragansett.

KT: I'd leave messages, paychecks, the works, there. "Just put it in an envelope and leave it for Chucky" - that type of thing. It was all right.

Word of mouth. Kids walking by. I used to keep a three-by-five file card. Anybody who came on the boat looking for a job, I used to make them [write] their name, Social Security [number], street, like that. And then I asked them their social security number again, right after they wrote it down. [chuckles] You'd be surprised.

You heard of people going to Alaska. "Why do I want to pay taxes?" When Alaska was hot. When the king crab was there, sure. "You can call me Tim. You can call me Jim."

The captain said, "You need a job?" Four days later, you told him your real name - something like that. Social Security number? Take your own. I don't really care what you put

down.

[end of side two, tape one]

JM: What do you like the best about your work?

KT: I would say coming home. Sunrises are nice.
Sunsets are nice.

JM: What's a sunrise like out on the Georges Bank?

KT: A big ball of orange, generally, unless it's overcast. The way the world's going now, I'm still wondering what it's going to be like when the sun rises in the west. You always think of it.

I remember the day that [Ronald] Reagan got shot. I was listening. I had a scanner on. I picked up channel ten. This old dog out of New Bedford was talking. He says, "Jesus Christ, they just shot Reagan." I was like, oh, no. There was a lot of people on that radio. There's a certain number of boats always on channel ten. There's a Swedish guy, Olie. Everybody was listening. It was silent for a long time because everybody realized just what the hell was going on.

I think fishing offers an avenue of escape for a lot of independent type people. I didn't realize how well fishing would suit my lifestyle. When I worked in that factory and it was 7:30 to 4:00, "Hey, you want to work overtime?" "Yeah,

what the hell?" You know? The car needs a new set of tires. I've got to bang out eight hours overtime this week. It seemed like every time I got a raise, I had something else to pay for.

After I got out of high school, I think I started at \$3.05. When I left that job, I was making \$3.65 an hour. No matter how much I made, there was always something to get. If you work it out, I don't think a fisherman makes \$2.50 an hour. At certain times, he does. Even though you work in shifts, you're there on the job twenty-four hours a day. If anything ever happens, you're up; you're out. You tear up the net lots of times, everybody's up.

I've sailed on boats where everyone could mend. Now it seems like there's two or three guys. There's at least one member of the crew that can't mend. There's a lot of men that came to the industry that don't know how to mend twine; they don't know how to splice. They have other features which you can take in account for. They can cook or they navigate, so you don't have to worry about that.

You see a lot of ex-truck drivers in the fishing industry because they're independent.

JM: How interesting.

KT: It really suited my [lifestyle]. There's nothing I like better than to come in during the middle of the week. Anything you have to do -- say you've got to build something around your house, you've got to put up a fence or something -- well, everybody goes to the lumberyard on Saturdays and Sundays. That's their project. It's still nice to have a weekend off because three-quarters of the people I know probably, or that I used to know, were ashore working nine-to-five jobs, five days a week. It was nice to get together with them on a Saturday or Sunday or something. My family still all works. Weekends is when I've got to be in for them. So that's interesting.

JM: Do you usually have the same crew or does it change pretty much?

KT: When I was running the Mr. Bill, I had a steady crew. The boat was, at one point, four years old. I'd been on it since 1980. So I had four years on it then. The mate had been with me three years. The engineer had been with me two years. So that's nine years of experience on the same boat, between three guys. Other boats, there is a big turnover. I generally tried to keep the same crew, just because I'm kind of a loyal person. I'd rather see the same crew because it all makes

it mesh and blend in together a lot easier. You get to a point where you get comfortable with someone. If a lobster pot comes up in a tail piece in the net, you don't even have to tell them what to do. Everybody just knows what to do. By the time I check the radar and get back out there to cut it out and mend up the hole again, it's up on deck. It's all ready for me to get in there. Everybody's dressed in their oils. I come out in a set of boots or something because you don't wear oils in the wheelhouse, of course. I'd do the mending, because they all have their gloves tucked under their sleeves and everything else.

That's the handy thing about working with guys all the time. They know your lifestyle. You get a new cook... See, I don't run the Mr. Bill no more. I just went from captain to cook on the boat that I was on. The first trip it was like, "Well, what do you eat?" Fortunately, they all eat the things that I like. I don't like spicy food. I open one drawer full of Roloids, Tums, and you name it. That's the way it is. They just wanted basic food - no spicy stuff.

JM: Had you ever had experience cooking before?

KT: That's where you should start - cook. But I knew enough about gear. The first boat I went on, the

Captain Bill, I cut, picked the pile and put the chain bag back together whenever it came up with a hole in it. My wife got a kick out of it, because I went cook. My whole family razzed me. They said, "Oh, boy. They must have lost weight that trip." No, not really. I'd been through enough cooks that, by watching them, I picked up a little bit of each thing. Ships' cooks are fantastic people. You don't mess with the cook because your steak can come out like a piece of leather if he really wants to.

JM: What do you eat out there?

KT: I would eat fish once, twice, or three times a trip. I've had cooks where you have fish cakes in the morning and have fried yellowtail for lunch, baked fish for supper - not all in the same day, of course.

I had one cook. We used to kid him unmercifully. The first lobsters that came on deck, the keepers, were just -- right to the refrigerator. Them suckers were boiled. Then we had sauteed lobster. At one point, during the trip, he'd steam some fish and the leftover potatoes from the night before. We'd have fish cakes. Delicious. You can't beat fish right fresh off the deck, no matter what anybody says.

I bring my in-laws fish. It was like a big joke. "Now, if I could only get my other daughter to marry a guy that's in the beef business, we'd have it made. We'd have surf and turf all the time."

Chicken, steak, roasts, spaghetti - like that. Now, because all the boats have 110 power, like house current, microwaves are becoming the thing of the future. That's the thing. "Oh, gee, no microwave? Boo." TVs, too. VCRs.

I went on this boat as cook and it was there. Whereas, I was a captain for seven or eight years on two different boats, I had enough to do in the wheelhouse - keeping track.

JM: Do most of the boats have things like VCRs and microwaves?

KT: Yes. It's [unbelievable]. Everybody's getting them.

JM: Is there much time for that stuff?

KT: Now, because of the fishing, yes, there is. Except when you're fishing on the school fish - the shorter tows. When you have the long tows, sure.

I've found that fishermen are very literate people. They might not express themselves or they might be crude. You might think they're hard.

Oftentimes, they just tell you like it is. They don't wax poetry all over you. Reading is phenomenal on boats. Everybody reads. Political views, whatever. Politics is something to kick around on boats. That's a very interesting topic of conversation at the galley table. It's [unbelievable]. Just the different views that people express. They're very attuned.

What impressed me most -- I thought, when I started fishing, if I made twenty thousand dollars a year fishing, I'd be happy. Then I saw what could be made in the industry. I couldn't survive on twenty thousand dollars. I'd put myself in a position, financially, where I couldn't make it, because I'd built a couple houses. It enabled me to build two houses so far. In 1980, when I was getting married, my wife and I bought a house. I came home from fishing. She said, "I found a house I want."

"What?" I was like, "What are you talking about? We're not even married."

"Oh, yes. But you've got to come see it."

I saw it and we bought it. It was lucky. We got into it when it was brand-new. We got to decide what we wanted for cabinets, wallpaper, paint, carpeting, the works. Damned if I didn't

come home again in 1983, she says, "This house is too small. I want to move."

I said, "Well, we can buy the lots next-door and add on."

"Well, you can't build an eighty thousand dollar house in a forty thousand dollar neighborhood."

"I can, because I could give a damn what people think. I mean, it's my house."

Well, we did build a new house, and I'm glad we did. I thought I'd be one of those people who'd want to move up every three years -- buy and sell, buy and sell -- but I think I'm going to stay in this one for quite a while, because there's so much room in it. The basement is unfinished. The yard and all that. We have two kids, so it would be nice to raise them in one spot.

JM: Is that a new thing in the industry - people getting in it because they know they're going to make a good living and they're going to have --

KT: Yes. The public's image, I think, of fishermen has changed. Like I said, the twenty thousand dollars I thought I could earn. Yes, I think that has changed an awful lot. Fishermen get respect now.

JM: Do you think a different kind of person goes into it now?

KT: I don't know about that so much. A person who goes fishing is a pretty independent cuss. He goes for reasons that he didn't like society dictating what he had to do. He got tired of the nine-to-five [hours]. He doesn't mind how hard he works, where he works, what kind of weather. That's a lot to do with why people go fishing. I think that's the main reason. They can get away. They leave the world's problems on the beach.

When I first started on the Captain Bill out of Provincetown, it was a little thing, "Start up the deck hose. We've got to wash this land dirt off us. Wash the deck down. Let's get rid of it."

The captain had a dog. It was a little Lhasa apso, a little ragamuffin. We couldn't go fishing before that dog came down and took a shit on deck. "Okay boys, let's throw the lines off." And then, we did. Me Too did his number and away we went. We didn't wash that off. That's the way it was.

I'm a superstitious person. I don't know. Some of the terms you can call a boat - a slut, a pig. That don't bother me.

JM: Yes. That's bad luck, isn't it?

KT: It is. But that don't bother me. I can hear that. I don't like to see deck hatches overturned. I don't like to see deck plates upside-down. I don't like to see the hatch covers in the fish hold. I always turn to starboard when leaving anyplace. Backing away from the dock, I always turn to starboard.

I saw a guy who had a bad run of luck in Provincetown. He backed his boat out of the harbor completely to get rid of it.

JM: Is that supposed to change --

KT: Yes.

JM: How did you learn these things?

KT: Word of mouth.

JM: Do you know where they came from?

KT: No. Just old-timers. If it worked for them, it works for us. That's pretty much the way it is in the industry. What works for another man, if it's working there, you pretty much get it. Right now, there's more information on fishing being written down compared to way back when, I suppose. But it's pretty much, "What do you got on there? What are you towing for gear?" and stuff like that. Even now, when you go out fishing, you always talk to different people and they always ask you.

Generally, you fish around somebody. There

are guys that will fish alone completely. But I always used to fish next to at least one other boat. You talk to them and say, "All right. We'll be leaving Wednesday. What time you leaving? Okay. I'll be right behind you."

Back when fishing was good on the Southeast part, you could be steaming down there and give a guy a call on the radio because you knew he was down there. He could set you right in on the fish. Now, you've got scanners and all kinds of stuff - scramblers and everything. You don't see as much of that, because the fishing has dropped off so much. Unless you're really set up with a guy where you can get him alone on a channel or you've worked with him for years --

I've got a couple guys that I've got different wave points with. We gave different names to different geographical points of land. The Tin Man, the Scarecrow, the Ghoul, the Pitcher, the Pie Plate. There's old-timers that have the Rabbit, the Shark's Tooth and stuff like that - the Bite, the Can, stuff like that. Everybody knows them.

JM: Does the crew keep it a secret?

KT: Yes and no.

