

Name of person Interviewed: Eugene Connors [EC] and Stephen Worden [SW]
Note: Jimmy Dwyer [JD] also present—may be him talking in some places where it says [SW], hard to distinguish the voices

Facts about this person:

Age (if known) EC: Mid-60s? SW: 47
Sex EC: Male SW: Male

Occupation EC: Former fisherman and fishery researcher; Food distributor employee / seafood trading;
SW: Former chef; Chef instructor

If a fisherman (if retired, list the ports used when fishing),
Home port EC: Stonington, CT, and New Bedford SW:
and Hail Port (port fished from, which can be the same) EC: Stonington, CT, and New Bedford SW:

Residence (Town where lives): EC: SW:
Ethnic background (if known): EC: SW:

Interviewer: Millie Rahn [MR]
Transcriber: Janice Gadaire Fleuriel

Place interview took place: New Bedford Harbor Development Commission

Date and time of interview: Sept. 26, 2004

INDEX (minutes:seconds) / KEYWORDS

KEYWORDS: New Bedford, Massachusetts; Stonington, Connecticut; Fishery development; Fishery research; New England Fishery Development Foundation; Europe; Iceland; SYSCO food distributor; Frozen fish; Fresh fish; Fish quality; Seafarers International Union; Seafood Producers; Seafood standards; Changes in family aspect of New Bedford fishing work; Fish auctions; Display auctions; MF Foley company; Icelandic USA company; Fishing industry fraud; FDA; National Marine Fisheries; Russian fleet; New Bedford Fishermen's Wives; HACCP / Hazardous Analysis Critical Control Points standards; COOL / Country of Origin Labeling;

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- 00:00 Tape intros;
- 00:16 EC started fishing in Stonington, CT, then New Bedford; Then did research work with New England Fishery Development Foundation
- 3:22 New Bedford infrastructure not open to better European, Iceland model
- 5:58 EC presented project results Newfoundland
- 8:35 EC works now for SYSCO, food distributor; Changes for better quality happening other areas, not here
- 15:29 New Bedford fishing better infrastructure union days in 60s, then broke down; Today, people making big money but talk about injustice in industry, don't want changes as in Europe, Iceland
- 21:08 Those who came in after system broke down don't understand what it was built on, won't listen about better ways
- 23:51 Health-care example of better conditions before system broke; Lack of quality standards in industry here
- 29:05 Quality standards (continued); People here don't know what quality to expect; Distinctions between good and bad frozen fish;
- 33:45 Stephen has been chef and now a chef instructor; People don't understand quality
- 39:00 EC thanks people who provide quality product, doesn't happen here; Things in New Bedford turn very political; People who are New Bedford's industry leaders today were on fringes before system broke; Fishermen today live huge expensive houses but talk about injustice of industry
- 42:41 EC's wife started fishermen's wives, blessing of fleet; EC member of wives, had speakers from places like Iceland, good info; Russian fleet freed them, prices very low before that
- 45:33 New Bedford has a great future, needs a visionary; Remember someone who ran auction house corruptly
- 49:48 Low seafood standards this country
- 53:19 Much of US seafood imported, frozen; Good plants in New Bedford (MF Foley) and CT/MD (Icelandic USA); Quality fraud in industry, FDA doesn't have money, people to help

58:00 This is global vs. local opinion; Local needs diversify, do frozen when makes sense to, because freeze fish at a higher quality state; Forced to sell fresh here because consumers ask but don't realize frozen can be higher quality

1:01:30 HACCP program to monitor quality conditions, developed by NASA; Traceability, COOL (Country of Origin Location) also important now, to be included on their labeling

[End of interview]

TRANSCRIPT

00:00

MR: OK. Let's start. If you could give me your..., name. It's Sunday, September 26, 2004. My name is Millie Rahn. And this is another oral history interview here at the Working Waterfront Festival. And your name please.

00:16

EC: My name is Eugene Connors.

MR: And, why are you coming here to tell me your story? What is your story?

EC: Well I'm being forced [chuckles] in here by James Dwyer. [Laughter] A dear and old friend of mine.

MR: He was a victim yesterday. Yes. [Laughter]

EC: You hear any screaming and shouting that's me going out the door. [Laughs]

MR: And, you've been fishing? You've been doing...?

EC: I was a commercial fisherman from 1960 to..., well I came ashore in '81. September of '81.

MR: And what kind of fishing did you do?

EC: Scalloping and dragging.

MR: In New Bedford?

EC: Yes.

MR: Were you born in New Bedford?

EC: No, I came from a small fishing community in Stonington, CT.

MR: Oh. We had the Connecticut folklorist here yesterday.

EC: [?Rendeiros?]

MR: Lynne Williamson.

EC: [?Rendeiros] is a guy you got to get over. Joe [?Rendeiro].

SW: He was here yesterday. I wish I brought him in.

EC: Great storyteller.

SW: Yesterday.

EC: [Laughs]

MR: Well, we can link him up with Lynne. She's down in Hartford.

So how did you get from Stonington, Connecticut to New Bedford?

EC: Well, I started fishing in Stonington. And, then I joined the Navy. I spent three and a half years in the service. When I got discharged in January of 1960, I went back home to Connecticut. Fishing industry was pretty devastated by then. There was no jobs around. There was no unemployment. So I got a job in the foundry over in Groton, Connecticut. Company called Arwood Precision. Pouring steel. Worked there for..., oh I guess maybe eight months. And then, I just couldn't be confined. A friend of mine happened to be coming back from vacation. His father owned five or six boats in Stonington. It was the Rebello Family. They had moved their operation out of Stonington up to New Bedford. Stopped by and asked if I was interested in going back fishing. And I said yeah. So I gave up my job there and came up here and commuted back and forth for a while. And then moved down here. I came here in..., guess the early part of 1960. And I fished here until September of '81 was, like I said, the last trip I made. On the scalloper Seafarer. And I went to work for a fishery development foundation out of Boston.

MR: Hmmm. Who were they? I live in Boston.

EC: It's the New England Fishery Development Foundation. It used to be—At one time it used to be eight foundations throughout the United States. And they were funded by what were called the Saltonstall Kennedy Funds.

MR: Were your family...?

03:22 No, my father was a pharmacist. For forty years. I just got into fishing because all the kids I went to school with, all their family were either involved in owning boats or worked on boats.

MR: And what did you do for the New England Fishery Development Foundation?

EC: I was the vessel site coordinator for a project called "Quality at Sea." And the project was to improve the quality of seafood being landed in New England ports. By applying Scandinavian methods of handling product at sea.

MR: And what were the Scandinavian methods?

EC: Boxing. Bleeding. Proper temperature control. Sanitation. Things of that nature. It was supposed to be only a one-year project. It wound up to be the—The results of it were overwhelming from the General Accounting Office. So they funded it for four and a half years before they pulled the plug on it.

MR: Wow...

EC: They pulled the plug on it because the industry didn't want to pick it up and run with the results. The purpose of the program was to build European display auctions in New England. And so, fishermen who took care of their product would be financially rewarded. Those who *didn't* would be penalized.

MR: I just interviewed the Canastra brothers earlier about the display auction.

EC: Hm.

MR: So.

EC: This is not a European display auction here.

SW: [chuckles]

EC: The closest thing to a European display auction would probably be in Hawaii. Portland, Maine might—on the mainland here, the continent, Portland may come close. But, it's not a European display auction.

