

Name of person interviewed: Paul Lemieux [PL] and Mathieu Lemieux [ML]

Facts about this person:

Age (if known): PL: 53/ML: 29

Sex: Male/Male

Occupation: Shoreside business owner/operator (Blue Fleet)

If a fisherman (if retired, list the ports used when fishing),

Home port:

Hail Port: (port fished from, which can be the same)

Residence (Town where lives):

Ethnic Background (if known): Canadian American

Interviewer: Madeleine Hall-Arber [MHA]

Alex

Transcriber: Sharon Pollard-Waldron

Place interview took place: Working Waterfront Festival 2009

Date and time of interview: September 27, 2009

ABSTRACT

The father and son duo, Paul and Mathieu Lemieux, have run the successful New Bedford, MA shoreside business, Blue Fleet, for over twenty years. Throughout their lifetimes working with the fishing industry, the two have drawn upon their optimistic outlooks, values of respect, and continual adaptability for support and strength within a frequently changing and challenging industry. In this interview, Paul and Mathieu discuss the struggles and joys of their experiences working in the fishing industry and running their family business. They also share their insight, observations and concerns regarding important issues about the impacts of economic downturns and consolidation in the industry as well as the challenges of keeping up with and adjusting to different regulation changes in addition to the social, cultural and economic dynamics that take place within the local fishing community. In this interview, Paul and Mathieu also touch on specific aspects of the importance and impact of the fishing industry to New Bedford, Massachusetts; the pressures of developing businesses on the waterfront and the resulting tourism; as well as the struggle of overcoming the negative image given to the fishing industry by increasing positive public awareness. As Paul and Mathieu discuss their strong connections to the waterfront, they emphasize the joy they find through working with others in the industry as well as with local youth in school co-op programs and with the general public through their participation in the yearly Working Waterfront Festival in New Bedford, MA in addition to the support provided to the local industry by their helpful supply business.

INDEX (minutes:seconds) / KEYWORDS

KEYWORDS: Shoreside business owner/operator; Supplies; Dredge; Draggers; Boats; Crane trucks; Fishing gear; Welding; Social and Cultural Characteristics of Fishing; Fishing Communities; Relationships with other fishermen; Safety practices and beliefs; Gender roles; Family; Family roles; Family Business/Organization; Father/son relationship; Social networks; Community structure and organization; Ethnicity, Canadian; Diversity; Youth; Education; Festivals; Values; Beliefs and belief systems; Fishermen stereotypes; Business and Economics of Fishing & Other Maritime; Making a living; Family involvement; Business organization; Consolidation; Business risks; Financing and investment; Domestic competition; Obtaining supplies; Business and economic effects of regulations; Adapting to change; Contributions to local economy; Supportive politicians; Importance to local community/region; New Bedford; Massachusetts; New England; Off-season occupations and activities; Retirement; Ports, Harbors, Marinas; Ship construction, shipbuilding; Tourism; Fisheries Management; Dangers on the job; Regulations; Bycatch; Shellfish; Scallops; Scalloping;

[Start of Interview]

[00:00]

Family background; Family businesses; Welding and building scallop dredges at Hathaway's; Going off on own to start business (Blue Fleet); Father as inspiration; getting into chain bagging through father's business; Eclectic learning in the field; Balancing roles as father and business owner; Growing up in a large family; Children's and siblings involvement with Blue Fleet; Family owned and operated; Grandfather's Business;

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Family from Montreal, Canada; Breaking into traditionally Norwegian scalloping business; Diverse nationalities; Different cultures varying working methods; Finding common ground with diverse cultures and clients; Making a good name; Passing down family values; 20 years of successful business; Impact of economic downturn and changes in industry; Consolidation and changes in boat ownership; Adjusting to changes; Downsizing; Four hundred pound creating new market;

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Explaining four hundred pound regulation in scalloping industry; Wife's involvement in business and family; Changes in industry over time; Regulations; Changes in ring size; Building new Turtle dredges to keep up with competition; Regulation interfering with business booms created at end of scallops seven year cycle; Importance of keeping up with changes; Pleasing the customer; Fishing is a tough industry;

[15:03]

Scalloping and dragging to understand clients' needs; Working with the competition; Challenges of adjusting to regulation changes; Challenge of keeping up with changing regulations; Technological advances and reasons for sticking to traditional methods;

[19:29]

Local competition; Businesses and scalloping industry in Maine; New Bedford businesses whittling down; Customers from all over the world; Word of mouth advertising; New Bedford, the capital of scalloping; Services offered at Business (Blue Fleet); Benefits and consequences of consolidation in New Bedford; New Bedford and changes over time; Fishing industry as the economic engine of New Bedford;

[25:01]

Importance of New Bedford's port in supply and job opportunities, Bad name given to fishermen; Fishermen most conscientious about preserving fisheries; Overcoming fishing industries bad name; Working Waterfront Festival; Finding happiness in informing and working with the public; Changes over time in public awareness of fishing industry; Waterfront industry as whole life and social network; Education on fishing industry in local schools; Vocational schools' co-op programs; Benefits of co-op programs; Recent decrease in co-op students; College and family influence on kid's getting into fishing industry;

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College and family influence on kid's getting into fishing industry (cont'd.); Connection to waterfront industry; Father pushing son into college; Returning to fishing industry to help father; Blue collar work; Connection to work; Getting another crane truck; Operating business out of truck; Appeal of working on the waterfront; Not wanting to go elsewhere after retiring; Learning to operate the business while father is on vacation; Happy employees; Difficulty of downsizing; Diverse nationality of employees;

[35:00]

Finding and sticking to your niche in life; Physical labor; Keeping deadlines; Views on the future; Taking over father's business; Concerns about consolidation in the future; Diversifying and fishing for additional income; Keeping busy year round; Part ownership in one scalloper and one dragger; Responsibility; Dangers on the job;