JM: So you have to change it a lot.

KT: Yes, I'd say. Yes, you do change it a lot. And there's a lot of references. "Do you know where we were when this happened - when the turbo let go, where I passed you the belts for the alternator, and stuff like that." I know where that is in comparison to the guy I'm talking to. I know right where it is. You also hear, "Oh, gee, I've got a broken back strap. I had a broken back strap that tow." You'd better be there the next tow, because the guy's right on the fish. That's just the opposite of what you're doing.

Certain guys come right out and tell what you're doing. Other guys, you've got to work out a code with. I would say, more and more, it's become working out codes, references, and stuff like that.

JM: To save yourself.

KT: Yes.

JM: What about the danger out there?

KT: It's always there. Anything that can happen will happen [chuckles] on boats. I've seen messes like you just don't -- but you've got to fix it, because you're out there to make money.

JM: What kind of messes?

KT: Oh, a part in the main wire on one side, getting it all back, crossing doors - just like that. I'm

sure there's other horror stories other people could tell you. Ripping the net in two, stuff like that. Steaming in thick of fog. Having boats come up close to you, tankers. You don't know what to do. You try and call them - no answer. You try them on all the channels they're supposed to be on and there's just no answer. It turns out they're tracking you all the time and no one's up there even in the wheelhouse on the tankers. Who knows? You don't know that.

Getting towed up. Towing somebody up by mistake. Getting your signals crossed. Taking on water. Stuff like that.

JM: Have all those things happened to you?

KT: Yes.

JM: What does "getting towed up" mean?

KT: Someone else tows across your gear. When it happened to me, I only lost the cod end. I've been around guys that tangled doors. That's a real mess - in particular if there's any kind of a heave on or it's sloppy or anything.

But, generally, nowadays, when you get in the fleet, everybody's communicating. I found the Portuguese were the toughest people to fish around. It seems like they don't own a red and green. They go where they want. But, then again,

too, there was Loran A and then there's Loran C. Loran C is more definitive. But they have Lorans that still produce the old A bearings. A lot of those older fellows know how to tow on the old A bearings. So they are. They're towing, say, northeast or southwest or nor'west, southeast, on the old five bearing or something. You'll be towing straight east and west. Well, naturally, you're going to come into trouble.

All in all, though, it's all right. You get used to it. You really do.

JM: Do you sleep out there?

KT: Oh, yes. I had a mate at all times. Or, if I didn't have a mate, I was going to lay to that night. We just ran a watch through the night. We fished at daylight because there was no fish to catch at night. I always carried someone else that could run the boat. Or, if the mate took a trip off, I was lucky enough to have part of my crew who I could train or who had been on other boats as a mate or had run another boat. That's the way it was with me, anyway. In other words, when the mate took a trip off or I took a trip off -- if I took a trip off and the mate took the boat, the engineer went mate and engineer or both the mate and the engineer did the engineering

together - pumping her out, checking this, greasing that.

And you sleep. Like I say, when we were four-handed, we went three up and one down.

JM: And you get so you can do that?

KT: I can go to sleep anytime. Give me a minute and I'll fall asleep here.

JM: [chuckles]

KT: No, I'm serious. I could fall asleep anywhere. I can sleep.

JM: What's the worst thing that's ever happened to you out there, the most afraid you've been?

KT: We ran out of coffee syrup for my milk.

What's the most afraid? Oh, yes. You don't really want to hear sea stories, do you?

JM: Sure.

KT: Oh, boy. We were fishing the week before Thanksgiving. I'd taken a trip off and I came back. I think it might have been the week of Thanksgiving. Yes, it was. It was on the Mr. Bill and we were fishing Cultivator. The Mr. Bill's a shrimper, built down south. It has outriggers.

We got there late. We made the sunset tow. There were some fish on deck, so one guy was turned in. We were four-handed. Me, the mate,

and the engineer were out on deck picking. The boat was laying to, the engine was running.

It wasn't blowing that hard. It was only blowing maybe twenty-five, thirty (something like that), northerly. We were just laying to, picking the last tow. We were going to lay to the night and start off in the morning because I thought we had a sign of fish.

All of a sudden, I heard a pow. I knew what it was right away. The afterstay had parted on the outrigger. I ran to the wheelhouse to put her in gear and get her headed into sea and have the paravane -- on the end of the outrigger, you've got a bird that, when it gets rolling (rough seas), you set it in the water and the water pressure helps stabilize the boat. I wanted to get her into the sea so I could hold the outrigger back with the bird, and then we could secure it with another stay, because it was only stayed forward. Before I could do it, the outrigger started working forward and aft. I didn't get her into the sea, and the outrigger snapped off and fell alongside.

So we're there. And, of course, the other outrigger was down. Now we can't put her in gear because there's the bird in the water and the

stay. It would have gone in the wheel. We had to get it lashed up alongside. Our first reaction was to cut it off. But then I said, "Oh, no. This is going to take a month to get another one built." The boat was designed as a shrimper, and it needs the outrigger. So I'd have to fish a month of fairly rotten weather, while it was coming into wintertime, without outriggers.

So we lashed it alongside. While we're doing it, when the boat rolled down, that outrigger on the starboard side was still out. It was still connected up. There was backwash of green water coming aboard. So then, we lashed it alongside and the wind changed around to the west. We had to steam right into it. Of course, we had the return fuel to that side of the lobster box. Luckily, the lobster box was on the port side.

We went into Nantucket and we're coming around Great Point. It was really humming then. It's shoal water in there. There's a channel. You go in Great Round Shoal and all that. We hit two queer ones and knocked out a window right in the center of the wheelhouse - all in the same trip. That was when Dougy was on the wheel and I was reading a book. All of a sudden I heard [water]. I could hear the water running down the

steps. I look out the end of the state room, and there's water running by me, pouring out the back door. We went down and rigged a patch, and went into Nantucket and got posthumously drunk that night.

JM: How far out were you when that happened?

KT: When we knocked the outrigger off, we were about seventy miles east of Nantucket. Where we knocked the window out, we were right in Nantucket Sound. It's not a very nice feeling, though, when you knock -- because all the radars went dead; the lorans went dead. Maybe we had one radar still working. I think we did.

That's my sea story for this tape. That was interesting. I didn't like that feeling at all.

JM: Do people talk about the danger much?

KT: Well, yes and no. I guess. After a while you ignore it, because you know it's dangerous. I mean, what do they rate it? Fire fighting and fishermen? You hear different polls. Fire fighting, mining, then fishermen - whatever. After a while you get used to it.

I remember when I first sailed out of Provincetown - waking up and not seeing land. That wasn't scary; that was nice. You'd been on land for nineteen, well, twenty-one, years of

life, and then you don't -- I guess it was nineteen or twenty years or something like that. You wake up, and there's no land. I was a landlubber completely. Famous people -- Nathaniel Bowdich wrote the Bowdich book on celestial navigation. You know, the Bowdich logarithm chart and all that. He never went to sea until he was twenty-one. There's a smart man. Everybody uses that book now. He was an authority.

End of First Interview

Second interview with Kevin Tuttle, conducted by Jennifer Murray for the Newport Historical Society on May 15, 1987

MURRAY: I had a question about something you talked about last time that I really don't know much about. That's the Guaranteed Price Contracts with the Japanese.

TUTTLE: My first association with that was back in 1978, when I started on the Sundance. What happened was that the Japanese, before the Two Hundred Mile Limit, were allowed to catch as much butterfish as they wanted. Of course, the American government set quotas on what they could catch. Japan, being the most populated country in the world, they still needed a protein. Butterfish is one of the major sources of protein.

They came to the American buyers and processors and they guaranteed prices to the American fishermen, as far as what they would pay per count of fish. At first, there was what we considered large mixed butterfish. It was a class range. Between 350 to 400 was considered large mix. There was plenty of butterfish to be caught. At that time, the price was forty-two cents a pound.

They're very sharp businessmen. They knew what they were doing. They got us all psyched up

for it. Everybody went out. You made a lot of money.

The following year, there was more directed effort because the Two Hundred Mile Limit was new. It was a guaranteed price -- it didn't fluctuate from day to day on an auction board. They started with the fat contents -- where the fat content wasn't right, and this and that. There's a dye in the butterfish in the fall of the year. You can't bring them in (then), because they don't want them. They actually had people shoreside here that would do testing samples on them -- I imagine like they do with the tunafish. It was either too early and they had the dye in them or they were full of feed. Of course, with all the extra boats being directed on them, the butterfish shrank in size. So did the price. It still was a guaranteed price, so there was double the effort.

It's continued to be double the effort. Now we have freezer trawlers out of Quonset Point. There's been shaker machines on the boats. In other words, what happens is that everybody knows that the guaranteed price is there. It's a stable market. With the shaker machines on deck, what proceeded to happen was that they'd tow through a school of small fish, run them through the shaker

machine, keep the big ones, and kill the small ones.

JM: What's a shaker machine?

KT: It's much like if you were to shake loam on the lawn for a lawn and get the rocks out. They can set the grid pattern on these machines. They actually shake. The butterfish that you don't want fall through the grids.

JM: And they're dead.

KT: Everything, generally, that you drag up is dead. It really is.

There was a big push for butterfish. The guaranteed prices helped. But the Japanese knew exactly what they were doing. After we caught the large mix, everybody geared up for it. They [butterfish] start showing sometimes around August - definitely in November and January. October, you go butterfishing. The fish kept getting smaller, so they kept on lowering the price.

JM: Each year?

KT: Yes. Then, when they knew that we had no more larger fish -- there used to be large, medium, and small -- they started this new classification: super smalls. Super smalls are really disgusting to catch. It's a shame.

JM: How big are super smalls?

KT: A little bigger than a half-dollar. It was poor.
It was just a poor thing.

JM: How can they be used?

KT: They're making fish paste out of them - surimi, whatever. It's all protein to the Japanese. Surimi is just basically a fish. If they want it to taste like crab, they drag crab extract through it. And that's what you get. They call it crab surimi - from my understanding of it anyway.

So they had the super smalls. The fleet nearly killed it off. This year, I did some butterfishing with the Mr. Bill. They brought the price back up, because they were hurting for butterfish so bad. Medium butterfish now are a dollar a pound. But when you can catch them in schools and you can hit them big, a dollar a pound ain't hard to take. And there was some larger butterfish. Maybe they're making a comeback. Hopefully, they will. We had a month out of it in January where we did okay. It used to be that you wouldn't bring in the small fish. If you did, then they'd allow for seven or eight pounds of waste - in other words, fish that they couldn't use. When you catch them like that -- I've seen tows, twenty-five thousand in twenty-five minutes.

It's great fishing. It's just exciting as all can be. When you're catching them like that, you don't have the time to sort through them and return the small ones over the side. Since then, they've changed the gear around, where they have square mesh instead of diamond mesh on your tailpiece. You can sift the net. You just raise and lower it in the water. The small ones swim out while they're still alive. So you're getting a more selective grade of fish. But when you're catching them like that, you can't. So you run them down.