MR: And how is the European display auction...?

EC: Well the European display auction is—There's a lot of satellite communication between trawlers. Companies from the European community—If you're fishing in the North Sea, you can go into ports in Scotland, England, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Sweden. Unload. Exchange boxes. People from the European community can even buy over the Internet, or satellite. And product would be packaged, inspected, transported across different borders into different parts of Europe. It's a trust system.

MR: And this—And you're saying the industry does not want this? Here?

EC: No. Can't have this. The mentality is not right for it.

05:58

MR: Why is that?

EC: Because they're old and obsolete. It's a controlled mechanism. Everything—Every port that you go to, I don't care if it's a small port. They'll either be companies that control things. Or there'll be families that control things. And, nothing gets by, or nothing gets in without their permission.

MR: Hmmm. [A noise –from refrigerator? from a water drip?—starts in background.]

SW: [Laughs]
MR: So annoying. We've been taping in here for two days and that just started two minutes before you came in. [Laughs]
EC: [Saying what to do to silence the noise]
MR: Now tell me... You were saying you went to Newfoundland to do some...
EC: Yeah we presented the results from our project. [?] Because at that time...
MR: Was that the marine institute? At Memorial?
EC: Memorial University Marine Institute. At that time National Sea had already sent, I think it was four of their trawlers over to Iceland to be retrofitted for boxing and bleeding. And had hired two gentlemen from Iceland. Matter of fact one is in New Bedford right now. His..., production manager for American Seafood. His name is [?] Jensen[?]. The other guy was Paul Petersen[?] who just retired from Icelandic USA. Which is an Icelandic Company. And..., they were working [?] fishery [?]. So they were the gentlemen that were there presenting their work. But they had already done a lot of the extensive work in Iceland on these projects. It was funny because the results from all of these projects—And some of the results we went back as far as 1932, to the [?] Research Center in Aberdeen, Scotland. And matched our results with theirs. And recently, just the sheer alone..., the Irish fisheries, the BMI just did a complete three-year study. Basically the same thing we did twenty years ago. So these studies have been repeated all over the world. But the industry doesn't adapt to them because they have to change the infrastructure. To produce good, consistent raw material.

08:35

MR: Wow. And what are you doing now.
EC: I work for SYSCO food distributor.
MR: In New Bedford?
EC: No, in Norton, Mass. That's the oper—one of the operating companies in New England. There's seventy-two operating companies in the United States and seventeen in Canada. Are you familiar with SYSCO?
MR: I just see the trucks.
EC: Yeah. It's the largest food distributor in the world. It's a twenty billion dollar industry.
MR: Wow....
EC: Or company. We do 1.6 billion dollars in seafood.
MR: And you do the seafood stuff?
EC: I do all the trading. Not for SYSCO, but for my operation in Norton, Mass.
MR: Hmmm.
EC: They've been there eighteen years.
MR: So what are the significant changes that you've seen?
EC: None.
MR: None? In your whole career?
EC: None. Not here in this country. I've seen plenty of changes in Europe and Iceland, Norway. Even up in Canada. I just got back from a five day trip with Clearwater. Went from Shelburne all the way up to North Sydney. And you go aboard any of those scallopers—we buy scallops from them, [?] under the SYSCO label. They've got the ocean mapping. They already know two years in advance where

they're going to go get their scallops. They already know that there's four different bottoms that the scallops grow on. And just with this ocean mapping they reduced their overhead by seventy million dollars and increased their raw material production to thirty-three million dollars. The fleet commander told me there, when I was up there a few weeks ago. He told me, "We're not hiring fishermen. We're hiring highly educated professional people. We're going to teach them the seafood industry."

MR: Do you think this will ever come here?

EC: No. You've got to leave New Bedford to understand what's holding it down. Nobody can get off the dime because they don't know that the rest of the world is doing. That was the greatest thing that the foundation gave me, was the opportunity to come out of a local environment to be thrust into a global environment. And the booty was to see all these systems in place, and to see the consistent quality and the level of quality that these systems were producing.

MR: So it sounds like you're kind of beating your head against the wall?

EC: Not me. I've made great success. Because I went out of—thanks to my son-in-law, who's a chef, and he said to me, you know, when the project was over with there were like five other projects that were there, available, if I wanted to stay there. But there was nothing that I saw that had any interest. And by that time I was just, totally one hundred percent committed to this system. I mean when you're able to take a raw material and you're only getting thirty-six percent raw material out of it, to change that system that's going to give you eight, ninety, percent of raw material to use. And someone turns their back on it, walks away with it. But you see it. You touch it. You feel it. You eat it. I mean, it's hard to walk away from that.

MR: So you have to buy your stuff out of the country?

EC: Well we buy a lot of stuff out of the country. We buy a lot of stuff in the country, too. A lot of stuff that we pack I won't even sell.

MR: Hmmm.

EC: Because it's inconsistent. Nobody in the restaurant or the food service business wants something that's inconsistent. And the seafood industry is the only protein producer that still has fear factor attached to it. Because you never know what it's going to—These people talk about quality. They don't even know what quality is in this city. They think it's fresh, they think it's the best. But what quality level? National Marine Fisheries Service has a Grade A quality system that goes from one to ten. You're down to five—Five is the break-off point. But above five it's still fresh. Below five, 4.7, it's decomposed. It's still fresh. See until they're able to get out from under the "fresh is better than frozen," until they get out there and understand what the Icelanders call the science of quality, understanding the aging process of seafood. And then embracing—The technology that's out there today is unbelievable. This city will never get out from under it. This is a great city, too. I've been one of the biggest cheerleaders of this city, and someday I hope to God it does get out from under it. Because this is a great city.

MR: So, coming to the festival some way may kind of...

EC: I came to this festival because, first I knew I'd—We've had one of the most weirdest relationships. We've...

SW: She's open-minded, so tell her.

EC: We have been absolutely brothers, since I've met him. We don't see one another, maybe, once every five years. I was best man at his wedding. And my wife was maid of honor. Godfather to his children. It's just a relationship that—I don't care, there's nothing could eve come between him and I.

MR: Again, we're telling the tape this is Jimmy Dwyer.

EC: Oh. I'm sorry, yeah.

MR: Yeah.

EC: The reason I came to the festival was to bring my grandson down. He's a generation that—It was funny because the other day when he was over with [?] he was already talking about leaving New Bedford and going to California to college. And I just—you know, that struck home. Close to home! Why leave a great area? A great city? Just because the city cannot help itself. There is no visionaries in this city. There's no leadership. There's just absolutely nonsense. And you know it's funny because on my business card I put something that those two Icelanders said in Memorial University that day. "Opportunities are arrived at by exploring ideas, not by fighting problems." And this industry fights problems. It doesn't look at opportunities and ideas.

MR: Opportunities arrive by exploring ideas...

EC: Ideas, not by fighting problems.

MR: OK. Not by fighting problems. Wow. [?]

EC: This port was built by Newfoundlanders. Nobody knows why—what made this port successful. This is what drives me nuts with this port. The thing that made this port and this city success—This was the most, this was the best port anywhere in the United States for a married man and a family. Nowhere else in the United States did you have what you had here.

MR: And that was because...