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Partnership of boats; Relationships; Buying a dragger; Rough times for dragger boats; Improvements in the scalloping industry; Bycatch; Regulations; Captain of the dragger boat;

Boat history; Everything happening for a reason; Opening doors (work at Hathaway's and Arrow Fox);

[45:15]

Tourism; Increased activity; Pressures of developing businesses on the waterfront; Boston; Waterfront businesses and hotels attracting tourists to the docks; Concern about tourists; Looking out for many people's safety; Waterfront tourists in smaller towns; Different piers in New Bedford area; Tourist concerns;

[50:44]

Supportive politicians in New Bedford; Barney Frank; Niches; Supporting the industry; All in it together; Optimistic perspectives; Doing whatever it takes to keep business going; Placing happiness before money;

[54:59]

Admiration and respect for people in the industry; Scalloping industry would run fine without consolidation; Fishermen's concern for the fisheries; Hopes for the waterfront industry; New Bedford, a fishing community; Competing businesses all working together; Working with Reidar's family business; Fishing as a way of life; Overworking and stress;

[59:47]

Overworking and stress (cont'd.); Divorce; Impacts on family life; Father as inspiration; Friendship between father and son; Joking around;

[1:02:08] [End of CD Part 1]

[00:00] [Beginning CD of Part 2]

Other family run businesses in the area; Bigger boat owners; Not to many women in the fishing industry; Working with bigger boat owners; Family run businesses all helping each other out; Working Waterfront Festival;

[CD Part 2: 5:00]

Chipping in at the Working Waterfront Festival; Meeting a lot of diverse and interesting people at the festival; The Working Waterfront Festival, a great educational and entertaining event for everybody; Getting joy out of informing the public about the waterfront industry;

[End of interview][CD Part 2: 6:32]

TRANSCRIPT

00:00

MHA: Ok. Um, I'm going to ask you both to introduce yourselves to the- to me, so that we can have it on the recording. So, um I'd like you to tell me what your name is and, when, when and where you were born.

PL: When and where? Okay. My name's Paul Lemieux. I was born in Acushnet Massachusetts, 1956.

ML: Um, I'm his son Mathieu Lemieux. I was born in New Bedford Mass, 1980 November 9th.

MHA: Great. Thank you. Um, can you tell me a little bit about your background? How are—I see that your um, well tell me your, that your business, I guess, to start with.

PL: Okay, uh, the business, uh, we have is, uh, Blue Fleet Welding. I started approximately 22 years ago. Um, I guess I have to go back a few generations and let you know how it came about. My grandfather came from, uh, Canada. He jumped the freight taint, uh freight train when he was 19, 20 years old. Came in New Bedford for the work. And in a few years, he started his own plumbing and heating business. And he did real good. He had 7 children and 3, 4 of his sons joined the business. One broke off and started his own business, the other 3 brothers took over the business from my grandfather. Uh, they all had large families, French Canadians, so my father had 11, my uncle had 11, my other uncle had 7, 7 children. And I learned at a early age in life that, I'm not gonna be number one in *this* business 'cuz I wasn't the oldest of any of the grandchildren. So I decided I was gonna go off on my own. How and where I didn't know. Uh, went to vocational high school, got my trade. And I was fortunate to land a job at Hathaway's. And it just took off from there. I knew I wanted to work for myself. I was welding, next thing I know I was building scallop dredges at Hathaway's and I decided to start building 'em on my own.

MHA: And how bout you, Mat?

ML: Um, well pretty much my dad's like, my inspiration. Like he, you know, he's been a father, a friend and a boss to me. So, when I got into the business there were a couple other people trying to do the, uh, chain bag part of the business. So, uh, my dad says 'hey, well lets try it out, Mat. See how you do.' And I had a knack for it so now its, we go hand in hand. My dad's got the knack for building scallop dredges and now I'm, you know, I still have things to learn. I mean, I'm still young. I've um, close being, going on 10 years of doing this type of work so, you know, I still have a lot to learn, but I mean, this is how I got into it. This is, I was brought up in the fishing industry, because of my father. And nobody helped my dad. My dad did it all on his own. And when I learned to do the care, I mean, you take a little bit of what people tell you. But, you know, you take a little bit from this guy, a little bit from this guy and mix it all up in a pot and you just come up with your own way of doin' things. And that's pretty much what my dad did and I just kinda learned from him in that way, but except with the chain bags. So, that's how I got into it.

PL: Mathieu says he's been in the business 10 years. He's probably been in it more like 20 years

MHA: [Laughs]

PL: Because, as I started out as a young business, I also had to be the book keeper, the baby sitter and unfortunately, or fortunately, they went on some jobs with me. You know? And at the end of the day we had to go quote jobs and of course the wife was out either shopping or her part-time job, so put on a different hat and drove down to the boats and they learned that way.

MHA: So, how many children do you have?

PL: I have four.

MHA: OK, so you didn't go the quite the same as your grandfather, but [laughs]

PL: No, No. Yeah.

ML: [laughs]

PL: I learned from him. Lets just say, eleven was a lot.

ML: Mm...

PL: Four was a lot

ML: Yup.

MHA: Rite.

PL: I have, uh, three sons and a daughter. My daughter lives out in Texas. And I have two sons that work for me, Mathieu and my, my other son Adam. He does the dredges. And I have a son who works part-time for me. He works a full time job and he comes in and fills in and helps out any way he can to make some extra money.

MHA: That's great.

ML: Yup. He's also a security guard down there, uh, SeaWatch, Which is a clam processing plant right on the docks,

PL: Yup.

ML: So, he in a sense is kind of in the industry too. You know what I'm saying?

MHA: Rite.

ML: Even though he doesn't really fish. But like my dad said, he does. He comes in once a week to try to make some extra money and helps with the gears, so we're all kind of in it except for my sister. Which you know, is kinda—

PL: And I also have a brother in it. And I've had a couple other brothers throughout the years that worked for me.