I can remember back then they used to allow -- That was 1978, 1979, even 1980 - upwards of 1981. They used to throw in a few extra pounds. In other words, say you had a hundred and fifty pounds that you were putting in a barrel with water and ice. Well, you're only going to be able to keep -- Say a hundred and forty-two pounds of that is good fish, marketable fish. So they used to throw in an extra eight pounds or ten pounds, figuring that in eight to ten pounds, you're going to have the other eight pounds you need. They could figure out the waste that you needed, the waste you were going to have, by a count and weigh it, and then add that extra weight onto the

barrel. That was still okay. And then, the super
smalls came in. That was just disgusting. They
almost killed them off.

JM: Is there any market for them here?

KT: Yes, there's a fresh market for butterfish. With
the press and the publicity going on, there will
be. I think it will become a thing.

JM: Are they mostly marketed whole?

KT: Yes.

JM: Over there?

KT: Well, they're shipped over there now whole, but I
don't know what happens to them since then. They
prepare them the way they do - smoked, fried,
probably in some kind of surimi.

JM: What is the dye that you were talking about?

KT: It's just something. It's not a dye; it's a
purple tinge that the fish -- like in their
blood. Part of the year, they have it in them and
they're no good to the Japanese.

JM: Do they have to be kept any special way on the
boat?

KT: Well, you should shelf your pens and all that.
You don't want to put too much weight on top; you
don't want to continue to crush them. Because
once they get too much weight, they just crush.
You can see blood in their eyes. Their guts will

start squeezing out of their belly. That's no good. It's a good idea to keep better quality of them. The freezers are doing a great job. They're packed so many pounds to a box. They're graded, blast frozen within two hours of being caught - even sometimes less than that. So it's a good product.

JM: That operation out of Quonset, they have a mother ship, don't they, that smaller boats bring the --

KT: No. They're each capable of catching and freezing their own catch. In the summertime, when the butterfish aren't around, some of those boats will go squid venture, where American draggers will be selling to them, and they'll be processing the catch that way.

JM: What are the main grounds for them?

KT: Butterfish?

JM: Yes - in general.

KT: In general, they're anywhere from West of Hudson's Canyon all the way down to -- I've seen them on the Southeast part of Georges Bank and anywhere from twenty-nine fathom all the way out to a hundred fathom. They're primarily an offshore fish. They do come in the Bay here in the summer, like the squid do, for a brief, short period of time. I've fished mainly on them in a place

called The Gully, which is from Hydrographer's Canyon West to Hudson's Canyon to Fishtail and that area.

JM: It can be pretty brutal out on The Gully, can't it, in the winter?

KT: Yes. And that's another thing. You need calm weather. Before the chromoscopes came into effect -- which is a color depth sounder; it's like a TV picture tube -- you just used to drag and search. We call it "scratch and sniff" - keep your net wet looking for them. But now, with the chromoscopes, you can go out there and ride around. You know what they look like from past experience. You can ride around and find a school of them. If they're the right size and shape and color density that you're looking for on your chromoscope, you set out. A lot of fellows will search before they even bother to set their net. Some of them have even got sonar. Sonar's coming into the fishing industry, too. It's even better than chromoscopes, from what I understand.

The weather can be bad. It's easier to look with that equipment when it's calm. I would have to say that most of the time, the butterfish that I've seen caught and I've caught, has been in fairly calm weather - no more than twenty-five or

thirty knots of wind. The roll and motion of the boat will affect your chromoscope or any electronic equipment, as far as depth sounders anyway and you can't find them.

The butterfish now -- I think they're getting smarter, actually. Because you can have them in one spot one day, and the next day they'll be two or three hundred microseconds further east, west, north, or south. They just go. But that's due to more boats, too. When something's left alone for a long time, one boat catching fish through that school won't disturb it as much as the fact that now there's going to be a minimum of probably half a dozen boats working right near you, because of more boats in the fishing industry.

JM: Are there many people going out that predict the weather themselves, that don't have much navigation equipment?

KT: I wouldn't think so. I think, generally, everybody watches the weather on TV. The older people are better weathermen than the younger fellows like myself. Everybody generally watches a barometer. You can watch the birds. The birds are a good indication. Seagulls are always a good indication of wind. If they land on the bow and

start preening themselves or bringing up the oil, it's going to blow. If you see them circling above you, winding up in a big circle, you know it's going to blow. Stuff like that.

JM: I wonder why they do that.

KT: Well, they have to bring the oil up on their feathers. That way, when it gets so rough that they can't fly anymore, they have to lay to in the water. It's just to help them float. They shed water better when they have the oil up.

JM: Can you actually see the oil coming up?

KT: No, not at all.

JM: You just know they're doing that.

KT: Yes. It's a gland. It's probably a semi-odorless, colorless liquid.

I think everybody generally does pay attention to the weather more so now than before. There's more concern for safety, I imagine. For a fact, the older sailors were a lot tougher than we are today.

JM: About safety?

KT: Not about safety. They just went and did their job.

JM: Oh, I see. Regardless.

KT: Yes. "Time to go. Throw the lines off. Let's go. We're bound."

I was up in Maine on vacation. I guess it must have been 1982. Yes, 1982. There's a schooner in Boothbay [Maine], I believe - the Sherman Zewicker. It's one of the last codfish longliners that ever sailed out of the country. They have movies of it - actual movies of these men. They sent the men over in a dory every morning with a jug of water and a compass course -- in case they got lost -- for land. They're black and white movies. The most amazing thing is the last trip was in 1968, which isn't that long ago - not at all. The movies are something to see. They'd salt the fish down. Ice - non-existent. It was gone a month, I guess. They're very tough men. [chuckles]

JM: Would they have been the Grand Banks fishermen?

KT: Yes. By sail. That boat now is a museum up there. Oh, it's beautiful to see. You ought to go up to see it.

JM: I'd like to do that.

KT: It's entertaining.

JM: It must have been quite a life.

KT: They've changed it a little bit. I think she's about a hundred and ten foot. Wood. Now it's a museum. Oh, it's fabulous. The movies. You can't believe it. I mean, they're black and

white, but they're -- You say, "Boy, this can't be. This has got to be from the 1940s." I mean, even if it was color, the work they did was just -- they had to haul by hand. I think they had five miles of gear that they set out.

I went out in a skiff yesterday in the Bay with a little net and a set of doors. We had to haul them by hand.

JM: Why were you doing that?

KT: Just for fun. My friend's got a net. I guess it wasn't fishing right, so he wanted me to go out and take a look at it. The day before, I made an adjustment on the bottom and added some chain to the sweep.

The fellow that owns the skiff, he's Swedish. He's got to be. Angus McCall. Right out of the old Wild West.

JM: With a name like that. [chuckles]

KT: Yes - Angus McCall. Well, he didn't like the weight because the doors weren't shining. So he called up where he bought the doors. They went and got weight. I just happened to run into him in the morning. I said, "Yes, I'll go," because I'd never done it - in the skiff. You're doing everything by hand. You throw the net over and you set the door over, and you slack the door off

on a cleet. There's no winches or nothing. And then, come time to haul back, it's hand over hand. It's a small net - thirty foot sweep, if that. Twenty-four foot, six, I think. It was fun.

JM: Did you catch anything?

KT: About thirty pounds.

JM: Of what?

KT: There was some tautog and flounders mostly. The Bay isn't even what it used to be, from what I've heard. I don't know.

JM: Do people tell you stories about the abundance in the Bay?

KT: Yes. You could catch codfish in the Bay. You can't catch a codfish in the Bay now. If it is, it's probably diseased and sick from the chemicals from up Providence way or something. It's probably a groundkeeper [old fish] hanging around. It just isn't what it used to be in the Bay.

You see the day boats down at Parascandolo's - Albert on the Elizabeth K. "Do enough to keep going." Probably everything in his life is just where he wants it and he's just too set in his ways to give up fishing. He loves it too much. He likes going out every morning and making his two or three drags, and then coming back.

It's not like it used to be. It wasn't

very good even when I got here. I lived with a fellow when I got out of school that's been coming to Jamestown all his life. He says the stripers and everything are just not there the way they used to be. It's probably over-fishing. Maybe it's a change in the atmosphere of the earth. Who knows?

JM: You were very proud of being a Georges fisherman.

KT: Yes.

JM: As you've said, there's so much depletion there. What do you think about the oil exploration out there?

KT: I'm not pleased, because where they had the wells -- they were setting (I don't know) twenty-five thousand pound anchors to anchor the rigs. Well, I had friends that have since been fishing - one fellow that was with me that went fishing that used to work on the oil rigs. They've left debris all over that place. I can't go back there. I could, but I'd stand a good chance of losing my gear. I don't have Loran bearings on them, but I know for a fact they've left anchors out there, pipe, all kinds of stuff.

JM: They weren't supposed to do that.

KT: Oh, no - not at all. They were supposed to clean it up a hundred percent. But when you have a

piece of twenty-five thousand pound anchor down forty fathom of water and your retrieving gear off it, what are you going to do? You can't send divers down on Georges Bank. The tide, forty fathom, two hundred and forty feet. The oil companies wouldn't be willing to pay for it to make sure they get it all clear. If they did, then they'd just pass along the cost to us, which they do anyway.

JM: The government does?

KT: No, the oil companies.

JM: How can they do that?

KT: They raise the price of oil. I wasn't too pleased about the fact that they were going to drill on Georges. I just figured, well, that's evolution for you. That's the only thing. Now they're going to be back. They're going to be back. They say they've found gas wells. Well, who knows what they -- they probably kept everybody silent. The ones that are in the know are being paid to keep their mouths shut, I figure. Even if they didn't strike oil, all that gas is a resource. That's eventually going to pay off for itself. Who knows?

JM: Is anybody complaining about that - all that debris left down there?

KT: I doubt it. My own personal experience is I give it about a three to five mile leeway all around the rig. I don't need to get into an anchor and I don't need to lose the gear, because you've got a twenty-hour steam to where they were for me. To lose the gear, I'd have to steam another twenty hours and then put in the time to get all the gear back on the boat. I just gave it a wide berth.

Oil companies are funny people. It's like the Catholic Church. The more money they have, the more powerful they get, the more ridiculous laws or regulations they get implemented.

JM: Do you think people have much of a sense of what a rich place that was and could be again?

KT: As far as the average middle-class person that reads newspapers, I think they've heard of it probably. They didn't realize how rich it was. I don't know if it will ever be as rich again. I can't see how. I don't know where the fish are going to come from.

I had a friend, a skipper, I used to work for. He owned his own boat. Times got tough and he lost the boat, but he still had the mortgage to pay off. Well, he got on a boat and he ran boats to the Grand Banks. When there was no yellowtails on the Southeast part of Georges Bank

or Georges Bank period, he was going to the Grand Banks when everybody started fishing the Grand Banks again on draggers. He was coming in with a hundred, hundred and thirty-five thousand pounds of fish.