EC: There was a system in place. The system, and the architecture of the system, was the Seafarers International Union, and the Seafood Producers. The union had control of probably about eighty-five percent of the boats, of the members, of the crews. And the Seafood Producers had probably eighty-five, ninety percent of the boat owners. They'd sit down and they negotiated.

15:29

EC: When I first went out on a union boat out of this port, and got my pay, I was embarrassed to take it home. Because I felt I didn't earn it. When I came—Or *where* I came from, you worked seven days a week. It was day boat fishing. If you didn't go out that morning, you came up and worked on gear, down in the cellar and all that. When I came in here, you had—If you were on a six-man boat, you had eight hours of work, four hours off. You had three *hot* meals a day! Which was *unheard of*. Three hot meals a day. You had four hours to get in the bunk, and rest. When you came in you could hire somebody to take your place to unload. If you wanted to take trip off, you didn't lose your job. You just got somebody to take your place, that was equal to what you were. This was unbelievable. But, it was the system that made New Bedford great. It was greed and ignorance that killed the system. That's what you got here now.

MR: It's hard to fight greed and ignorance.

EC: Yup. Especially when they're making money. They're making more money than God right now. Where can you go and make a hundred and twenty—Where can you go to make seventy thousand dollars a year for a hundred and twenty days? Then on top of that get unemployment. Thirty-six weeks. And then on top of that they get a booty of the government coming in and taking care of you if you want to be retrained. On top of that, they don't even pay into their health and welfare pension fund. The Boston Diocese of—The Boston Catholic Diocese dumped in, what? Three million dollars. The state dumped in another two or three million dollars. For what? These guys are making more money than God. Why do they have to have people pay their health care? The other thing that rubs me is, if you have a restaurant, and the chains come in and put you out of business, do you go to the government, say, "Hey, I want you to buy my restaurant"?

MR: Yeah.

EC: These guys are blaming the government for—for what? Government is the one that stepped in. That stopped them from what they were doing—you know, destroying themselves. Eventually they would have fished until economically it wasn't feasible anymore. The government was the one that stood up to the platter and said, "You're going to stop this. We're going to manage."

MR: So how..., how do you get that message out?

EC: You don't.

MR: You just don't.

EC: You don't. It's not going to be listened to. Especially now when they're making more money. They're making more money than God. They're not going to listen to you. You don't have a system in place. You got somebody that was just here, he makes statements in the paper, that he's not sure whether he's worth fifty million or a hundred million. What's the difference? He's only been in this country seventeen years. And yet he's telling you, or he's making statements in the paper, all the injustice in this industry. Come on! Give me a break. Nobody's going to challenge you. They're scared to death of him. He's a goon. He's a goon with a lot of money. That's what they love on the waterfront.

MR: Hmmm.

EC: It's the mentalities down here. Sad. Because the future of New Bedford is not only its past—maritime past—but its maritime future. Also connected to the University of Massachusetts. The..., Massachusetts Council, science center down there. That's where our future is. Our future is not in industry, or bringing in big industries into this. How big is New Bedford? Seven miles wide? Seventeen miles long? What New Bedford offers is its historical [?].

MR: Yeah.

EC: Package that for the future. But. You don't have the vision in this city.

MR: Well... A good start is this festival. You know, getting the stories, getting people telling.

EC: Yeah, but there's nobody telling—Nobody is telling the story with any kind of credibility. Or any kind of—You know, you tell a story but it's usually a problem. They're not telling the story with a solution. I'm saying there's a solution, there's a great future here!

MR: Well, that's why....

EC: But you haven't gone onto the rest of it.
MR: Well it's easy for—I mean, my job is to get people's stories. I'm trying not to make, you know, any judgments.
EC: Or direction.
MR: Yeah.
EC: Yeah.
MR: Just getting it down, so that... First off, because somebody in my position, you know, in the future is going to look at all these different things. But.
EC: You don't want to influence somebody.
MR: You've got to get everybody talking. To get, you know up on the stage everybody's talking together. And people in the audience.
EC: You want to do something? Go back and dig up the Saltonstall Kennedy Funds. Research that. You know, there's seventy-five million dollars that's available for fishing industry in the United States. That National Marine Fisheries Service is holding. And there's going to be more now when they impose those tariffs on those six countries for shrimp imports. So you'll have over a hundred million, maybe a hundred twenty-five million available for research and development for the seafood industry. Done through industry people. That's, what I did. You know all of this whole thing that they're doing—I forget what they're calling it now but there's another term. Basically what it was, was basic research. Taking applicable research that was on the shelf. Taking it off and bringing it into an unsanitized environment and finding out what the results were all about. That's what we did for four years. Good part of it.

21:08

MR: Well, and... How—you know, since you're out there every day... How do you guys work together to get this out there?
SW: You just don't. The system is—It is broken down.
EC: Sure it is.
SW: That system won't come back. That system we had... The founders of the system, like I said the other day, it was—We had the backbone of the Seafood Producers during those days. We had negotiations with the Seafood Producers. We had a system with the union. Everything was organized labor.
EC: Yeah.
SW: Everything—In the sixties, when you came to the City of New Bedford, you had to get a union book.
EC: Yeah.
SW: You didn't come aboard without a union book.
EC: Yeah. They had safety directors at every boat.
SW: Safety directors aboard the vessels.
EC: Checked to see if the equipment was...
SW: Conservation was built in.
EC: Yeah.
SW: There was no such thing as back to back. You couldn't leave on a Sunday. It was unheard of.
EC: [?] between a...
SW: Conservation was built in.

EC: Sailing time was between eleven and five. You couldn't leave after five. You couldn't leave before eleven.

SW: After five o'clock it was [?].

EC: You never went on a Sunday.

SW: Never left on a Sunday. Unheard of.

EC: You had auction five days a week. Monday to Friday.
Greed! It was just, absolute greed. The problem was that people who built the system, the architects of the system, never passed on the legacy. And you know, when you go, it's—You can see it in, industrial America right now. The third, fourth generation of people who have companies? Nine times out of ten they wind up destroying the companies. Because they don't really know the nuts and bolts of how the foundation was built.

MR: Yeah...

EC: Right? So they've got a different philosophy. They've got a different way of looking at business. You know, that's a great thing about complacency. Gives us all a shot at the top. Right?
But this city is sad. This is absolutely deplorable.

SW: When we're talking health care as an example, everyone had a health care [?].

EC: Yeah.

SW: The fishermen had one. The lumpers union had one. They did divide that. They took thirty-five boats alone out of the City of New Bedford.

EC: Yeah.

SW: Those thirty-five boats that they took out of the City of New Bedford was our receipts for contributions.

EC: Yeah.

SW: [? Lost] them.

EC: Yeah.

SW: We [?are burning] an unfunded liability.

EC: Yeah.

SW: [?] There was no grant money there available. Everyone was lobbying for Mass H Health Care, subsidized. We didn't *need it* during that time. During that time we had a system in place. There was a health care. All that did was force people to say, "Do not negotiate anyone. We'll get a subsidized plan." We had a plan in place.

EC: Yeah.

SW: We didn't need a subsidy.

23:51

EC: Same with the fishermen. Still up there. You know? I got my—When I turned sixty I started getting my pension from the Seafarers International. It's still up there. Nobody wants to pay into it, because they got the State of Massachusetts and they got the Diocese of Boston paying their health plan.

SW: Under the system...

EC: Stupid.