MHA: Really?

PL: Until they started their own businesses or moved on. So yeah, it's a family business.

ML: Family owned and operated.

PL: Yup.

MHA: So, is there anybody in your family still in your father's business?

PL: Yes, my oldest brother took that business. And one of my uncles, um, one of my cousins is also in the business. And his children, his child and my other brother's child, that, that third generation taking over the business, so... They've been in the business over 60 years. We're only at 22.

ML: Yeah, we're gettin' there though [laughs].

PL: Yeah.

[5:13]

MHA: [laughs] Oh, that's great. So um, before I forget to ask, what part of Canada was your grandfather from?

PL: The Montreal area.

MHA: Uh huh. Good. And do you still have relatives up there?

PL: Um, distant. My, the only one that's really up there now is one of my uncles

ML: It's how they say in French "Comme ci, comme ca", "so so"

PL: [laugh]

MHA: [laugh] Do you speak French?

ML: Um, petite.

MHL: So, the scallop business here is largely, traditionally anyway, Norwegian. So how did you sort of break into the---

PL: As I said, when I graduated from high school, they placed me in a job over at Hathaway Machinery—

MHA: Rite.

PL: Which, uh, I was into the drag department. I started at the bottom and worked my way up to a foreman and I worked there for ten years and that's what I learned and it was the welding and I liked it and I seen an opportunity and I said I'm gonna go for it. That's how I started.

MHA: Yeah.

PL: And, uh, yes it, there are a lot of Norwegians in the business and um, but in the New Bedford harbor you have on the Fairhaven side. You have where the Norwegians kinda congregated. And over here on the New Bedford side you have what you call the Portuguese pier. And then you have the American pier. And then everybody else kinda co-mingles everywhere else. So, yes its Norwegian but no, it, it's actually a lot of different nationalities.

ML: It's very diversified around here.

PL: Yes.

ML: And, you know... you have to learn that these certain cultures like their stuff built a certain way. So you kinda like, not that you're stereotypin' but, you just kinda like learn how, like "oh, well these guys like their stuff built this way" and "oh, well these other Portuguese guys [nets?], so you know how they like their stuff done.

PL: They learn from generations and you know, what—"what my father did..." and then it goes down and every little cliques got their own little way of doin things and---

ML: Yeah

PL: And you have to... it's not stereotypin' but...

ML: It's just the way it is.

MHA: Yeah.

ML: So, you gotta learn how to, you know, find—

PL: Please the customer.

ML: Rite, and find common ground with everybody you work with. I mean, sometimes you get tough people to deal with. But it's like my father says, he always told me, it's all about the customer. You can make the customer happy, and that's all that matters. At the end of the day, you're not goin' home with them and, you know, you bite your tongue. Bite the bullet, you know? And just—

PL: They might be wrong, they might be right but they're payin the bills.

MHA: [laughs]

ML: That's right. So, you know. You just kinda just take the good with the bad. But I mean for the most part, my dad's made a very good name for himself and I'm not just saying this cause he's my dad. But, every time someone talks about my father, the next words out of his mouth "your father...", and the next words, "is a good man". And, I honestly mean that. I'm not just sayin that cause he's sittin' here with me. People tell me that all the time, "you're fathers a good man". And he is. He's a—

PL: I heard the same story about my father too.

ML: Yeah, so. You know, that's something he learned from his dad and now I'm learnin' it from my dad and hopefully one day when I have kids I can teach my kids that. So you know, we, my father brought us up to be respectful, polite, and to respect others. And just because someone else is acting maybe not so nice, you don't have to be like that. Kill 'em with kindness, as he says.

PL: Right.

ML: You know? So...

MHA: That's really important. And I think it's, it can be unusual in the working world to—

ML: Yeah.

MHA: --have that attitude. So, that's

PL: Yeah. It's tough but we must be doing something right. We've been in there 20 years and it hasn't been all peaches and cream on the waterfront, so

ML: Mm.

MHA: Rite, well actually, that was one of the things I was gonna ask. Is there, how have you been affected by the economic downturn and changes in the industry?

PL: Uh, yes. Definitely. When I started, um, there was so many different bout owners, I don't remember them all. But now, the industry is consolidating. Uh, boat owners own 20 boats. I mean, I could name a half a dozen guys that own a hundred boats in the, in the New Bedford harbor. Whereas, when I started, it was only maybe a half a dozen guys that had a half a dozen boats. At best. So yeah, it, it is changing and um, you have to, uh, roll with the punches.

ML: Yeah, you have to adjust to what the economy is thrown' at ya. I mean, I was doin' the gear and we were havin' five guys working for the gear department and my father had to downsize and

PL: When they closed the four hundred pound down. When they opened up the four hundred pound it created a new market. Uh, a lot of people jumped into it and there's not too many scallop, uh, dredge builders and ringman, uh, fabricators so um I decide that to keep the competition at bay, grab all we could. I knew it wasn't going to last forever so,

ML: Yeah, we had to expand and then contract and that's always difficult. Um, letting people who work for you go, but I try to find new things and try to keep, you know, the core people busy no matter what.

[10:10]

MHA: Yeah, because some of the people listening to this may not know a lot about the fishing industry, maybe you could just speak for a second about what the four hundred pound is?

PL: OK. It was a, uh, the uh, regulations change constantly and what happened was, there was a little window that wasn't quite closed. Uh, as they were regulating these scallopers, this particular part of the industry opened up and uh, a lot of guys were able to get in there and go fishing for four hundred pounds and the government had to re-regulate it so that it wasn't a free-for-all and not interfere with the main scallopers, the big boats as we like to call them. So, a lot of people got into it and they knew they were going to get cut out in two to three years but, they figured, you know, we'll worry about tomorrow tomorrow. Uh, so we had to accommodate them or somebody else would've.

MHA: MmHm.

ML: I hope that answered your question.