I can remember hearing him talk, coming back from the Grand Banks. He says, "If there's one thing I found out this summer, I'm not catching domestic yellowtails. I'm not catching domestic yellowtails. They're just not worth as much as good old United States yellowtails."

It takes four and a half to five days to steam to the Grand Banks. You're going to only be able to put in five days fishing, another four or five days coming back. Ten-day-old fish. They're reaching the end of their usable product range. Even if you went out there and froze them, which no one has tried to do, I don't believe - freeze codfish, freeze haddock, freeze yellowtails. The buyers just said, "No. They've got carbolic acid in them from the bottom." Whatever it is, the fish are not the same. They're the same species, but they're not the same family or same product when you fillet them off. The yellowtail tends to be softer.

So he avoided catching yellowtails. He just

caught grey soles, witch flounders, and ocean dabs. That's a funny thing. The buyers, they're unbelievable people. I understand they've got their own business, but they're just so hard on you.

JM: The wholesalers?

KT: Yes.

JM: Who do you mostly wholesale to?

KT: Parascandolo's, myself. I get along with them fine. They know me. When you develop a reputation for bringing in good fish or being able to diversify and work with them to a point as far as you can ask them what prices are going to be like, what they think this is going to be so you can change fisheries --

JM: Are you in touch with them all the time when you're out there, about prices?

KT: No. I generally don't. I like that part of the independence. When you fish out of Boston now, they want you to call ahead and tell them what you're catching. You talk to them and they think they're doing you a good deal by telling you, "Well, this boat, this boat, and this boat's going to be in today. Why don't you come in for the following day or two days later?" They try and do it that way. It helps a bit. You don't

want to get in when there's a lot of boats, because then it's going to drive the price down with a big supply. But then, again, by the time you get to the dock, they've got your fish sold. How competitive can an auction be when they know what you've got? You go into that port and there's not much you can do about it.

That's why I don't talk to the Parascandolos. I suppose I should more often. I think the competitiveness in me just says I'd rather be real independent when I get home. I don't even call home. Very rarely do I call home. I'll be gone. That's the way I like to do it.

JM: Have you ever brought fish into Boston?

KT: Not myself, no. I've been to New Bedford, but I've never gone to Boston.

JM: What's that like in New Bedford?

KT: It's a public auction. Gee, if this is going in a book, I'm going to be really crucified. They're like seagulls at a dump. When the bell goes off, they're yelling and screaming, hooting and hollering, screaming prices out. You can't believe grown men can act like that. You just can't believe it.

JM: Are there a lot of fights?

KT: I have yet to see any.

[end of side two, tape two]

[side one included the previous interview]

As far as fights at the New Bedford auction, no, I've never seen any. I've seen a lot of disgusted skippers. The fortunate thing about that is, if you're not happy with your prices, towards the end of the auction, you can just tell them no sale, and you can pull your fish off the board.

JM: And then where do you go?

KT: Well, you can wait till the next day's auction or you can work your own deal - go somewhere else and take what you can get. Oftentimes, you can do that and make out just as well. You'll probably get the average board price. The fellow that gets the high board price, in my experience in New Bedford, is the fellow that -- when you see codfish, for instance, are forty or fifty cents across the board for everybody, and one fellow has a thousand pounds of flounders and another fellow has two hundred pounds of flounders, well, that fellow that has the thousand pounds of flounders might get an average price of seventy cents, where the guy with two hundred pounds of flounders might get two dollars a pound. The last bid that is put on your trip on the board is the one that buys the

whole trip. See? Naturally, a person isn't going to bid two dollars on a thousand pounds when he can bid two dollars on two hundred pounds. They go after the pieces, so to speak - the smaller quantities. Sometimes they go up by tenths of a cent. They might go up a nickel, dime. It all depends.

It's fascinating to see. I think a display auction would be a little better because then it would pay for people to take the quality. It would eliminate the real long trips, I would think. If they bought by lots of say five hundred pounds and the buyers actually were in a refrigerated room and they looked at the fish, one part of your fish would bring real good money, because it's not that old. Of course, the older the fish, you would expect it to bring less money. If you took care of your fish, you'd be making money and your effort would be rewarded - is what I'm trying to say. That would make sense, I feel.

I think everybody's tending to take better care of their fish these days -- from my experience in Newport. You work too hard to try and bring in a lousy product. I don't agree with that. Sure, sometimes fishing's real easy. You get a trip in a couple days. But, other than that, no.

JM: I've heard from people there's a certain amount of cheating that goes on in New Bedford.

KT: As far as what, you mean?

JM: Well, of knocking more fish on to a hundred pounds....

KT: Oh, yes. You mean the scalemen.

JM: Yes.

KT: [chuckles] Yes, you have to watch that. You've got to watch that. The scale tips and then they sweep a few more fish on. They call that for all the ice they didn't get off the fish, supposedly. But, yes, there's a lot of that.

The first time I ever unloaded in New Bedford, I was up keeping tally. Every time they took a row of boxes away, I was marking it down. Come up to the end of the trip and I'm a whole tier shy; I'm four hundred, five hundred pounds shy of fish. "What's going on here? How come I've got this marked down?"

"Well, Cap, go check them. They're right over there against the wall."

Well, that was fifty feet away from me. I'm watching the scale. What happened was another handtruck came in, scooped that tier and took them away. I lost. So, since then, I hired a bonded weigher. But they're in cahoots, too.

Supposedly, they're hired by the state. The first thing you've got to do when you get there is you offer the cullboard man a box of fish. He says, "Can I have a box of fish?"

"Yes." You're taken care of. He sees you get your weight - you think. The bonded weigher. I had one. It also turns out he's a bookie. I looked for him at the end of the cullboard, and he's gone. When he came back, I said, "Where'd you go?"

He says, "Oh, I had to make a phone call."

Then, I got to know the guy after a couple trips. He flashes a wad of hundred dollar bills in front of me out of his pocket one day. I was like, "Oh, boy." So, needless to say, I didn't really enjoy the fact when I had to use him that often.

Other than that, there are some spots you go that you get your weight, you get treated fairly. Other spots, you don't. Everybody takes an extra little bit of weight. They always do. In New Bedford, they have a scale set aside not only for the fish, but they have a man setting up the box with the ice in it. They've got the scale set. They know what the box weighs. The man's supposed to shovel so many pounds of ice in it. Well, when

the hurry's on, the scale is not going to balance out all that quickly. He throws the ice. If it's under, then the fish make up the difference. It's like that. Or, if the guy is real smart -- and it's not real smart, it's just common sense -- he'll get a whole bunch of boxes ready. It's warm out and your ice is melting. Your fish are filling the box once again.

I wouldn't sell to everybody in New Bedford. I wouldn't do that. But there are a few that I'd always go back to.

JM: It must be tough for people, who are just starting out, to know what to do with all that.

KT: Yes. Your adrenalin flows when you go to New Bedford. It flows even more, I hear, when you go to Boston. In Boston, that is actually a piece auction where your fish doesn't get bought by all one buyer. Different buyers buy different parts of your trip which is nice. It could go along with that quality thing where one buyer likes that fish more, so he'll bid more on that fish. But you've got to have everybody up there, because they've got little trains. I think it's five hundred pound cars, where your fish come out into five hundred pound cars. The train hooks up to it. It's much like an airport baggage tractor

- the little, small ones. Your fish is going everywhere. If you don't tally it all, you can lose lots. So that's the way that works, too.

As far as honesty, Parascandolo's. He's the best on the whole East Coast. That's my own opinion. I haven't gone that many places. From what I've heard from a lot of fishermen, he is the most honest fish dealer up and down the Coast. He'd do anything in the world he can to help you, too. That speaks for itself. It's always nice to come home and know you're not going to get ripped off, especially after spending anywhere from four to eight to nine, ten days at sea. I don't even watch the scales at Parascandolo's. They say, "Do you want to count the trip in the truck at the end?"

"No, that's all right. Just tell me what it is." And that's the way I feel about it. I don't think they're ripping me off. If they do, it's minor, compared to what it is at other spots.

JM: That's pretty nice.

KT: Yes. Everybody's happy to see you. And it's close to home.

JM: That's the best part, or one of them.

KT: Yes.

JM: You were talking about the quality of fish --

about how you were going to store them in seawater. How does that work?

KT: You have a watertight fish hole. It's called a slush tank. Instead of your pens having bulkheads, it's all stanchions. You can set up your pens the way you want. You'll stagger your ice and your fish. You don't ice the fish the way you regularly do, if you put any ice in on them at all. You run them into a pen. There will be a pen of ice right alongside. And then, there'll be another one behind. The corners of each pen will touch -- They'll probably be fish, but they'll be surrounded by ice. You float them in ice. You float the hold in seawater, and you bring the seawater up to the level of the fish you have. In other words, there's no ice to crush the fish. It's just fish and fish scales. Nothing foreign, except for the pen boards and stuff to the fish. It's a much better product.

I just found out the other day that they're getting more money in Point Judith for the fish that way. It makes sense and it's a very simple thing to do.

JM: It's pretty new, isn't it, that people are doing that?

KT: Well, yes. They call it slush ice. You can have

compressors aerating the water or you can have your water being pumped through the compressors and cooled. That's refrigerated seawater, which is the real refrigerated seawater. This is kind of cheating on it, because you're just using the ice to cool down your seawater. There is some melting involved and all that. Well, there would be with even passing your seawater through your refrigerated seawater, because of the heat loss and all that.

As far as new, I don't know if it's so new. It's just more equipment that you have to -- as far as you were going to have air compressors doing that. A little more labor intensive at first to set up your fish holds and your pens of ice. I think it actually would be a lot easier, because you're just running them down a deck plate anyway. You don't have to ice the fish. Climb down and throw the pen boards in. As far as the quality, let's hope the price goes with the quality.

JM: That's important.

KT: Yes.

JM: You were talking about all the new technology, how much more efficient it makes you - the nets that can fish for more than one species at a time.

You were saying you didn't know how good some of it is, and that you saw some things going on on other people's boats that you really didn't like that much. What do you mean by that?

KT: I think that when you look at it from a conservation point, fly fishing used to be just that - where you didn't catch any flounders or yellowtails. In other words, when you went fly fishing, you might not know that there are some flounders or yellowtails there. You were after the fly fish. With those combination nets --

JM: What are the fly fish?

KT: Whiting, squid, scup, butterfish.

JM: Why are they called fly fish?

KT: They're very rarely on the bottom. They're close to the bottom. They move a lot more than flounders and yellowtails do. I wouldn't say that they swim a lot faster, but they're apt to move in great schools more than would yellowtails or flounders.

With those combination nets, your net will be hard down on bottom. You've got good head rope height, smaller mesh. You can still catch all that fly fish.