SW: ...I was paying fifty dollars a month to the union. On health care. And we had a co-payment and we had a deductible of fifteen hundred. By losing those vessels, during that time, it was going to be for fishermen only. I was in opposition. I

- testified at all the meetings. If you give it to the fishermen, you have to give it to industry people. You have to give it to *my* people, the lumpers union. You have to give it to the welders. You have to give it to the fish cutters. That iced the fish. Everyone. You cannot say it's for fishermen only. I have an existing plan in place and you are taking it away from me? So they *did* change the language. They put us under it. And I was very thankful. Because once we lost the vessels, I lost my health care. And what happened I went from fifty dollars a week—I'm sorry, a month—I'm fortunate that I'm *under* there, they got that language in there, I'm grateful. I went from fifty dollars to six hundred and forty dollars a month. That's what I'm paying now under the health care. I'm very fortunate that they changed the language. In the first program around, it was going to be—indication was, fishermen only. To me it was an unfair system. If you're going to do it for the fishermen, it has to be corrected with the language. Industry people. And, Barney Frank did it. But again like I said, I had a good plan with the union.
- EC: Remember when they tried to pull—bring down that self-employment. Where they tried to bring that Stern guy, Stern... lobster guys. They were self-employed. And they wanted *us* to pay our... Somehow there was—I forget exactly what it was but.
- SW: [?] so many men.
- EC: They wanted to revamp it so that the boat owners didn't have to... But that was when the whole system was starting to break down. You know, when the union was here you used to—If you were on a scalloper you got a sixty-forty, sixty-forty broken. If you were on a dragger you got a sixty-fort—It was all different lays, but... It was all doled out. You know? So that everyone got what they deserved. Soon as the union broke up, then it was fifty-fifty, sometimes it went sixty-forty. Sometimes you didn't even know what you got. You know? It was up to the boat owner to pay you. It was, it was—It's horrible. It's *horrible* what goes down up here.
- SW: It went back to when it was like the whaling days.
- EC: Sure it is.
- SW: When they got off the whaling voyages, you owed the boat money.
- EC: Right. I remember when I started fishing in Stonington. They'd say, the Fulton Fish Market." Right? They said now they're going to pay us in cash. And it would be like, ten dollars for you, ten dollars for you, ten dollars for you, fifty dollars for the boat. Ten dollars for you, ten dollars for you, two hundred dollars for the boat. Ten dollars for you, ten dollars for you, two hundred dollars for the boat. Yeah, that's the way they used to pay you.
- Same way those guys in Gloucester. I mean, in, Portland, Maine now. Here they have a Portland display auction. Probably better than anywhere in the United States, in the continental United States. And just because the State of Maine wants them not to sell lobsters, they're going to take the lobsters and move their boats into Gloucester so they can sell lobsters. You know, that's, that's—That is, people who don't even know what it was like *before* there was ever a display auction up there. Or an auction up there. When you used to ship on consignment to New York to the Fulton Fish Market, or the Philadelphia market, and sometimes you'd go, four, five or six months before you got your money.

MR: Hmm.

EC: Or sometimes you never got your money. I remember one time we shipped ninety-two thousand pounds of scup to New York, Fulton Fish Market. Blue ribbon. Never got a dime. We got a *bill* back. That we had to pay Blue Ribbon—No it was... It was a trucking company out of New London. We had to pay them twenty-three dollars out of our own pocket. And the fish company in New York kept ninety-three, ninety-two thousand pounds of scup. That's who—That's the way it was. When you're working outside the system, it's always for a chosen handful. The system, you share. And that's why they don't want it. That's why they don't want it *here*. Anymore.

MR: Hmm.

EC: It's disgusting. It's absolutely disgusting.

MR: [To SW] And what's your point of view from—you're a chef?

SW: Of what? My point of view of what, though?

MR: Your point of view of how you get fish into your restaurant?

SW: I always found that it was one of the most highly perishable items, but it was the least controlled. There was never any quality standards. It was driven by price. If you're a price shopper for fresh seafood, you're dead. If you're a quality shopper, there is products out there. And, I was the one that originally said to him there was such a demand for *education*. People didn't *know*. You know, ...

EC: They still don't.

SW: ...the standards were in place for pork. Poultry. Everything—the USDA controls it all. To this day, we still don't have mandatory seafood inspection. We have some people doing it, which is a great thing. You have some [?] great thing. But... In general, it's still like—you never know what you're going to get. You *never* know what you're going to get.

29:05

EC: The only protein that still has a fear factor. Beef. Poultry. Dairy. You can buy it consistently. Seafood. And I do this every single day. I do this for SYSCO every single day. Bring in—They bring in what we call our gold customers. And my job is to explain to them what our philosophy is. The direction we're going in. And the reasons why we're going in it. And the number one reason is that the seafood industry produces consistently inconsistent raw material. And in eighteen years I've had *no one* challenge me on that. Because everyone has said you're absolutely right.

SW: When I started cooking—I'm only forty-seven, I started cooking when I was seventeen. We never saw [?soaked?] scallops, things like that. It was unheard of.

EC: That's right. You got people out there don't even know what a good scallop tastes like anymore.

SW: All of a sudden you start asking questions like why when I cook the scallops now what are we throwing off here? What's the substance? And then you—"Oh, that's an approved seafood *preservative*." And all of a sudden now it's common knowledge. You buy dry. You buy wet. You want ten percent soaked? You want twenty percent soaked? Thirty percent soaked? And if you're not a knowledgeable chef and you're out in Des Moines Iowa, then you have no clue.

EC: We have a frozen sea scallop that comes off the Clearwater boats that's second to none. There isn't a fresh scallop that can touch it. Not a fresh scallop can touch it.

SW: And I was always taught too if it's frozen it's not fresh.

MR: Yeah... That...

SW: You know? "You're using frozen fish?"

EC: Well the opposite of fresh is "stale." It's not "frozen." [Laughter] See? Like I tell people, "Listen, I'll tell you about fresh. But you've got to remember there's "stale" there, too. We have to [?move over] what quality, or level of quality will you accept? There's some people will accept only nine and ten. Some people will go seven to eight. Some people will go six to seven. Some will even go four and *five*. Some people will even serve stuff that's already *decomposed*. As long as the price is right.

I had—Matter of fact there was farm-raised cod fish from Newfoundland. This is going back..., fifteen years ago it was sent down to me. And I put a taste panel together. And on the seventeenth day, ammonia showed up. And my panel that day when they tried it they said, "Now *this* is what we always look for. This is *good quality* seafood." Well when ammonia shows up the product is already expired. Because all the natural chemicals in the animal come together and when they finally finalize, it turns into ammonia. It's already expired.

MR: Well I think it [?] ice. [?] The freezing process. [?]