MHA: Yes, it did. Yes, that's fine, thank you. Um, and you uh, has your wife been involved at all in the business?

PL: Uh, [?] Yes and no.

ML: Yes and no.

PL: I mean, with four kids... you know what I mean? If I was, you know, goin out on a job she might have to run off and drop some stuff off on me. Or we played a lot of tag where I'd have to run home and meet her at the ball parks so she can go out and do the other stuff. The running around. Um, she didn't get really involved with the billing or the work itself. Like I said, she had four kids and uh, that's a full time job in its own.

ML: Mm

MHA: [laughs] Yeah, indeed. Uh,

PL: But I've had my mother come down on vacations to fill in and when, when I was married for twenty years, I'm not married right now but, when, you know, um, I had the office at the house so obviously, the phone rang and she answered the phone. She helped with the billing and the running around and, like I said, my mother's come in and filled out and it's a family affair.

ML: Mhm.

MHA: Good. Um, let's see. Oh, I know, maybe I asked you about the latest economic downturn but, you've been in the business so long, maybe you could talk a little bit about how the industry has changed over time. You mentioned the change in ownerships of the boats, but have there been other things?

PL: Well, um under---

ML: Regulations too,

PL: Yeah.

ML: For the, for the laws. When I first got into it, for the gear part itself,

PL: The rings had started to change

ML: The rings went from three and a half to four inch. That was one of the changes for me. Uh, I think the [mesh? Net?] size went up too,

PL: The [mesh? Net?] sizes went up

ML: from eight inch to

PL: Ten inch

ML: Ten inch or ten and a half inches. And, you know, just little stuff like that for my, for my part of the business. The gear part. Um, he also, the turtle dredges, which is a different style of dredges that he also had to start buildin' in order to keep up with the competition, per se. And uh, you know, cause if not, then nobody was buying the regular dredges, so... you know, little things like that. Uh, you know, for the changes of me, for what I've noticed. Like I said, I haven't really been in it full time that long. Like ten years full time. But like he said, I've been around it my whole life. But this is, a few of the things that I've realized since--

MHA: Mhm

PL: When the government became uh, came in and started regulating. Before they did, the scallops are on uh, approximately a seven year cycle from uh, babies to adults. And that would create a boom [and bus?] cycle. As the scallops became plentiful everybody and their brother jumped into it. Which meant a lot of work and you had to hurry up and, you know, grab what you could. But as the [bus?] cycle came, uh, just created the opposite effect where you had to,

uh, unload baggage and and um, what's the word I'm lookin for? Uh, you have to move in with, you know, move with the show. So yeah, I mean,

ML: You gotta keep up with the times, you know?

PL: Yeah.

ML: You gotta, you gotta, you know, when things change you gotta change. You can't just be set in your ways anymore. Like you know, it's good to have your way of doing things. But if you sit there and try to be stubborn and try to just keep things the same way, people are going to go elsewhere.

PL: Right.

ML: So you gotta learn how to keep up with the times--

PL: Please the customers

ML:--And changes and just, please the customers. You know? And if not, then you're not gonna make it. I mean, we don't like the changes, well, we might not like some of the changes I should say,

PL: Right.

ML: But, you gotta do it. You know? Like, you know? So that's just pretty much how its gotta be. And if you wanna survive in this industry, like my dad told me, it's a tough, it's a tough business to make a dollar in. I mean, you gotta know what you're talking about, I mean these guys they're, they can be tough people to work with, you know?

PL: They go out and risk their lives and they expect.

ML: They, they want

PL: You know? They want the top of the line and they expect things right when they go out there, so.

[15:03]

ML: I can't blame em. Me personally,

PL: Right.

ML: I can't blame em either. My dad feels the same way. I've been out scalloping and dragging a couple times. Not the life for me, but he wanted me to go out there to experience, because I am making the scallop bags and, you know. He was worried about me bein' out there but, you know, like I told him, I says "Dad, it's not the life for me". But, you know. He does have, uh, he is

partners in two boats. So he does have partnership in two boats that I went on one of them and did the scalloping and dragging on that same boat. Cause, its, the Jessica and Suzanne is a [conversion?] boat.

PL: you have to know what they're doin' out there to...

ML: Yeah, so I uh

PL: Appease em.

ML: Yeah. So, now I went out there and got a better, uh, grasp of, you know, why they want this done a certain way. So when I came back on land now I understand, "oh OK, this is built this way because *this* happens on the boat". You know what I'm sayin? And not to say like, I'm a great fisherman 'cause I'm not. You know what I'm sayin? I'm a gear guy and I do gear. I've done it, and you know. But, hey, you gotta go out there and do stuff like that in order to keep up with, you know, competition. And you know what? We don't even look at it as competition. We have guys that are doing gear that we do business with. You know? And that's how my dad wants me to be. He doesn't want it to be a competition. He wants it, you know, "hey there's enough work out there for everybody"

PL: For everyone. Correct.

ML: That's what he tells me. So, you gotta don't step on no one's toes

PL: You don't need the whole pie, right?

ML: Yeah.

PL: You just need a piece of it.

ML: You just need a slice of the pie

PL: That's right.

ML: A little whipped cream on top is good too but, you know, hey...

PL: [laughs] That's right.

ML: But it, it's the way my father is teaching me to get along in this industry. Like I said, it's a tough business, but it doesn't mean I have to be, you know, a big tough guy about it. Just have tough skin like my dad says. You gotta learn how to take a few punches sometimes, so...

MHA: So when they made the changes in the, for example, in the size ring and some of the other things, was there any technical challenge to--

ML: Well yeah

MHA: ---increasing the size?

ML: For me, for the gear I had to recalculate all the uh, sizes for a fifteen footer. Lets just say um, three, um, for three and a half inch rings we would have an eight footer. Back then it was like three and a half inch rings, I think it was uh, twenty five? And now that it's

PL: Rings. To make [___?]