It hurt the industry. Because a man that went fly fishing before they invented those

combination nets, he went fly fishing. He didn't know that the bottom had that. Smaller mesh, because you have to have smaller mesh to catch scup, squid, whiting, and butterfish. Therefore, your mortality rate on your flounders is high. You're bringing the small ones up on deck because they can't escape the mesh size. It's too small for them. They get gilled in the twine or caught in the cod end.

I don't know what statistic would hold true as far as what you return to sea lives. But I have seen quite a few small yellowtails back in 1980 and 1981 that you knew were dead, but you couldn't keep them. That's what I meant by that.

It was disappointing. We were all making money when we did it - making good money. Now we're stuck with the results - lack of yellowtails around. We caught them right when we should have been leaving them alone. We should have had larger mesh on them. We're all directly to be held responsible.

JM: But people didn't really know that, did they?

KT: Well, I imagine the older people did. They did. But when you have the same similar boat as someone else next to you and he's out-catching you, boy, that really goes up your ass a mile. If he's

towing a smaller mesh net to do it, or he's got more chain on his net, he's got more ground cable out, you do what you've got to do to get competitive. If you don't, there's only so long you're going to keep the crew happy. That's the big thing. I mean, it's all money. That's what talks - money.

When I was considered that Georges fisherman, "Oh, you're going to Georges." He uses legal cod ends. He doesn't have graduated nets and all that. At one point, you didn't have to because the fish were down there. But there were guys going down there with those combination nets, smaller mesh. I can't blame it on those combination nets down at Georges. It was a more increased effort on a number of boats going to Georges so that they caught all the breeders. And then, that was it. There was nothing left to breed. That's why there's a lack of yellowtails on Georges Bank. There was a definite increased intensity of fishing effort by us fishermen.

JM: How about the competition from foreigners? The Canadian fishing industry is subsidized.

KT: That hurts. I never expect to see in my lifetime the United States Government subsidize anything we do. They've got too many Ronbo's and they've got

too many Contra deals going.

The main job placement for Canada is on the water. It's a major source of income for the whole population. If they don't fish, they raise potatoes. That's probably a crude way to say it. The Canadian Government love their fishermen. It employs them people, so they don't have -- I mean, their unemployment rate is probably quite high. I don't know. The land is so hard with the weather they have in the wintertime that what would they do, but fish? That's why the government, I think, stepped in. They realized a long, long time ago just what they had in the fishermen, as far as supplying food for their country.

Their prices aren't all that hot, you know - Canadians. They claim if they average twenty-five to thirty cents a [pound], year-round, they're very happy. Whereas, back when fishing was good, we figured we averaged forty cents a pound year-round. So they had to get in and subsidize them because the prices they receive are nothing. There's another way to look at it. They had to subsidize them. I don't know if this is absolutely right, but when fuel was like \$1.15 here, they were only paying sixty or seventy cents

for it up there because the government was taking up the slack on the other end of it.

I think it's great. God bless the Canadian fishermen. They're as common a fisherman as us. They work hard. Sure they work hard. They have days when they loaf. But they're out there. They're definitely out there. They're doing their thing. The fact that they got their government to subsidize them speaks a lot higher of them than it does of us.

Our government - ugh. The defense -- Oh, boy. When you think of it - Star Wars and the whole bit. Why can't we just mind our own business for a while, take care of our own? I don't know. I think most presidents do it to make themselves look good. I think most countries realize that if they ever screw with the United States, they'd all get together and kick their ass right quick. The people are that way, I think. I really do. I think the country that ever bombs the United States is going dread the day they did it. You know what I mean? I'm not a great patriot, as far as that. But I think it would bring along an awful lot of angry people to arms. I can honestly say I believe that way. But why they don't help us, I don't know. Like I say, I

don't expect to see it. I'll be long gone.

JM: How do those Canadian imports affect --

KT: Terrible. This week, codfish, flounders, everything, has hit the fan. Codfish, I found out today, are like fifty cents. May 15th. And there wasn't a great deal of codfish in New Bedford.

JM: So it's all coming down?

KT: Yes. Canadian imports.

JM: Is that frozen fish?

KT: Some is. Some are fileted; some are not. The biggest thing in that Atlantic Offshore -- I forget the name of their committee [Atlantic Offshore Fishermen's Association]. They've got to impose tariffs. It's not even a quarter of what it should be. It really isn't. They're sending like four or five tractor-trailer loads at a time of Canadian fish into the country. It's mostly going to New Bedford - codfish and haddock. What can the limited amount of buyers do there? They don't need American codfish. They can just go, "Hey, I can buy it for a quarter a pound." That's what they're doing.

JM: Is it still pretty plentiful up there?

KT: At different times of the year, yes, I think.

They do well. It's like us. Different times of the year, the winter months and spring months, are

pretty good. Now there's a lull in fishing. I guess it's pretty slow fishing offshore right now. But everything's cheap, too - scup. The traps off here have the scup and the squid.

JM: What about the World Court decision on the Northeast peak of Georges?

KT: We lost, but we could have lost a lot more for sure. Back in 1979, Congress had that bill. They should have gone for it - set up joint management with Canada. I mean, the Canadians were willing. It isn't like you see a Canadian boat and it's war. We could have both fished there.

The Canadians are a more conservative people. That whole area, they've got closed off at certain times of the year. They only allow scalloping in there at certain times of the year, which is good. Their fishermen can afford it because they're subsidized. An independent fisherman in the United States, he'll argue to the death about closure zones and prices. I guess it's a fact of habit, we just don't feel like we're getting treated fairly all the time.

The World Court decision hurt. It really did. I lost ground. I used to fish out there in the summer. In fact, in the wintertime, the sun

sets and you can see boats from America towing over there.

JM: What happens to them?

KT: Well, if they don't get caught, they get a trip, generally. I've heard ten microseconds over that line, trips of twenty thousand pounds of yellowtails being caught there. I can't say that's going to hold true, but it seems like the fish know that there aren't going to be any boats there. They don't get whacked up. The bottom isn't disturbed.

I've seen boats get caught. I've seen the Canadians chasing boats, shooting flares, throwing line over, circling them, trying to get them to stop. I've had friends fishing down there. They know the boat's coming. So you haul back and you start steaming. They have a Zodiac or whatever it is. It does about forty-five miles an hour, where a fishing boat does eight. You ain't going to get away. Since then, they've started chasing boats. They used to chase them back just to the United States line. Well, it's not a territorial sea. It's a conservation zone. They can chase them all the way back to the twelve or three mile limit - twelve mile limit. That's happened off the Massachusetts coast, too. And there's a little

piece in the paper the next day about, "Ooh, American vessel chased by Canadian Coast Guard within twelve miles of the Massachusetts border." Well, it's like Big Brother put a fence out there. They almost ought to have a fence out there, where your boats can't go through. That's what it amounts to. The guys that go there, that take the chance, they take the chance. When they get caught, they go to jail. You lose your boat; you lose your catch. Someday I might be on one that will be caught. But if I'm running it, I would never do it myself. I can say, honestly, I've been over that line. I've towed across. I didn't enjoy the fact. I didn't enjoy it at all. I didn't like it. Of course, I didn't catch any fish over there, either. [chuckles]

JM: [chuckles] Maybe next time.

KT: They weren't there.

JM: What about the sawed off shotguns you were telling me about?

KT: Our Coast Guard get the kids, the farmers, from Kansas.

JM: Oh, that's our Coast Guard.

KT: Yes. Well, the Canadians now have fifty caliber machine guns mounted on deck. I don't know if that's to shoot at you. I'm sure they'd fire a

burst across the bow to get you to stop. I don't know if they'd shoot you or not. I think that would provoke an international incident. Maybe then, Ronbo would get up on his horse and ride to the future. Who knows?

They're very serious about that line. They are. There's no doubt about it. The thing that bothers me is: Why hasn't our Coast Guard caught any of the Canadians fishing in our zone? I can't believe that they haven't been there. That's a pessimistic view to take that, yes, they've been here because we've been there. I wonder. I really wonder. You're down there against the Canadian line. There's always, always, always -- They check that probably -- I would have to say they send planes out at least three times a week, weather permitting in the wintertime. The boats are two hundred, three hundred feet long. They're very serious about it. I think they're very conservative, too. Like I say, they shut down the area. It's a long way for them to steam, too - that Northeast peak. I would say it's probably just as long, maybe a bit shorter, than for me to go to Georges Bank from Newport.

JM: What makes it such an abundant area?

KT: It must be the currents.

JM: What currents?

KT: The Gulf Stream. The fact that it is so far away, there's only so many boats that can go there. The bottom doesn't get as disturbed, or didn't used to be as disturbed. The fish can realize that. They sense that. It's like, why are trees so tall? Nobody touched them for years. It's the same thing, I believe. Mostly the nutrients and the Gulf Stream and whatever other currents - the Labrador Current coming down, the cold water meeting the warm and the works, bringing all the different microorganisms that are there to each other.

JM: The tides are always changing, aren't they, in different parts?

KT: Oh, yes. The tide runs strong out there, very strong, all the time.

JM: How do you learn about all that and know where to fish?

KT: Just experience - talking to other people. A lot of it, trial and error. I don't care to count the number of times I've blown the gear to smithereens out there and have been forced to lay for eight and ten hours, putting it back together. It's like that. You've got to just go and do it. If anything can happen on a boat, it will. It

definitely will. You're out there. That's part of your job. Put it back together; get it fishing as quick as you can. That's the way it is. Either that or put another net on and smash that one up, too. [chuckles]

JM: The ultimate outward bound. [chuckles]

KT: It's like that at times. I always try and fix my nets out there. A lot of the fellows have spare nets aboard. Oftentimes, they have three or four nets aboard. They just change their net and keep fishing. If you fish closer to home, you don't have the time to mend on deck on the way in. If you're going to turn around, if you're making shorter trips, financially it's smarter to take it somewhere and get it fixed and you go back fishing. You don't spend the time at the dock to repair it. So that makes sense, too. Flyfishing is a different style of fishing. They make the shorter trips. There's boats out of Newport here that make the shorter trips. Ten hours, I would say. It's nicer, in my opinion - if you can make a living at it. I'd like to fish Georges when I have to and fish closer to home. Who wants to steam over fish just to go to Georges all the time? That's where, I think, you have to be the smartest person, deciding where to go, what you're

going to do that trip. It's kind of like you've got to get psyched up every trip. You've got to come up with a game plan. That's interesting, too. The scuttlebutt on the dock. Who was where? What did he do? You hear from everywhere.

[end of side one, tape three]

That's a very interesting part of fishing, as far as where you're going to go. You have favorite spots you go to. You know each time of year what fish would be in what general area. Oftentimes, you keep trying that spot for a month. Sometime during that month, you might just be there at the right time. That's when you make the big score. There are certain spots where you go and you only catch a bushel a tow. Now, on Georges, if you can find three bushel an hour, you'd better keep your mouth shut and just drill away. Just drill away.