EC: But Birds—Birds Eye... Freezing did not give frozen fish a bad name. It was fresh fish that was frozen that gave fish frozen fish a bad name. You got to remember, from the whole coast, along this coast, everything was up and down the coast. Boston there was three, four million pounds of fish landed on a day-to-day basis there, right? But everything went up and down the coast. Then the increase in production was getting more and more, what do we do? Birds Eye come along with this freezing thing. You know? Let's try that. Right? So what they do is they wait until the fish was almost expired and then they'd freeze it. They'd put it on rail cars and ship it into the middle part of the country. That's why the middle part of the coun—People don't understand that wherever you go, there's a [?catch issue]. In New England, everyone wants a soft bite to their product, right? Because it's been on the boat, it's gone through rigor. It's on the boat for eight or nine days, it's already gone through rigor. But if you take something from a frozen trawler, that's frozen in pre-rigor, which is a higher quality, a wholesome quality, a safer product. Right. Fresher than anything else. But the texture hasn't gone through rigor so it's a firmer bite. They'll reject it. Even though the quality, the wholesomeness, the safety is far superior to anything fresh. You got to remember, fresh seafood under ideal conditions can only last sixteen days. That's under *ideal conditions*. Now we did our project, we saw temperatures anywhere from thirty-seven degrees to as high as almost eighty degrees in the pens. And for every two degrees above thirty-two degrees for twenty-four hours, you lose one day shelf life. So if you got something that's thirty-seven degrees and you got something that's seventy-eight degrees, you going to tell me that's fresh?

See until they understand the science of quality, the aging process, they'll never ever get off the dime. They just can't. They won't do it.

33:45

MR: So... [To SW] Back to... Could you give us your name for the tape, please?

SW: I'm Stephen Worden.

MR: And... In your food industry, cooks, chefs, what are—are you kind of trying to organize any kind of education?

SW: No...

MR: Or are you just trying to...

SW: I'm a teacher. I'm a chef instructor now. After twenty-eight years in the restaurant business, [?they keep you in the fish] you get kind of tired of that.

MR: Yeah...

SW: The nights. The weekends. So. I teach culinary arts so I still get to teach and *cook*. So I get the best of both worlds now. But I... I have more of a life. Of trying to preach this type of stuff...

MR: But you get to affect then, the next generation coming up.

EC: Naaah.

MR: Influence them.

SW: You can try. Until people tell you they don't want to hear it anymore. And that's what you run into. I owned my own restaurant. I would only use the freshest seafood. I dealt with local farmers. You know? I had the in—It was picked that morning, I was cooking it that night, but. You—you find out people don't want this. Why should I pay—I can go down the street and get that. No you can't, but you can't explain—they don't, people don't want...

EC: They were saying this morning. We were out on the boat this morning in the harbor and the woman said, "You know, have you been to the festival?" I said, "No we're going today." She said, "Well, fish and chips is nine dollars. I'm not paying nine dollars for fish and chips when I can go down to [?] and get it for four-fifty." You know? OK. She made her statement. But, is there a difference? The only difference for her was the monetary difference. Wasn't anything to do with the quality of the food that she was consuming.

MR: Well I know from—I've done a lot of work in Maine, too, on the coast. Both with farmers and fishermen. And the whole thing about—Not only are you buying fresh, locally produced stuff, you're keeping money in the local economy.

SW: That's right.

MR: You're not trucking in...

EC: It's not a reality, though.

MR: But, ...

EC: It's not a reality.

MR: ...people want to go to Stop and Shop and pay...

EC: That's right.

SW: And we expect to walk in and have everything we want.

EC: Exactly. It's not a reality.

SW: [?]

EC: This is the problem with the farmers and the seafood industry. They've got to get into the reality of where their market is. What the market is demanding. And then produce according to that. And find a niche. You got whole fish coming into this city at one time was like a market cod. A dollar seventy-five. OK, that means off

the knife, even if you get three—thirty-six percent, off the knife it's got to be almost eight dollars. Not that's just off the knife. Now you got to ship that out. Shipping's going to pop another sixty cents for shipping. Packaging. It's got to go to another distributor. From that distributor it's got to be sold to a food service. That food service person takes possession of that, it's probably a ten dollar item. How many restaurants can absorb a ten dollar pound item? This is what they've got to start to realize. Until they understand the market, and the different niches out there, where, you don't—I have on problem getting ten dollars a pound, but bring me something consistent. Bring me something that wows me. Don't bring me inconsistent. And don't pump it up with chemicals. You know?

EC: This is—these guys got to—They've got to get out from under this rock they're under. And get this little chip they have on their shoulder, "Poor me." "Poor me." Because "Poor me" is not going to get you anywhere. You want to do something? Get off your butt and get out there and do it. I mean I deal with it every day. Every day I deal with it. I'm one of twenty-two specialists in my company. And we sit there day in and day out. And I have—I have such a criteria in front of me in regards to food, understanding the science of food, but also understanding the importance of quality. And also technology. And *advanced* technology. That my company doesn't allow me, just because I come from an archaic, old, obsolete industry, that doesn't cut any water with us. We still have to produce. We have our name, we have our reputation on everything that we produce. And it has to be consistent. The consuming public doesn't want inconsistency. They don't want excuses, either. When they place an order, they want their product there. Because they've got Friday, Saturday, Sunday night to crank it out and make their livelihood. These guys don't live in the real world.

MR: That's why McDonald's is so...

EC: That's right.

MR: You can go anywhere and have it the same.

EC: These guys have been subsidized by the Canadian fishermen for as long as I can remember. Because when you get a dollar seventy-five for a whole fish, you got to have something to bring that price down so you can get your price in line with what the competition is out there. And most of the time what's coming out of Canada, most of their product was coming out of Canada, being trucked down here. But now the Canadians, you know, they want to add jobs. We have a..., a company called Cape Bald Packers up in Cap-Pele, New Brunswick, Canada. When I started with SYSCO they were packing a spring pack and a fall pack for us, on lobsters. Now they have the town working twelve months of the year.

39:00

MR: Hmm.

EC: They're doing a variety of different packing—products for us. Mussels. Crab. Shrimp. Everything. You know? That's just the relation—it's a partnership that you build. Because you start to want—you know, want consistency. You don't want to be working six months or three months and then off. You know, on the government—you know, government program for the rest of the months. I go up there with plaques. I go to these people and I, go in there and right down the line. And I *thank* them for what they're doing. I tell them how *important* they are.

They're the most important ingredient we have. Because quality starts here. It doesn't start at the end of the line. It starts where you people are. I tell them how wonderful they're doing. You know? [?] They don't even think about doing that here.

So, I don't know.

But this city has got a bright future if it could only get some leadership. Some direction. Make a commitment to it.

SW: Everything always turns political [?].

EC: Yeah. And it's ridiculous. These guys are idiots. I'm sorry.

SW: No...

EC: After forty years and watching what went on down here, and watching what went on down here. And then I see people that are on city councils. These guys were picking up by moonlighting scallops at night.

SW: [Laughs]

EC: Come on. And he's in the city council? Come on! Give me a break! I mean, this is ridiculous. But they've got to realize what made this city great. And they still don't know what it is. And that was the system. The system was unbelievable. And they destroyed it. Through greed.

MR: Mmm.

EC: I remember I went up to—I wanted to buy a boat, I always wanted my own boat. I went up to—I think it was First Natio—no, First National Bank?

SW: First National Bank.

EC: No, no, no. It was First Natio—it was the one that Lief had. The one that Lief was... Yeah. First National. The guy told me, he said, "What are you..." He said, "Are you crazy?" I said, "What do you mean?" He says, "I've got guys here with bags and bags of cash that came in from Angola, Mozambique, and all these other countries. He says, "You want to mortgage your mother-in-law, your sister-in-law, and everyone else? And you want me to bet on you when these guys got brown bags full of..." And that's when it all went the other way. That's when it went all the other way.