MHA: Right.

ML: Twenty-five rings to make eight feet. And now that its, uh, four inches, now it's like 21. So I have to go back and recalculate all my bags. From five footers all the way up to fifteen footers. So, there was changes there. Uh, as far as the [mesh?] size go, that didn't really

PL: No.

ML: Do nothing different. So, but the rings did kinda, I had to go back and recalculate everything

PL: Yeah.

ML: And then you got trial and error. You know? Sometimes, you know, it's not exactly like 8 feet you measure out. Maybe it's a little, like an inch over or somethin'. So, you know. Some guys want it under, some guys want it over, you know? So it's, you gotta go back and recalculate all that, so.

PL: Yeah. And they're constantly changing and improving their methods, which feeds back to us.

ML: Right. So now I gotta keep up with that. And, you know,

PL: Right.

ML: So, you know it's like you said, you gotta keep--

PL: Constantly changing, yup.

ML: Yeah, you gotta keep up with the, the demand for it. You know? And its, if you don't they're gonna go elsewhere. Or they're gonna do it themselves.

MHA: So do you have to, I mean, have you found yourself moving into computer aided design at all or are you just sticking with the traditional, more traditional methods?

ML: Yeah, I think I, well I want to say for me, I'd like to get into more computers, you know? But it's tough. You know? I don't have time to sit there in front of the computer cause I'm doing

the work. Same thing with my dad. Even though he's the boss, he's always out in his crane truck running around. So its

PL: the dredges have changed very little in the past 20, 25 years. I mean they've gotten heavier and minor adjustments. But the basic design is like a car. It's the same thing they just keep adding little improvements here and there, so

ML: It's not needed to have the computers. In our opinion.

PL: Well, to design the dredges.

ML: Yeah,

PL: Right.

ML: You know, it's all up here. You know? It's all up in the head, you know. So, uh, you know the bags for me? I got it all up in the head too. I mean, it would probably help to move to the computers, but like I said, I don't have time.

PL: Well you've got it all computerized with the—

ML: Yeah but I'm talking about--

PL: --With the billing and everything.

ML: Designing and stuff on the computer. Like, we don't need it. We got all the specs in our head.

MHA: Right.

ML: And, but like he said, we have all the sizes and stuff in the computer. Priced out and stuff like that.

PL: Yeah.

ML: So, well I guess you could say we're half books half computers. So.

MHA: Mhm. Are there a lot of others that, in the local area that are still doing the kind of work that you're doing? Gear—

[19:29]

PL: Uh, the dredges right now, there's two main people building them in the city of New Bedford. We have one guy in New Jersey and one guy in Virginia. Uh, up in the state of Maine, they have different regulations, a lot smaller dredges. There are a lot of little guys that are building the little dredges. Um, but basically, up in Maine its every town has their own blacksmith, their own welder

MHA: Mhm

PL: Their own net guy, and he takes care of that little town and the next town is the next guy. But, uh, yeah. And in the gear there maybe a half a dozen guys to some degree that are building it. So, I mean. There's only, I believe there's only four hundred full-time scallopers in the industry. And then you have your state of Maine which is probably several hundred people there. But they have a very short season of like one month. And sometimes not even that depending on their, you know. So, yes and no. I mean, let's just say there will always be competition,

ML: Yeah.

PL: But it's not like there's a hundred guys doin' it. When I started in the business, there were at least 7 or 8 guys in the city of New Bedford that were building dredges and they've all whittled out over time.

MHA: Hmm. And do you find that you're getting, [clears throat] excuse me, customers from all along the coast?

PL: Oh, all over the world.

ML: All over the word.

PL: Yeah, we've had, uh,

ML: Alaska

PL: Alaska, England, Canada, Venezuela. Was it Venezuela?

ML: Wasn't there one in Russia? Didn't we send one to Russia? Or China?

PL: Um,

ML: I thought we sent one to, to Russia?

PL: Nope, no that was, they only talked about the paper work

ML: Oh, yeah that's right.

PL: But they never

ML: They just talked about it. Never went through.

PL: Yeah. So,

ML: Yeah, up and down the, from anywhere from Maine, down to Ocean city, Maryland.

PL: Yeah that's the

ML: Carolinas

PL: -- the main

ML: Yeah

PL: The main scallop beds go from Canada down to South Carolina, so

ML: Yup.

MHA: So how do people find out about you?

ML: Usually word of mouth. From fishermen to fishermen

PL: Yeah, well the thing is, anybody who knows, anyone who wants to get involved in the scallop industry, New Bedford is the number one capital of the scallops. Probably in the world now. Because, the way the, uh, the fish buyers have modernized the selling of the scallops. I load trucks with gear to come up here all the time and they come up here delivering scallops on a regular basis from Jersey, Virginia, they all come here to be resold throughout the world.

MHA: Mm

PL: So, if you're looking to get into scalloping you don't go down Stonington, Connecticut. You come to New Bedford Massachusetts.

ML: Mhmm.

PL: And then over here, that's where we have our name.

MHA: Yeah.

ML: Yup, and that's how one guy talks to another guy, you know, 'oh, go see Paul over at Blue Fleet. He can get...' See, the beauty about my dad's shop is, you can come to our shop and we're like a one-stop shop. You can come here, you can get your scallop dredge, scallop bag, whatever you need.

PL: Delivered, welding...

ML: Delivered, welded, if you need boat repair, we can do crane work, uh, you know, you name it. Anything to do with the fishing industry, we can do it. And if we don't know how to do it, well go and get somebody to work for us to do it

PL: Right.

ML: So, every, everybody in that shop has their own thing. I do gear. My brother Adam does the dredges, Roger bends the bails, you know, so uh Sal and Winston, they you know, they do boat

work. Uh, Bob and my father do the crane work. And so, you know, we can always find somebody to get the job done. So if somebody needs anything that's the beauty--

PL: One stop, yes.