Years ago, you used to go to spots and you wouldn't stop looking until you found a thousand weight or more. You'd be towing from spot to spot once you got initially down on Georges and you got to where you could tow all around. In the Southeast part, there are spots where it's tough. But out below thirty fathoms, there's just a wide open area. You can tow from one spot to the other

with all the hangs you've got - all the areas you can tow. You just kept searching and searching. Then, back in 1979 and 1980, you pretty much were able to find eight hundred to a thousand pounds no problem - set out on it with no problem at all, but keep looking for the fifteen hundred. Now, phew -- You go down there and work with someone, and you keep your mouth shut until someone else that you fish with comes along. So that's different.

JM: Do you have to keep reports for the government?

KT: No. They'll eventually do that to us, though.
[chuckles]

JM: That would make it hard to keep secrets about where you go.

KT: Yes. Well, I don't know. I suppose. Maybe yes; maybe no.

JM: Are most of those Canadian boats owner-operated? Or is that pretty much an American concept?

KT: I think there's quite a few independents, but they're all assisted financially by the government. You have independent owners and you have companies that own boats, and fellows running boats for them like I did.

JM: Do you have much trouble out there with lobster gear?

KT: Occasionally. That's becoming a problem now. Fifteen hundred pots, from what I understand, years ago used to be quite a lot of pots. Now they're setting two thousand. Twenty-five hundred would be a lot. And they're rehauling half of that again. They used to go haul for four or five days. In order to get enough weight, they rehaul. They'll finish hauling, then they'll go back and haul the rest of it. Either that or they'll set three thousand pots and it will take them seven days to get through three thousand pots. With the greater number of pots and the way the winter weather is, they can't bring all the gear back in to the dock. What they do is now they're moving it up inside of fifty fathoms. When we go fluking in the wintertime, we're checking fifty fathoms of shoaler water and we're hitting it. They call it "winter storage." They ought to put an end to it. You hear that? They ought to put an end to it. It's not right.

JM: How could an end be put to it?

KT: Either limit the number of traps used, or we'll just start welding blades on our doors and we'll wipe it out for them. When I get into lobster gear and I don't know it, I steam out of there. I know too many of the lobstermen

personally to go and ruin their livelihood. I don't like to. I'll work with them. They can tell me where they are and I'll stay clear. I don't mind that at all. But it just seems like they're fishing too many pots. Again, it's over-fishing. There's too many boats, too many lobster boats, too much gear. Who knows?

Everybody complains about gillnets. When a gillnet is lost, it's still fishing. Fish still swim into that gillnet and gill themselves and die. It's a little of this, a little of that.

As far as the lobstermen -- I get along with them personally. I have heard of big battles between different boats. I've heard of gun fights, the works.

JM: From people locally?

KT: Out of Connecticut. One fellow's boat broke down. He had lobster gear offshore. When he got his boat fixed, he went back out to his gear and he saw another lobsterboat hauling his gear. He pulled up and said, "What the hell are you doing?"

He says, "I'm hauling the gear. What the hell do you think I'm doing?"

He says, "Well, that's my gear."

He says, "To hell with you." They opened up on him. They counted over a hundred bullet holes

in the hull of the boat. The guy had it coming, though. He had it coming.

There's more of a tilefish industry now, though. It wasn't a hassle, because they were talking on the VHF to us all winter long. But there's more and more tilefishing off in the Gully now.

JM: And the lobstermen are doing that, aren't they?

KT: Some of them. There's two or three boats that converted out of Newport because they saw what the longliners out of New Jersey and New York (were doing) -- At first, it used to be the party boats that used to convert - the head boats that take people. In the wintertime, they'd switch it over to longlining tilefish. But now, they're building boats exclusively designed for that - tunafishing, swordfishing, and longlining. There was an incredible amount of them offshore this year. I would say there would have had to have been upwards of two dozen boats working in the Gully. When they set their longline gear, they occupy the area for the day. They haul it back at night and they drift. Then, the next day, you might be towing all night, but they just come out and they set again. Or they ask if they can set there. One end of your tow

might be clear. But the other end of your tow, they'll be setting into. You have to change your tow. So it's becoming more competitive all the time out there. I think you'll see even more out there next year, because they whaled the living shit out of them (the tilefish) this year. They smoked them. They had a good year at it. That's why the lobsterboats converted from Newport.

They got in kind of late at it, but I don't think any of them had a broker (a trip where no money is made) the first trip. I know they didn't. Because I know the guys that did it. They did all right. They didn't like it, though.

One fellow made one or two trips and said, "I'm getting the hell out of this."

"Why?"

"How can you guys stand it? The price fluctuates so much from day to day."

They're mad if lobsters drop ten or fifteen cents a pound. But they're talking about a species of fish where they probably average well over two dollars a year.

There's a lot more to lobstering than there is to dragging. I could never do it. I wouldn't do it. No way. Personally, I take my gear home with me when I come in on the boat. It would be

like taking all your life savings and putting them in a trap and putting it off of Fort Adams in the summer time and setting a big orange buoy off it and having a yachty come along and say, "Ho, there's dinner." There's your life savings. Traps aren't cheap. I'd say an offshore trap, a wooden trap rigged, plus the line, it's probably about forty or fifty dollars - maybe even more. So when they start wiping them out, it's no good. A fifty pot trawl, two or three grand a trawl. That hurts the boat account.

JM: What about people wanting to get into the industry? What's the future for them with those kinds of expenses tied up in it? There's fewer fish, so there's smaller crews on the boats.

KT: Better have a good sugar daddy. You'd better have someone with a lot of backing behind you. I could never afford to do it myself right now, raising a family and everything. I think if it came down to it, I would tie my personal property, my house and home up with it. I don't really want to. But I might.

As far as anyone coming into the industry? Phew -- Work hard. Just work hard. Build a name for yourself. Start at the bottom. That's what I'd do.

[off/on tape]

JM: What kind of safety equipment would you have on your boat?

KT: An inflatable raft, life preservers, a survival suit for every man involved, an EPIRB (which is an emergency position indicating radio beacon), flares, first aid kits, single sideband for long-range communication in case someone gets hurt (you can contact shoreside facilities and have the Coast Guard, hopefully, come out and get you). I think that's about it. I said the raft, the survival suits, the EPIRB, the sideband, VHF's (of course), and backup equipment for all of that. Maalox, Tums, Roloids - like that.

JM: Have you ever been on a boat where they haven't taken adequate safety precautions?

KT: I think you'll find that on any boat, depending on what the boat account looks like. If the owner doesn't have any money, yes, you ain't gonna see a raft. Nowadays, you aren't going to see that either, because if he don't have a raft, the boat ain't gonna go fishing because of insurance. I think every boat owner is scared to death of lawsuits, because they haven't stepped in and made laws as to what a broken arm's worth. I mean, a fellow can lose a finger and he doesn't have to go

fishing anymore. I don't agree with that.

That case where Hathaway Winch was put out of business -- I'd like to take that judge with me. I'd like to show him the common sense things that happened with that. My own opinion: The man running the winch -- I don't care if he'd been fishing all his life and he owned that boat. He was running that winch wrong. It wasn't Hathaway's fault that they put the shutoff for that winch where it was. That is the way the boat was designed. That was where the owner had specified it. The fellow that owned that, that got hurt, that had bought the boat, he should have moved it. It wasn't Hathaway's responsibility to tell them, "Hey, look, this is in a bad spot." Ninety percent of the Eastern rigs on this coast, it's the same spot. It's in front of the wheelhouse. You have to reach up and move it. You have to reach over. It's away from the winch heads.

Again, the government got involved. The expert that testified from Woods Hole told the judge that it was wrong; he was running the winch incompetently. I don't know what happened. That judge just wrote the book on Hathaway. And we're faced without one of the major winch manufacturers

in the world right now - or one of the major winch manufacturers in the United States. A lot of people on the East Coast had Hathaway winches. Now, since they've gone out, other people have picked up the slack and are repairing those winches. But they were great winches. When someone else gets their hand into something, they're going to redesign, and it's probably not going to work as well. You're going to add more complications to the failure.

JM: You had said that a friend of yours was lost in the blizzard of 1978. That part wasn't on tape. Have you had close calls yourself?

KT: No. None other than the outrigger and the window incident. I have lost other friends since then, being swept overboard or... He's missing and they never recovered him. Everybody gets knocked down on deck with a wave. Everybody does. There's always the queer sea that comes along and surprises everybody. It's going to happen. Just hope the person's prepared for it. That's all.

JM: What's the worst thing that you watch out for out there?

KT: Tankers, I would say. Tankers and fishing in dense fog with a lot of boats. You're always more alert then. It's like driving a car in a blinding

rain storm. You've just got to pay attention. The tankers -- you're curious. Sometimes you swear no one's on watch because you can call them on the channels. You hope they're standing by. I guess they're supposed to be standing by. And you get no answer. Or you get an answer, but they're a foreign registration. So the fellow speaking to you on the radio, you can't understand him. That's mostly it, as far as what you really watch out for out there.

JM: Do you get rogue waves out there? Or is that closer in?

KT: It's a hard thing to say, as far as rogue waves. Sure, not every wave is the same. They come in series of threes. Like, you'll be in some wind. There will be a period where it isn't so bad, like, say, five minutes. And then, you get the larger seas that come.

JM: How big can they be?

KT: I don't know. I guess I've seen twenty footers. The weather service isn't all that accurate as far as that. Their reporting is a little bizarre. Sometimes they're totally wrong; other times they give a bad forecast, you go out, and there's no wind at all. I think they could probably have more weather stations. They have a service where

we can report into them. I don't do it. I probably should. But then, the thing is, being an independent fisherman, if you're reporting into the weather service and you're not talking on the radio and it's your time to call into the weather service, and they say, "Okay, give me the position," you give them the position, well, other boats are going to figure out: Well, he isn't talking. There he is - on the fish. That's all part of it.

JM: Can you work in seas like that?

KT: It's pretty hard. The boat I was on, the Mr. Bill, didn't have the power to tow in that. Fair seas, sure. But when it gets rougher, your gear doesn't tend the bottom as well. You're better off towing than you are steaming into it or jogging around. Towing helps stabilize the boat a bit. But when you've got to haul back, it's terrible. You're fighting. You can't get the stuff to come back onboard as easy as it should. You have to be careful of that. It's not a very easy thing to do.

I found, with the boat I was on, I didn't fish in over forty miles an hour wind. Thirty-five, forty, was about the cut-off point for me. Just because you didn't have the power to tow the

gear. It wasn't too too dangerous. It's just I didn't want to push the limit as far as all of that.

JM: That's a heavy wind.

KT: Yes. But there were boats that could fish in that, no problem at all.

JM: What are hurricane force winds?

KT: Oh, I guess sixty-five.

JM: What about winter, with the ice?

KT: I've made ice before, to the point where I had to chip it off the windows so we could see when we came in by Castle Hill.