MR: Hmmm.

EC: What a shame.

MR: So... The system made the city great. And now it's destroyed.

EC: They de—the people in—Matter of fact, there, I have to laugh, because some of the people who are perceived as leaders of this industry today were the biggest scumbags in the industry years ago. They were always outside the fringes of everything. You know? They were like rats.

SW: [Laughs]

EC: And when the system broke down, they were the first to run in and see what they could get out of it. Right? And out of that what they did was they wormed their way, and their philosophy to get into the driver's seat. And now it's just hilarious to sit there and..., and watch them..., talk about all the injustice. And they all— You know somebody ought to do a financial evaluation on all these fishermen. You know, you got people living in *mansions* across the street telling you they don't have two nickels to rub together.

MR: Yeah...

EC: This is all bullshit. You go down to the south end of the city there, and there's houses down there that are worth a half a million dollars. You know? Where'd these guys get this money? Yeah, there's all kinds... You know, there—There's all kinds of things that you could question here. But nobody's going to touch that. The government's not even going to touch that. You know, they don't understand the government. And I don't know if you've had any deal—I don't know if—Canada's just as bad as we are too. Because I deal with the DFO up there, too. It's the same. You get the runaround.

42:41

EC: But, if you've ever been in a quasi-government position like I was, I mean everyone there is trying to run and duck because they don't want to do anything. Right? So, one department doesn't know that the other departments are doing. Right? They talk about years ago, when..., you know, managing resources. I remember years and years ago, my wife started the United Fishermen's Wives organization here in New Bedford. Right? We started the..., the Blessing of the Fleet, was something that she started. Right? And..., I used to be invite—Matter of fact I became an honorary member of the United Fishermen's Wives organization because there was so much information. They were bringing people in from Iceland to speak to them. And... Where was I going with this now? There's so much. Wow! How did I get into this? Well let's, back it up a little bit. I can't think what it was now.

MR: I didn't write down anything.

EC: Yeah... But let me tell you something...

MR: Well about the governments, and...

EC: Oh the gov—Yeah, oh I know what it was. That's what it was. They were talking years ago about managing the resource. You know, when the Russians came here they freed us, the Americans. Americans won't tell you this. Before the Russians came here, the Russian Fleet came here? The East Germans, Romanians, Russians. We were bringing in yellowtails for a half a cent a pound. Quarter cent a pound. Remember that, Jimmy?

JD: Yeah.

EC: We couldn't—We couldn't even make enough money—I was on a boat called the New England. We used to land three trips a week. Forty thousand pounds. Matter of fact that's [?]. Forty thousand pounds. And we used to bring in seventy, eight, to a hundred bushel of skate wings. For a guy by the name of Gus [?Banacas] down in Westport, Mass. Who was a lobsterman. We took more money home out of that skate wings there than we did a hundred and twenty thousand pounds of yellowtails. And I could take my twine knife and take one callous from this finger to this finger. One complete callous. From picking.

MR: Ewww.

EC: We'd run away from fourteen hundred pounds of fish in an hour because we couldn't make a living. And that boat I was on only had a hundred and eleven horse Caterpillar on it at that time. It was the New England out of Stonington, Connecticut. You go back in history you'll find that those fillets, those same quarter a cent a pound fillets were being sold for ninety cents a pound. And you tell me that they weren't pigs.

MR: Hmmm.

45:33

MR: So what do you want to say [?].

EC: Well it's been a great day coming down here. [Laughs] It's been a great day and I have to say that I got an opportunity to not only see some *old* friends, but probably one of my *best* friends, and have the opportunity to meet *you*. And to, just throw my little two cents in there.

I think, you know, the future is bright. The future's bright. They just have to have somebody there who has vision and then wrap their trust around somebody who has the vision. Because this city is the greatest... It's the last New England great city left. That is, *begging, pleading*, for help. And I thought that Oceanarium was going to be the anchor for this city. But—And you know that's another thing. The money that the scallop industry is making? They should be funding that whole damn thing right now. Because I remember when we started with the scallop..., selling scallops we started the scallop promotion fund. We used to take I think out of each stock—and there was one, one a half percent?

SW: 1.5.

EC: 1.5 percent out of that just to promote the stock. And that—That wound up to be millions of dollars. And the processors never contributed a dime! And they were the ones who were rewarded. You know, one time, that, [?Bill Eldridge] for Christ's sake—he lost, the election, I forget who was—it was Eisenhower or somebody. He kept the price—he lost twenty-five thousand dollars in one day at an election. He kept the auction price in that building over there down for weeks until he got his money back. He told you! "Price ain't coming up until I get my money back." [Laughter]

MR: Hmmm.

EC: He used to tell you right blatantly. Right—They... Well, like that day that I said "If I had a machine gun I'd shoot every one of you bastards in here.

SW: Yeah that trip that I remember. Gene came in. He had the [?Katherine Mary].

EC: [Chuckles]

SW: And they'd agreed on the price—was going to be... During the time I think it might have been eight cents for haddock, whatever. And they'd already agreed [?and rehearsed], and they had prearranged a meeting. Six vessels. And they always said, "If we don't get the eight cents, we'll scratch."

EC: Well I was the spokesman for that.

SW: He was the spokesmen for them. And, they got to the auction and, it was under the eight cents. Whatever the premium was *supposed to be*, that number during that time. He was the first one to scratch. And the only one to scratch.

EC: Yeah...

SW: It wall took place in ten minutes.

EC: Yeah.

SW: I saw tears in his eyes.

EC: Yeah.

SW: If he had a gun he'd have shot everyone.

EC: I told them, "If I had a machine gun—"

SW: They all sold anyway.

EC: They all sold—they sold behind my back.
SW: The five vessels—all five of them, they agreed on, "We'll pull off and scratch."
EC: Yeah.
SW: And he was the only one that scratched. He was left alone. These are your brothers.
EC: We tied up this fleet for twenty-two days. And they used to call my wife and tell her, whoever it was, where the kids used to get the bus to go to school, his mother, where they—and they were going to run them over with a car. And all this other stuff.
SW: Vandalize the house and stuff.
EC: Vandalize the house. They even brought me in and—The bank brought me in and said, "You either shut up or we'll foreclose on your house." Because they could—at that time they could take your house, demand the mortgage.
SW: Call in the mortgage.
EC: And they could take it. And like the president of the bank said, "What do I give a shit about your goddamned house for when I've got millions of dollars of investments down here with these companies." I mean, you're nothing. You're a fly... Ah, this—This can be a savage situation.
MR: Oh, yeah.
EC: It's big money!
MR: Yeah that's true.
EC: Big! Big. Money.
SW: Yeah.
EC: You're talking some serious money. When you can take then thousand pounds of scallops, and put them in the soaking tank, the next day have fourteen thousand pounds. You're talking some serious, serious, serious money.
So it's never going to change. It's greed.
And as long as the American consumer is as ignorant as she is and he is, and willing to pay for crap and eat crap, then you'll always have somebody producing crap for you!
MR: Mm hm.
49:48
We handle seafood worse than world nations. Well you should—you know that.
Newfoundland's gone through all of this too, you know? You know, it's just—I just had a chef in from England. And he was strutting around like Billy Be Damned, you know, proud of it. I had to take him down. I says, "Listen, if it wasn't for the Icelanders you wouldn't even know what quality is in England right now." Because of the five-year [?cod bore]. When the Icelanders shut the British [?trawler] fleet off. They didn't have anymore British trawler [?] fleet and the Icelanders started bringing fresh seafood into [?Grimsy and Hall]. He said to me, "You know something? You're absolutely right."
MR: Yeah...
SW: How many people will leave a restaurant though and say, "I go there. It's terrible, but, it's cheap."
EC: It's cheap.
SW: Cheap! It's terrible but...