ML: --of the store. It's the one-stop shop. You can come and get whatever you need.

PL: Yup.

ML: You can get a full drag and bag assembled and ready to fish. Ready to go.

PL: Or just the parts.

ML: Or just the parts. Or just the buckets and the rings, the links. Whatever you want. It's all about keeping the customer happy.

MHA: [laugh]

PL: Get em in, don't let em go.

ML: Yup. [laugh]

MHA: [laugh] Right. Uh, let's see. Um, so, would you say because the industry has consolidated now, here, the scallop industry, uh, has that improved your business? Or has it made it more challenging?

PL: Uh, when you say consolidated? Within the country or within the—

MHA: No, I meant with, because of New Bedford being the, sort of the center of it.

PL: Um, yes and no. It's helped us and its hurt us. Uh, as the bigger companies, I mean, like [___ Nixon?] or Juan [Arigs?] Alexander, they have 20 boats. So they'll start getting their own welding crew.

MHA: [whispers] Wow.

PL: You know what I'm saying? So, on that aspect, we lose some, because on 20 boats, you know, they don't need to hire the outside company.

MHA: Yeah.

PL: But on the other hand, as it consolidates and the other ports around town, they'll start losing their supply side. So they'll be running up here because they know New Bedford's the scallop capital and anything they need for scalloping will be found here. So, yes on one end we gain and on the other end we lose. But,

MHA: Yeah.

PL: You gotta keep that door open and keep looking.

MHA: [laughs] Right.

ML: Mm.

MHA: Um, maybe you could talk a little bit more about, um, New Bedford itself and what changes you've seen over time? Cause you have, you've lived here for quite a while.

PL: I lived here my whole life, yes.

ML: Mm, same thing with me. My young life [laughs] I lived here.

PL: Well, as everyone knows the manufacturing has been moving out. Um, factory jobs are less and less. Um, one of the few bright spots in New Bedford is the fishin' industry. And it is the economic engine of the area. I mean, we have industrial park in the waterfront.

[25:01]

PL: I don't see much in between except for service and other little industries like that. So, and uh, they say what is it? For one dollar that comes into port, it's like four, five dollars that gets spread around, so.

PL: Yeah, its

ML: Yeah, I was just even saying today, to um, Reidar, um, his uh wife, is on the committee and stuff as you know. I was just telling her that, you know, without this port the city of New Bedford other than the sites of the historical part of it, there's really not much. And it would be, it would be actually kinda scary to see this go. Like,

PL: Right.

ML: I mean, number one, you'd be putting a lot of good people out of work. Number 2, like, where would people go and get their scallops? I mean, this is the number one place to go get it

PL: Seafood

ML: Or like seafood in general, right. And you know it, it creates a lot of jobs, you know? So it's like, I mean, I don't even really understand what the problem is. OK, I understand you can sit there and, you know, the worry about over fishermen, that's cool. The fishermen, like my dad said are the last people who want to over fish the ocean. The last people.

PL: Right.

ML: So, you know, everybody sits there and keeps,

PL: Bashes the fishermen, but

ML: Yeah, bash the fishermen. And it's like, they're the most conscientious of the, uh, the

PL: That's their bread.

ML: --the animal life in, in the water and stuff. They're the last people who want to go hurt a turtle and anything'. And, you know? So it's like, why is everybody attacking us in the fishing industry? You know, so. We, you just gotta, like my dad said again, you gotta have tough skin. You gotta let that stuff roll off you like a duck, you know? Like, you can't, you can't let that stuff bother you. You just gotta keep fightn'. And this is why I do this work on Waterfront Festival. I love doin' this. I love informing people. I love seeing the smiles on people's faces when you give them information and I love, um, you know, the kids they come by. They like to squeeze the links and [makes tough flexing noises and imitates the children] "yeah, I'm strong!" You know?

MHA: [laughs]

ML: I like doin' the, the competitions.

MHA: Mhm.

ML: You know? See my dad out in the crowd bein' proud of me on the mic, you know? "Hey, theres my dad! He supplied all the rings here!"

MHA: [laughs]

ML: Oh, I love that! That's, you know? Pumps me full of life and it's like, you want to take that away from us? For why? You know? For what? You know? So, you know, I just, this is why I love coming here. And I love, you know, supportin this, and you know, whatever we gotta do.

PL: Mm.

MHA: Have you seen a change at all in, in New Bedford over time as the manufacturing has moved out? Have people become more aware, do you think, of the value of the fishing industry? Or has it remained about the same?

ML: I think it's been, I think people are gettin'more con--, uh conscientious about it now. Especially now with this, well I think, this waterfront festival really puts it out there.

PL: Opens the door.

ML: Yeah. I really, cause now that we're gettin slammed with all these regulations, like people are now startn' to feel, uh , you know? The shutdown of the docks, so, I think people are now more conscientious about it. So, yeah.

MHA: Hmm.

PL: See, I've been in the waterfront industry my whole life. I mean, I don't, I don't see nothin' but it.

MHA: Yeah.

PL: You know what I'm sayin? So, it's kinda--

MHA: So, your social life...

PL: Right. I mean, my friends are fishermen, you know? My family, you know? People I work with, work on the waterfront. I mean, it, it's hard to see the other part. I'm on the waterfront every day, so that's a tough question to answer.

MHA: Mhm. Well what about things like, um, the vocational school and stuff? Do they, are they teaching schools that are useful for the fishing industry?

ML: The welding aspect, at the very least. Right?

PL: Yeah, they've got the cooking classes and I believe they're involved. I mean, I have the, uh, different vocational teachers that would come down and try to get the kids up on co-ops and, and years ago when it was very busy we've had several kids. In fact, most of the guys when I started out all were vo--, vocational, um, handouts. The teacher would come and say, 'hey...'

MHA: [laughs]

ML: [laughs]

PL: You know? And it was good for me--

ML: Me too.