This winter, there was a strange one. We actually were out fifty fathoms, sixty fathoms, which is kind of on the edge of the Gulf Stream. There was sea smoke out there. I believe it's when the air is colder than the ocean temperature. A smoke develops. We were fishing. We were actually making ice as we were towing. It wasn't that rough, though - just a little bit of spray here an there. But it was actually making ice. For that to happen out there, I thought that was strange. I had never seen it before. Two days later, it was beautiful. I'd never seen the sea smoke before out that far. You see it in the Bay here in the winter, but it's usually in February.

That was a very cold period. Every year, for about two weeks, you get this cold spell that affects this. It's pretty cold. You don't want to hang around outside because of the wind chill and all that.

It blew one day when we had the sea smoke. We were making a little ice, but it wasn't enough to be concerned about. You make the most ice within the last ten miles of land.

JM: Is that because of the water temperature?

KT: It's because of the land holding and absorbing the cold air. It's like a refrigerator. The insulation of the land is cold. It convects the air surrounding it into being cold, because it is so cold.

Ice -- I generally avoid the situation. You listen to the radio. You get the weather forecast. I don't like moderate icing conditions. That's enough for me. Although, that trip that we did make ice pretty good, we were gone nine days. Five of them, we spent tied up in Martha's Vineyard. We made a couple tows. I think we had three thousand pounds of fish on the boat. We spent five days in Martha's Vineyard. We went out. We went looking for fluke. We went yellowtailing again when we left. And then, we

went fluking offshore. Nine days, it was just horrible weather. Just horrible. We got the break after five and went out, fished a couple days, and hit butterfish. We had sixty-four thousand pounds of fish or seventy-four thousand pounds of fish. No one else had been out. We came in with all kinds of ice. We had a trip. So, you take your chances.

JM: Sometimes that must seem pretty rough.

KT: Yes, sometimes. But, after you've been in it for a while, you get used to it. You don't get lackadaisical, but you get used to it.

Unfortunately, all the rules of the road are the unfortunate accidents of people. That's why they wrote rules. All the sinkings would have to be to human error - rammings, loss of life in general, no matter if it's on sea or on land. It's human error. So you've got to pay attention.

JM: You read a lot about concern in the industry about drugs and people who not necessarily are drinking out there, but they're hungover when they get out there, and they're falling asleep in the wheelhouse.

KT: Yes. I don't want to sound like "the word almighty." I've been on boats where it's a problem. I personally don't allow it. When I was

captain, they knew not to show up drunk. They just knew it, because I didn't like it. I don't allow drugs on my boat. I don't care if you're not going to use it. I don't want it on my boat, because it's my neck. I'm in charge. Anything that happens, no matter what happens, the captain's held responsible. So I didn't allow it.

When I found out about it, I told the fellow, "Look, you can't carry it. You can't bring it with you. If you don't like it, pack your rags. I'll be here longer than you." That's what I always told them: "I'll be here longer than you." And that's the way it was. I had them come and go.

Even when you spend time with a guy for as long as you have, fishing with them day in, day out, for a year or even two months, you get to know him. You relax with each other. If a person bent the rules a little, I'd say, "No. It can't work." Friends is friends, but business is business. That's the way it had to stay.

Yes, I've heard some stories where it's been trouble. Just this winter, we've seen one fellow die. They went to wake him up for his watch. He was overdosed.

JM: On a boat you were on?

KT: No - another boat. It was local, though.

It was in the newspapers. What can you say? You don't want to run a person's time when you're running a boat -- ashore. They can do whatever they want.

JM: What kind of changes do you see going on? Even though the boats you've been on tie up over in Jamestown, what about all the development that's going on here?

KT: In Newport?

JM: Yes.

KT: As far as the development -- look, they kicked the Navy out and then they want them to come back. They didn't like Navy sailors, I guess. They're a little too rowdy. They've lost America's Cup. I don't really think people realize what's going on.

Then again, everything associated with the fishing industry is so costly that shipyards even went out of business. There's no more boat building in Newport, other than government contracts. Newport Offshore moved from down south, between Parascandolo's and Bucolo's. They moved up to the State Pier. They went under, and now they're reoperating again. They did all the government work and the government was slow in processing the money to them. So they had all their creditors coming against them.

There is no boat building in Newport. Williams and Manchester converted from being a commercial yard just almost exclusively to yachts. It's disappointing to see all the government money, all the bond money, that comes from the government in grants and stuff, which we all vote on, going mostly to South County. They're better organizers maybe. Maybe they're more literate figures, as far as getting in and getting a hold of them funds. Definitely, their fleet is getting bigger than Newport's. Maybe the people don't care. Galilee has always been a fishing port. Newport seems to be getting away from fishermen. They'd rather see the Fiberglas yachts. What do you think?

JM: What do I think?

KT: Yes.

JM: I think it's a shame.

KT: Yes. It is a shame. But I think we're a minority. We're not going to win. We've got the Atlantic Offshore Fishermen's Association here.

JM: Do you belong to that?

KT: Yes, I do. Sometimes I wonder why.

JM: Really?

KT: Well, they're good. They are good. They've done a lot. They really have. They're putting

pressure on just about everything that relates to the fishing industry.

JM: Are they involved in anything like that?

[end of side two, tape three]

Do they deal with things like local (issues) -- keeping the fishing industry in places? Because this is a big problem everywhere.

KT: I can't say for a hundred percent that I know that they are. I assume they are. Personally, I think they're more concerned about lobstermen than they are about draggers. When you read fisheries' letters, there's more information about lobstering. It's a good organization, though - some fine people associated with it. They've done good things. They were responsible for starting the tariff on the Canadian fish. You can thank them for that. They want more and everybody else wants more. There should be more. There's no doubt. But then again, they're fighting Big Brother -- the fish dealers. See, the fish dealers were always in control. Atlantic Offshore Fishermen's Association is definitely getting up there to be competitive with Big Brother.

The loss of docking space here in Newport is something. That's why I tied the boat in Jamestown. Because I could tie to a bulkhead and I

didn't have to worry about other boats tying next to me. I didn't have to drive over the bridge for a gale of wind just to check the boat. It was a good spot, but in easterly weather it got rough over there when it started blowing hard from the east'ard. But who knows?

JM: What do you think the future of the State Pier is?

KT: I understand they're supposed to build some docks there, aren't they?

JM: Supposedly. They're supposed to fix it up.

KT: When were they supposed to start?

JM: I don't know.

KT: I'd like to see it. But, then again, I'd like to see what kind of rent they're going to charge for that. A fellow would be willing to pay. If they start charging a hundred dollars a foot, it's ridiculous. I understand they don't want you to store gear on the dock and all that. Well, that's understandable. They don't want you to block the dock as far as if you were working on the gear and the net. You can't leave it on the dock overnight or some foolishness.

I think there will be a fishing industry in Newport just because Parascandolo will stay in business. It's family run. They've got their nephews that work there. It's a very family-

oriented business. My association is more with Parascandolo than it has been with the State Pier.

I've used the State Pier at different times, to go up and get ice at. It would be a damn shame if they did, because if they lost that, then all them boats up there would be subject to wherever. There's more lobster boats up there than there are draggers or anything. And they have to have a spot to tie. Let's hope some of the money comes this way next time. I don't understand why all the money's been going to Point Judith. Sure, they've got a public launching ramp that they rebuild for Newport. That's where some of the money goes. The main concern now, they haven't done a hell of a lot of good. It took a bunch of fishermen to get together and say, "Look, we need space. We're here. Why don't you do something for us?"

JM: Has that happened here?

KT: Yes. That was when the State Pier --

JM: It continued as much as it could?

KT: I still think some of the people in the State think we're ignorant. They had a bad time with the Deco fleet. Do you remember that?

JM: No.

KT: When the Deco scallop fleet was tied up here at

Fatulli's. There was stabbings and fights.

JM: When was that?

KT: 1979, 1980.

JM: Vaguely.

KT: A Virginia-based fleet. They caused a lot of trouble - a lot of trouble. That's when the people in town really got down on us. You can't blame them. They didn't send down one police cruiser; they used to send down a fleet of them, just because when they were in, they were all in together and they were all raising hell. They were out-of-towners, though. It wasn't all locals who were responsible. And they were sailors on leave. That's what it amounted to.

JM: Let's get into how your job affects your life. What affect do your hours have on your family life? What is that like for people like you?

KT: Now that I'm not running the boat anymore, I'm at the beck and call of any skipper that I work for. I could be leaving at ten or twelve or two in the morning - whenever he says. I could be leaving in the daylight. I generally sail during the daylight because of the sailboat traffic in the Bay. In the wintertime, I sail at night. But during the summer, I did sail during the daylight just because of visibility and the fact that

sailboats tend to like to run with no lights on, no navigational lights, until they have to.

My family got kind of used to the fact that I'd get up every day when I was home and go to the boat, even if I'd given the crew the day off. There was always something for me to do as the skipper - checking this, organizing that. You can always find work to do on a boat, always.

JM: I'll bet.

KT: Always. They got used to it. I don't know whether or not it would work for me if I came ashore and spent [every night at home]. I don't think it would. I've often considered it with my two children being as young as they are. I would like to stay home because now they're the age that they need a father around all the time - teach my son how to play baseball and stuff like that. But the money is good fishing. I don't know if I could find a job on shore where I could make the money that I am right now.

Fishing certainly adds for an interesting lifestyle. People get commonplace with each other because they're there all the time. When you're away from your family for quite a while, you learn the love the hell out of them real quick. The time you spend with them is very precious.

Generally, when you get in from a trip, you've got a couple days off. You have some work to do on the boat and you have a day off. Generally, we sat around and did nothing one whole day - just goofed off. Maybe lay in bed in the morning and play with the kids. That's the way it is.

The pay is hot and cold. It's not like you can count on a steady income - that check every week. That's the thing you've got to plan for. You've got to stow away a little money for when times are slow and the fish aren't there to be caught. It's not a nine-to-five job. Overall, I'd say you make whatever the middle class is. I guess it's, what, twenty thousand dollars now with the government --

JM: I don't know. It's too depressing to even look at that. [chuckles]

KT: You make better money than that. At least the boats that I've been associated with and I think a lot of the boats out of Newport -- You're in the upper end of middle-class earnings. Whether you live that lifestyle or not, I don't know.

You tend to think a lot at sea about your family, about what you'd want to do with them later on. Because you get the time. You have

periods when you go fishing where you talk to each other a lot. Then, you have periods of time where you're solitude. When you live with someone as close as you do on a fishing boat, you get to know that time. You can walk up and see that the person's quiet or he doesn't feel like talking, and he's thinking. So you do get to think about your family quite a bit. Sometimes you miss them so much you come home. Other times, if you're fishing close enough to land, you can call home and say hello.

I had a radio in my house, but I only used to call my wife when I was coming in. She kind of knew when I was coming in. She got to know what my... She could almost figure out... I'd say, "I'm leaving for nine days." Four days later, the volume on the radio's up. As soon as I call her, she answers back and says, "I figured you'd be in." It works that way.

JM: That's amazing.

KT: Yes. It does happen.

JM: It's nice.