EC: When I left Iceland the minister of fisheries took five of us to dinner one night before he left, and he said, "You're—" For some reason he pulled me off to one side, he said, you know, "You're different from the other four. All four came to learn but you digested the system. And it'll never leave you. Sad part about it you're going back to a country cares nothing about quality. All they're concerned about is volume on the plate and how cheap they can get it." At *that* time, I took great offense to it. Until I got with SYSCO and I started realizing after the years, "Jesus Christ, he's right!" Eighty percent of the people I deal with, all they're concerned about is price.

MR: Yeah...

EC: And I tell them, "Listen. Listen to what I have to say about the price. Listen to the features and the advantages. Listen to the infrastructure that's in place. All the checks and balances that are in place. Listen to that! Knowledge is power. Don't worry about the price. If the price isn't right after I tell you all this, then that's why SYSCO's got four or five different layers. It's not the *quality* that's different. It's the formulation of the product that's different to fit into the niche." But nobody... The culinary institutes in this country, they're so obsolete it's unbelievable. It's sickening what they're producing. Especially when it comes to seafood. Johnson and Wales gives students an hour and a half a year on seafood. And the people that they have training on seafood, they know nothing about seafood. How can you know anything about seafood when you come from an archaic industry?

MR: It's a lot of stuff to fix.

EC: A *lot* of stuff to fix. And the culinary institutes are not fixing anything, because they say it's easier to lower your quality standards than revamp your training manual. So they're not fixing anything.

MR: Mmm.

EC: The industry has to get off its ass and stop saying, "Poor me, this." "Poor me, that." What has happened in the past, let it be. Get on! Get on with it. You know? They should have a display auction here where tourists can come in and they can *watch* it being sold. They can *watch* the whole thing. They can be *told* the story. You know? They'll go back and ask... If you're from Sioux City Iowa... Well, we have a customer out there from Sioux City, Iowa that buys all New Bedford fish. Give them the name of the account, whether it's a restaurant whatever, supermarket. Whatever it might be. What are you going to do with organic and natural? When that comes along? When they're doing what they're doing here now. If it wasn't for chemicals these guys wouldn't even... In Europe—You go to Europe and you tell them you're from New Bedford, they call it the cesspool of the seafood industry.

MR: Ewww.

EC: Alright?
[Chuckles]

MR: Ewww.

53:19

EC: You know that seventy-eight percent of all the seafood consumed in the United States is imported.

MR: What's that? Seventy-eight?

EC: Seventy-eight percent.
And probably out of that seventy-eight percent..., sixty-five percent of it is all frozen. The majority of the American consumer is eating more frozen than she or he even realizes. And *thank God* for freezing. Because there is very few companies—The only company that produces consistently in fresh seafood and has been doing it for five generations, is, MF Foley.

SW: Foley. Yeah.

EC: You go over to Foley's—Foley's plant down here on Wright Street is nineteen years old this year?

SW: Yeah.

EC: That's the only plant in New England that I can go into, and go home and my wife doesn't know I've been in a fish plant. The other—If I go into some of our plants in Boston, and Gloucester, places like that, go back to the plant, they ask me to go home. Because of the stench.

SW: When I used to tell people that I dealt with them at Foley's, the first comment wasn't "Great quality," it was always, "Oh! They're expensive."

EC: They're not.

SW: I said, "But I get twelve days out of the fish if I ice it right. I never have to throw it away.

EC: Yeah.

SW: I never have waste.

EC: Yeah. It's the best fresh seafood com—And the other one for frozen is a company called Icelandic, USA. They're based in [?] Connecticut. But their processing plant is in Cambridge, Maryland, which I'll be going down there next week. Next month.

MR: Huh.

EC: And twenty years ago I said to [?Magnuson], president of the company. This I believe is one of the finest seafood companies in the world. You are the benchmark by whatever this should be measured by. Last year I was down there, and when he said goodbye to us, I told him the same thing. I said, "Twenty years later, I've got to tell you you're still the best." Because there's good fresh. There's bad fresh. There's good frozen. And there's bad frozen. You've just got to educate yourself And the FDA says that they can't help you on ed—FDA says they can't protect you on fraud. There's so much fraud going on in the seafood industry. [Laughter] They can't protect you, because they don't have the money or the personnel. So you've got to educate yourself. It's the only way you're going to protect yourself.

MR: Well I come...

EC: [Chuckles]

MR: ...and my first folklore job was actually..., working with the guy who was doing a lot of work with the water of Chesapeake Bay. [?].

EC: Yeah. Yeah.

MR: So. I have been to Cambridge.

EC: It's a mess. Oysters are almost gone. They're trying to bring in a China oyster to replace it. The crab industry's on its back because they were all sleeping there. They thought they were all... You know, everything was going to be hunky dory

for generation to generation, until Phillips went over the Philippines and started harvesting the blue swimmer. And then they went to Thailand and they found other places in the far east that... And now, he's..., he's taking over the market. Now blue swimmer crab meat is better than seventy percent of the blue crab meat business.

MR: Mmm.

EC: And then you can't get anything. And if you do get it it's inconsistent. It's all kind of games are being played. We just had a company that just came up from Maryland. They have two restaurants in Maryland. The guy said to me, "I want to use lump meat." I said, "Okay. I have lump meat." "So what's your price?" And I said, "And I said sixteen something," and he says, "Oh, I'm paying eleven seventy-five for lump meat. How come you're so far apart?" I said, "Well, there's got to be a reason. Let me see you product." And he brings in the product. It's not lump meat. It's back fin. I said, "I can sell you all the back fin you want for eleven, twelve..." You know, "Eleven, twelve, fifteen cents." "Oh that' not—I don't use back fin. I use lump meat." I said, "This is not lump meat." People don't even [chuckles] know what they're buying. People are so uneducated because the industry plays so many games. And you go to the state division of marine fisheries. They don't want to get in bed with you either. Because they don't want to—That's a hornet's nest. We just went through that with clams. We got... [Laughter], farm-raised clams out of Wellfleet. And I chased the Department of Marine Fisheries to try to get some kind of a criteria on what is [?] necks, what is cherrystones. The sizes and everything like that. They don't even call you back. So you got to go out and do these things on your own. [Laughter]

58:00

SW: Interesting interview. Right?

MR: Well it is. And it's also—It's such a counter to... Well, we've been getting lots of different opin—you know, that's what this process is all about.

EC: You're getting the local opinion.

MR: Yeah.

EC: And what you're getting now is the global opinion. Not only a global opinion on seafood. But you're getting the full brunt of everything from what I call—I want to write a book. The book is going to be called "From the Deck to the Plate." And find somebody who'll be helping me write a book. It's called "From the Deck to the Plate." And that's basically what I've experienced. You know, I started fishing and I was on deck. And I worked my way up to the wheel house. And from there I went to fishery development, doing research work, and got hooked on that. And then I went into the food distribution business. So I know from the deck to the plate.