PL: Because, I--

ML: Cheap labor.

PL: I would, uh,

ML: [laughs]

PL: Yeah, cheap labor, exactly.

MHA: [laughs]

PL: But it was good for the students because--

ML: Cause they were learnin'.

PL: --they got a taste of real life.

ML: Yup.

MHA: Yeah.

PL: And when they learned what it was all about and they got a little bit more experience they moved on to bigger and better things. And I started the next, next kids. But in the last couple years, its, its turned around, so. We had uh, two or three great years and then now, they've cut down with the regulations. Which is not bad, but instead of havin a work force of say fifteen, sixteen people, now we're down to seven or eight people.

MHA: Mm.

PL: But at the seven or eight, it's maintained and it's very good. So.

MHA: And in that work force, do you see, uh, are they all local people?

PL: Yes.

ML: Yeah, all local.

MHA: And are they likely to have kids that will then enter into the business, do you think?

ML: Um

PL: I would think so

ML: I would say so. Its either gonna go one of two ways. Either they're gonna tell their kids, 'hey this is a tough gig and maybe you should...' You know?

PL: Look for something else

ML: Look for, look for like a computer job or, you know the kid's gonna fall right in their father's footsteps, or their mother even at that.

PL: Yeah.

ML: I mean, I've been out there with women fishermen too, so you could say.

MHA: Mm.

[29:53]

PL: Most of the successful fishermen I know, when they have kids, they raise em up and they practically force em to go into college. And maybe not all of em come back but a lot of em do come back.

ML: It doesn't work. [laughs]

MHA: [laughs]

PL: Right.

ML: I'm here ten years. [laughs]

PL: So, yeah. They do, you know, it's a generation

ML: It's just, it's in the blood.

PL: Yeah.

ML: When you're around it. And that's just all I know. Like all my memories is, like my dad, like he said. Like always being in the car. Always bein at the docks. Always bein at the shop. You're just constantly around it. It's literally, it's in my blood. I bleed this stuff, you know?

MHA: [laughs]

ML: So its, you know? But it's like he said, he tried it, he did. He tried to, 'Hey Mat, go try to, you know, go to college.'

PL: Yeah.

ML: He tried to open up some more opportunities for me. He didn't say, 'Well that's it. You're gonna be a worker for the family.' Naw, he wanted me to,

PL: Right.

ML: He didn't want me to struggle like he did. And this is why he started this business. So now, you know, he's laid out a nice foundation for me but I can't, you know, let my father go through it by himself. I wanna help him, you know?

MHA: [laughs] Yeah.

ML: So, hey. You know? I'm, I'm doin' my best, you know? But, hey I'm not a, I'm not a computer guy. A suit and tie kind of guy.

MHA: Mhm.

PL: [mumbles something while ML speaks]

ML: I'm a blue collar guy

PL: Right

ML: You know what I'm sayin?

PL: Blue collar.

ML: So, and I have no problems with somebody sitting at a desk. I mean, you need people to do that stuff. But some people are cut out for that type of work, and this is what I'm cut out for. You know? I just, I love bein out here. The, the, you know, the air, the sea water. Just uh, bein in the shop. The smoke, the machines,

PL: Yes.

ML: You know?

MHA: Mm.

ML: It just, I love it.

PL: Well, when the business shot up to about sixteen to seventeen people, I had, uh, I had an opportunity with the, I got another crane truck. And that's what I run, the crane truck. And I went in the office and I gained about 20 pounds in about three months--

MHA: [laughs]

PL: and I wasn't happy. So, I decided that the cab of the truck was a nice little office with the invention of the cell phones. And I could drive my truck and operate the business at the same time. And that's what I do. I work my business out of the crane truck.

MHA: Well, there's certainly a lot of appeal about being on the waterfront.

PL: Yes, it is.

MHA: [laughs]

ML: Mm.

PL: On a day like September, like we had yesterday, when you're sittin on your truck while you're workin or weldn' or tendn' the net and you see the boats coming in and out and the weather is just,

ML: It's beautiful

PL: God gorgeous.

ML: Mm, it's beautiful.

PL: And there's nowhere else I wanna be. People my age all start thinking, 'oh I'm gonna retire, and, I'm gonna retire'. And where am I gonna go? Right?

ML: Mm.

PL: I mean, I'm right on the waterfront

ML: Yeah, right. Yeah.

PL: Right? Boats are, you know when the herring boats come in now? The seals follow em in

ML: Yeah.

PL: and they frolic in the water there for, you know, a couple of days until the herring boats are gone. It's, I love it.

ML: Mm.

PL: I don't know where else to go.

ML: Yeah, its--

PL: Except maybe in a couple of months when there's snow up on the mountains.

MHA: [laughs]

ML: Yeah, he likes to ski

PL: Yes.

[All three laugh]

PL: We, we can take a vacation.

ML: And that's good for me, cause then I have an opportunity to, you know, kinda like run the business per se. You know, not like take over everythin', but, you know, he's not there. So, now its like, you know, 'what would my dad do?' You know? 'I know my dad wouldn't want that, don't do that'. 'My dad wouldn't like that' You know? So, I get to learn the way he operates it, and I aint gonna change a thing. Changin' nothin. I like, I mean, you change with the times, but the way the business operates within the people that work there, I don't wanna change a thing. People love working for my father. As a matter of fact,

PL: We treat em with respect.

ML: As a matter of fact, I had Steve, [to PL] you know Steve?

PL: Yeah, I seen him yesterday.

ML: He came over and he wanted to enter the squeezin' competition which I run here.

MHA: Mhm.

ML: And he says, 'Oh, I came here for two things. I came here to go get, to go enter the squeezing competition and try to get my job back.' And the whole time he was sittin at my booth

sayin 'oh, man I miss working at Blue Fleet'. Blue feet this, Blue Fleet that. It's the way you treat people.

PL: Yeah.

ML: And unfortunately we had to let him go because of the downsizing.