KT: Yes. But then, again, sometimes she knows me too well. "Nah, you're not going fishing tonight."

"Oh yeah, why?"

"I don't think you're going."

It happened. You didn't go. For some reason, you didn't go. But that's all right, too.

Fishing's a fun way of life. The fact of no schedules -- that really fits my style. I hate being pinned down to something. Unfortunately, even my own family -- I've missed birthdays. I don't get to see my own family as often as I should. Now I do because of my children. We make more time. I intend to do that - see my brother more often and get my kids to know his kids. But when the time comes to go and the fish are there, you've got to go. You've got to go - whether it's on a long trip or you come in and unload after a short trip and go back out that same night. I did that with the Mr. Bill. When they're there, you've got to go make the pile of money. You can make fifteen or twenty thousand dollars one month and then you've got to worry about the summer months, when you're not even going to make what you should or what your goals are set for. Your engine breaks down or something like that. That's all time with no money - not the money that you're used to making.

JM: You had said once that -- I think it was your sister or your family -- you didn't know how seriously they took what you were in.

KT: Well, I don't know.

JM: Why is that?

KT: When I was young, I did a few different things. I worked a couple different jobs and I wasn't sure what I really wanted to do. Then, when I did go to school -- I don't know what it was about it -- the technical training that I received. They taught you how to mend twine. But there, when you tore up a net or they taught you, it was all stretched out nice. It didn't come back in ribbons and tatters like it does on Georges Bank with a net full of dogfish or even on the shoals or anywhere for that matter. It's spaghetti. But I could see that I liked it a lot. I really did. I could see that this was something. I said to myself I could expend a hundred percent or more of my energy into fishing and the dividends will come. You have to be a plumber, an electrician, a carpenter. You have to be all things on a boat. You have to know a little bit about everything. When I was young, I thought maybe I'd like to be a mechanic. Well, you've got to know mechanics to be a fisherman. You don't have to work with wood so much. But mending twine -- people say you should buy a fish tank when you're anxiety's up. You stare at a fish tank and their movements are

relaxing. Mending twine can be like that to a point, unless you've got hours and hours to do.

JM: That's a lot of relaxing. [chuckles]

KT: Yes. Bent over or something, your back starts to hurt.

What were we supposed to be talking about?

JM: Just that. What about the physical hardships? Is that part tough?

KT: Yes. It is. Probably sixty percent of the fishermen have bad backs.

JM: And bad legs.

KT: Yes. Oh, definitely. Your legs take a beating after years at sea. My knees bother me now. You're up and you're rolling around. It's a foreign motion to your body. Eventually, you probably develop crooked knees. I know I've got them, because I did it from other things. I didn't come into the industry a hundred percent healthy. I had twenty-one years playing different sports and stuff to ruin them. Not ruin them, but affect them so that the sea doesn't help them that way.

It's demanding. It is physically demanding at times. There's no doubt about that. You've just got to pay attention to what you're doing and make things as easy as you can. Slide a basket of

fish across the deck on a skate instead of lifting it up and carrying it. Slide the skate under. Tricks of the trade. Be helpful towards the other guys. Be a good shipmate. Don't let him lift a basket by himself and then he won't let you lift a basket. If you make the time to help someone else, he's going to make the time to help you. And it gets along a lot easier, for sure.

Conveyer belts are going to make it easy to handle fish. You're not kneeling down. You're not bent over. You're standing upright. You're picking off a flat surface that's about waist level. The old-timers will say, "Ugh, you're on a factory ship," because it resembles a factory. Things are moving. Production. Keep it going, keep it going. But it makes sense. It makes sense. It makes so much sense. That initial investment of whatever it costs -- be it five, ten, fifteen, twenty, thousand dollars -- may be a lot for the boat owner, but his crew is going to be able to handle fish for a greater, longer period of time and quicker, because he's not handling the trash, he doesn't have to shovel it. It goes right overboard, when you set them up right.

[There's] a lot more consideration for crews now that I've seen. The boat owners and skippers

are scared of lawsuits. That's why. You've got to watch it. You really do. You've got to be careful who you hire, what kind of person it is. I mean, you don't ask a person, "Hey, do you sue when you get hurt?" You can't. You expect a fellow to work as hard as he can and as well as he can and you expect him to be knowledgeable about safety. But you also have to watch out for him. You don't let him stand in the way when you're lifting stuff and things like that. You yell to him to get clear. Once someone knows the boat, they automatically assume those things. They all have their stations where one part of their job is crucial to the haulback and stuff. So that's the way that works.

JM: How do you feel about being part of an occupation that goes so far back, that's so old?

KT: I like it. It's nice. I have pride in being a commercial fisherman - a lot of pride. I honestly feel there's nothing that I would rather do for the rest of my life. I just enjoy it that much. I've been downright disgusted. But that's when I made up my mind, I'll just work a little harder. It's going to come to me. I think a lot of fellows feel that way, too, fishing. When they don't, they get off the boat. [chuckles] They

move on to another one. Yes, I'm proud of being a commercial fisherman. I don't really look like a commercial fisherman when you see me.

I think the industry has evolved where there's a lot of respect for commercial fishermen now. They realize that it's not back in the Dark Ages anymore. It's a good way to make a living. My family has realized that, for sure - my own family. My father's prouder than hell of me, that I'm a commercial fisherman. Generally, I talk to him probably four times a month now.

I don't know what he thought it was going to be when I started. I don't know if he thought it was a whim or not. I guess it was when I became a captain, he really thought that was pretty neat. He enjoyed the fact that I was fishing. They had a blessing of the fleet in Point Judith and I was on a boat. I had him aboard. We won the prize that year for the best decorated boat. He realized what it was then. He saw the skipper's family and he saw all of my crewmen, all the shipmates, and he saw how tight people could get. The skipper's family -- he's been fishing his whole life.

My kids think it's the greatest thing going. They see a boat and they say, "Daddy. Mr. Bill."

I don't know how they're going to adjust to me not being on the Mr. Bill. I told him (my son) what boat I went on. "Mentress?" Yes. He still says it now, and I'm not on there. I was just transit for a couple trips. They ask, though, about the Mr. Bill, because they grew up used to Daddy being the captain. But no more.

JM: Transition time.

KT: Yes.

JM: What do you like the best about your work?

KT: The hours. The hours are long, but it's not a set schedule. You can miss weekends. If you're any damn good at this business, you can take as much time off as you want and you'll always get a job. There's always work on fishing boats. There's always someone coming and going. If you know your stuff and you're in the right place at the right time, they can call you Tim; they can call you Jim. That's what I like the best about it.

You can go anywhere in the world and go fishing. You can't say that for camera companies. Right?

JM: Or insurance.

KT: Yes. That's what I like about it. I could always get a job. I could always go sailing. I could always be paid. I could be paid just to go bring

in boats somewhere. There's a lot to do at sea. I often thought of going into Maritimes - Merchants. (Merchant Marine.) My wife didn't like that idea. She didn't like the idea of being away for a month. Ten days is a hard trip for her. We've kind of narrowed it down to five. I kind of like five days.

JM: With two little children...

KT: Yes. They go crazy. "Is Daddy going to be home? Where's my Daddy? I miss my Daddy. I wish Daddy would come home." That's neat, too, when you come home. They'll drop anything. They could be in their best storybook. When they see Dad, Dad's the man for a while.

JM: That's pretty neat.

KT: Yes, it is. You tend to value your relationship with people a lot more. Like my neighbor across the street. I think this is the second summer that he's been there. He just rents the house. I feel like I've known the guy all my life. Your relationships with people tend to be more open. You say what you want and, hey, if they don't like it, you don't have to worry about it, because that's the way it is. That's the way I am.

I know a fellow that I've shipped with now since I've been fishing in this area. I met him

in 1979. He introduced me to Bacardi. He's worked for me. When we started, we were both deckhands. Since then, I've had the opportunity to run boats. He's worked for me. He don't cut no slack with you. I mean, if you're screwing up, he out and about tells you. The fellow has a hard time maintaining relationships with women. This girl was all over his case, "Why don't you do this? Why don't you do that?"

He turned around and said, "Why don't you lose about fifteen pounds before you come and see me again?"

That's the way it is.

JM: Is that how most of the people are that you go out with on the boats?

KT: What do you mean?

JM: Outspoken like that?

KT: When they get to know me. I hired a guy last July. I rode him hard. I always saw him with a hat on. He took his hat off and he was balder than a bat. I rode him pretty hard. That was July. I found out in January the fellow was thinking about quitting just because I rode him too hard. But he got to know me and he knew that I was just busting him up. He hands it right back to me now. That's the way it is. He's

pretty outspoken. A very, very literate person. He's been fishing longer than I have. Very intelligent.

I would say most of them are outspoken, yes. There's the quiet types, too, for sure.

JM: What's the worst part about your work?

KT: The worst part? Coming in to find out lousy prices.

JM: I'll bet.

KT: Yes. That's one of them.

JM: That's bad.

KT: Breakdowns - because then you've got to fix them. Oh, the worst part -- The uneven flow of money, the slow periods. If you could only keep those big months going forever, you'd be all set. That's about the worst thing. The buyers are always taking it. That's the worst part. Painting the boat, too.

Ooh, that's a nasty time - painting up. Ooh, I just did that last fall. It stinks, especially when you're in charge. You're paying a guy so much a day. It don't matter. They've been out to sea. They just want to get off. But I felt -- and that's the way I am -- that I know these guys can do it; whereas I've got to go to the shipyard and hire Joe Blow. He could give a shit about how

the boat looks. But when you paint up, you want your boat to look nice. You do all the cutting in real nice so the boat looks good. They could leave brush marks everywhere. Your crew don't want to hear it. Fortunately, we arrange it so that when there's a lot to do, we're all there. Then they just say, "I don't feel like working tomorrow. I'm not going to bother."

I say, "Okay. That's fine. You did a super job on the boat. It looks good. No problem." I took care of him, bought him lunch, gas. It worked out well. They were happy at the end.

JM: But that's a rough job?

KT: Paint up is, yes. You generally have discontentment with the crew. Out at sea, things have to be done and they have to be done fairly quick. If a net's torn up, sure, I'll go drink a cup of coffee if it's lousy out or it's going to be a long time and we're not catching a lot of fish. If we're steaming somewhere, we've got enough time to go to fix the net before we get there, we can stop and have a break.

On land -- I wouldn't say you only work with eighty-percent of intensity, but it does diminish. You get distractions. A pretty girl walks by. Someone comes down to the boat and talks to

you. Someone else comes down and starts talking to me - wants to know where we were, what we did. "What are you doing? Do you want to fish together on the next trip?" -- stuff like that. That does make a difference. So they just move on their way.

JM: Well, I've gone through all of the questions that I have. Is there anything you want to add?

KT: No - just that I'd like to see what becomes of this whole thing.

JM: You sure will. And I want to thank you for your openness and all that you had to say. I enjoyed it.

KT: Okay.

End of Interview