MR: Right.

EC: The problem is, while I was here I always thought that I knew the marketing end of it. And I *thought* I knew it. And so I kept telling the same thing. And after a while you keep telling the same thing you start to believe it. Because nobody's challenging you. Nobody knows any different anyway. Right? They're in the same caliber. Until you get out here and you start experiencing it. You know? Then all of a sudden—That's what they—they have to know the other part of their business

which they don't know. And that's the marketing end. What the market's all about. Where their niche is. What the trend is. What products they should be producing. They should be getting more diversified in... Fresh is fine. But also do some frozen stuff. You know? We did product here, on the program there, and Foley produced the fresh fish from the program. We also did some frozen fish. And we sent it out to Ray's Boathouse Pub in Seattle, Washington. They had all the food news people, and... Chefs and everything came in. And, Foley's product fresh came in number one. It was a score of 8.7 out of ten. And then the next was the Arctic... There was two arctic trawlers that were built for New England but went over there. They had a pollock and a cod. They came in first and third. Foley's frozen came in fourth. And his frozen was still like 7.9. Every—All the local retail stores around there, the supermarkets, they were like 3.1, 3.6. That was the quality of the product evaluated by all these food gurus. Everyone's a— Everyone's an expert on seafood in New England. Everyone.

MR: Yeah.

EC: You know, we even teach now to—you know, the wait staff. You know? Because you can go into the... A person can have a restaurant and find a piece of—a loin or swordfish that's priced right, performs great, texture, and shelf life. Has everything you want. The price that's locked right in is perfect, right? The person sits down and the first thing they say to the waiter or the waitress is, "Is the swordfish fresh tonight?" Well, the waiter or the waitress is shitting their pants right now. They don't know what to do. Right. So *body language* takes over. It already tells the customer, "Oh, oh. Something's wrong." "Well, let me check with the chef." Go back into the chef, the chef is..., you know he's got nine alligators back there chasing him. Right? So. He doesn't know—"Just get out of my hair. Tell him yeah." Right? They come back out and they tell them something. And... You know. But. We are forced to buy fresh seafood even though it's inconsistent.

1:01:30

MR: Well and I always want to answer that question with "No! We just pulled it out of the trash bin." You know what I mean?

EC: [Chuckles]

MR: It's such a stupid question.

EC: Well they say, oh, you know, "Is this fresh?" "Yeah, well we just—It just came in." Well... What does that mean? It just came in the door. What does that mean? You know?

We have packing that, through our HACCP program and our HACCP committee, our packaging that we have for our fresh seafood. If by chance, the order comes in at the wrong time—and he can relate to this because he's a chef. Say, the delivery order has to be between eight and ten-thirty? And their lunching thing has already started? They don't have time to put their order away. So it sits on the deck. So they assign somebody to go out there. Well that person goes out there, they're not familiar. They see fresh seafood. All they do is they throw it in the freezer. Or by accident it goes in the dry storage area. Our—our packaging has been designed [laughter] so that if it goes into the freezer, it takes thirteen to fourteen hours before the fillets crystallize. If it goes into the dry storage area, the customer has

seventeen hours before the internal temperature rises about forty-five degrees. But that's our HACCP program. [Laughter]

SW: HACCP's a great thing. It is.

EC: That's right. HACCP you got to believe in HACCP. If you don't believe in HAACP, you give it lip service, it's worthless.

MR: And how do you spell that?

EC: Hazardous Analysis...

SW: HACCP. Yeah. Hazardous Analysis Critical Control Points.

EC: ...Critical Control Points.

SW: I teach it all the time.

EC: Yeah.

SW: The minute something is harvested to the minute it comes to the plate it's monitored every single step of the way.

MR: Hazard... Hazard?

SW: Hazardous Analysis Critical Control Points. They'll set up a system from producer to end user. We have to document what it's been through, what temperature it was at.

EC: Yeah.

SW: What truck—the temperature of the truck it was on. The temperature of the refrigerator it was in.

EC: We have two gentlemen just on [?two doors] that [?receive]. Whether it's fresh shellfish or fin fish or, fresh chowders, or [?][?] time, temperature all of that. And then it has to be recorded and it has to be available to the FDA if you have some kind of food breakout. [?] That's the great thing about HACCP. You can track it.

The first month we implemented HACCP we kicked out... I don't know how many truckloads of chowders. And finally the company just said, "Listen, this is ridiculous. Send up your HACCP team." So we sent up our HACCP team. They found out problem was they weren't pre-chilling their trucks before they loaded our product on them. So by the time it reached our plant it had already exceeded what our HACCP requirement was—was it had to come in below forty-five degrees. They're coming in at forty-eight, forty-nine, fifty degrees.

SW: [?] HACCP was developed by NASA.

EC: Right.

MR: Mmm.

SW: Because they couldn't guarantee the quality of food for the astronauts.

EC: Space program.

SW: And they went out to..., manufactured items for the space program they realized there was no guarantee. And that's all they needed was astronauts getting sick in space. So that's when they developed HACCP. But that—the food—took *years* to get to the seafood industry though. Long time.

MR: We don't know—this is news to me.

SW: Well there's a lot of things developed by the space industry. [Laughs]
[? Several voices talking at once]

EC: Another thing is traceability. In Europe, I mean... And then the other thing is COOL, which is C-O-O-L, which is Country of Origin Labeling. That's supposed

to be in place September 30th. That means all our manufacturers have to have country of origin on all the cases that we buy.

MR: What was the thing you just said before that?

EC: Traceability.

MR: Traceability. Meaning...

EC: Meaning the product is being traced from the time it's harvested until the time it arrives in..., and it gives the end user the opportunity to know who he's dealing with. Whether the product is coming through a well-managed resource or not. Whether it's coming through a well-handled, well-established infrastructure for distribution.

MR: I think this is all *I* could digest. [Laughter]

SW: Boy!

MR: But you know—I do want to give you my card for a couple reasons. This is great. You know? Obviously, nobody else has talked about this.

EC: They won't! They don't. How can they talk about if they haven't...

MR: Well they don't know about it.

EC: They don't know the other...

MR: [?]

EC: Yeah.

MR: I mean..., part of—The wonderful thing about the work that I do is that I get to talk to everybody.

SW: Mm hm. That's right.

MR: You know and, I don't... I don't really have an opinion. [?] But I don't really know, like I said [?]. [?] restaurants behind the scenes. I'm just not seeing all the aspects of it. And this is [?].

SW: When I first met... I think you brought up the point about the fishing industry being so family-friendly back when you came up in the nineteen sixties, where there was a concern. The fishermen I see *now* are mostly transients.

EC: Yeah.

SW: No family orientation.

EC: No roots here.

SW: There's no roots.

EC: Yeah.

SW: Either they come up from Maryland. Some come—they come down from Maine. They take sites on New Bedford boats.

EC: No roots.

SW: They don't spend their money back here. They don't build homes here.

EC: Yeah.

SW: I mean, it's not a family-friendly industry anymore.

EC: Yeah.

SW: To be a fisherman now, you might as well... Divorce rate is incredible. Because the standards that they had with the unions and stuff.

MR: Well that's what Jimmy was saying. You know, the union. That whole issue [?].

SW: Yeah.

EC: Yeah.

MR: I'm going to turn this off. Thank you very much.

[End of interview]