PL: Yup.

ML: Not that he was a bad worker or anything. He was a great kid. Good attitude. It's tough, you know? How hard it,

PL: [while ML continues speaking] It is. To lay people off, it really is.

ML: --that is for my dad. It hurts my dad to do that. He sends em off with the unemployment and everythin' but that only lasts so long. You know how hard it is to try to find a job? It kills my dad.

PL: Yeah.

ML: Because my dad's a good guy. You know? And it, it stinks to do that but, it just, you know? When you got a place like that, like, you don't wanna go under, man. We got, you know, people from all over the world that work in that place. Some guy from Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Portugal, you know. We got another guy that rents out a garage that's within the property, uh, he's from Argentina. The other guy that rents it out with him is from, uh, China.

PL: Yup.

ML: Jack's from China.

PL: Yup.

ML: So, you know. It's, it's very, and people love my dad. Like these, these two guy that--

PL: Treat em with respect and

ML: Two guys that work there, they didn't speak a lick of English. My dad gave em a chance. They're our two best workers right now.

MHA: Hmm.

ML: And their English has gotten better, just from what they learned in the shop.

MHA: Right.

PL: Yeah.

ML: And you can't, you can't put a price tag on that. My father taught em English, and taught em a job, and gave em a chance. And now in return—

PL: Well, I didn't teach em English

ML: Well, I mean, well it,

PL: [while ML speaks] They learned

ML: --it, you know. It picked up through there,

PL: Yes.

ML: But now these guys can be offered forty dollars an hour, fifty dollars an hour and they wouldn't leave my dad. Because, nobody gave them a chance, but my dad did. So, that's the kind of person you want to work for. That's the kind--

PL: We don't have a time clock there. It's all, you come in, you write your book,

ML: Honor system.

PL: Honor system.

MHA: Hmm.

ML: And there's never any complications. For the most part.

PL: Mm.

ML: As far as I know. I don't do the books, but

PL: Yup.

ML: You know.

[35:00]

MHA: That's good. It's really a nice, nice to hear actually.

ML: Mm.

MHA: Um, let's see. Uh, Oh, I know. Do you, uh, do you get involved at all with recreational books? Do they ever—

PL: We don't work on em, no.

ML: No.

PL: No, we're, we've got a little niche here with the steel

MHA: Mhmm.

PL: And the scallop dredges and, and the industrial boats and, I've learned in life that every time I try to go somewhere when I don't know what I'm doin, the door hits me pretty hard sometimes

[All three laugh]

PL: Stick to what I know what I'm doin

ML: Yup.

PL: And it seems to work best.

ML: Yup. It's like my dad always told me, you get your little niche in life and just run with it. You know? And if you're good at it, and just go with it.

PL: And like it.

ML: Yeah, you gotta like it too.

PL: Yup.

ML: I like what I do.

PL: Right.

ML: It is a very physical job. But, what isn't? You know what I'm sayin? I mean, you could be sittin at a desk and in front of a computer trying to hold up your neck all day, I mean,

MHA: [laughs]

ML: That could be strenuous too, I guess.

PL: Yup.

ML: You know, I mean, I'd rather be out there gettin exercise. I mean, I, you know, I don't have to go to the gym, per se. I mean, I'm always lifting things and--

PL: We keep em physically busy at the shop.

MHA: [laughs]

ML: You know. So, you know, and on top of that, he's not a slave driver, you know. I mean, what need to get done, we get it done. But he doesn't mind if we take little breaks here and there. As long as you don't, you know, milk it. You know, as long as you don't, you know, take advantage of it. You know? Like sittin' there and takin a half hour break, like that's ridiculous.

You know, you don't mind if it's hot out, you know, you take a sip of water. Or if it's cold out, you go stand by the, the, by the wood stove for a couple minutes. Its, he's not---

PL: Nobody cares.

ML: You know, he's not—

PL: You look at the finished result at the end

ML: That's it. As long as your product is done when it was supposed to be done, that's all that matters. Well, now if you're standing by the fire stove and you're late, you know what I'm saying? And you're not supposed to, you know what I'm saying? And the guy was supposed to have the stuff yesterday cause you were standing by the fire all day, OK. Well, then he's gonna get mad. So you know, you gotta learn how to, you know, you gotta take the good with the, you know, you gotta learn how to

PL: I bark like the guard dog.

MHA: [laughs]

PL: But I very seldom bite.

ML: Mhmm. So, you just gotta--

MHA: Oh, that sounds good.

ML: --be respectful, you know?

MHA: And um, how bout, uh, how do you see the future?

PL: Hmm, Uh...

ML: I see [pauses]

PL: For me, [to PL] excuse me,

PL: Yup.

ML: For me, I, I see myself takin' over the business. Is that what you meant? I see myself takin' over this business. Probably not anytime soon, because

PL: I'm still a young guy

MHA: [laughs]

ML: He's still a young guy and he's in great shape. He takes great care of himself. Uh, but I also have a lot to learn too. You know? I still have a lot to learn so, but I do see in, you know, takin' over the business and, you know, and the old man retire here and, you know, let him do his thing.

PL: I see the industry still consolidatin'. And the more it consolidates, um, I'm not afraid, but, the more I'm concerned that we have to be our fittest and our best because survival of the fittest. And as it consolidates, you know, the people who survive are the ones that are gonna be here on Monday morning and when the customer calls a Friday afternoon at 4:30 when there's a problem and the customer calls, um. So we try to stay, you know.

ML: Yeah, you gotta stay on top of that stuff.

PL: Yeah.

MHA: Yeah.

ML: You hafta.

PL: That's one of the reasons we try to diversify and get a couple boats of our own so that when there are slack periods and, the way the fishing's goin. Fishing is always great in the summer time.

MHA: Mm.

PL: The weathers good, the fish are plentiful; the boats can get out there and generate an income. But as the days get cut and their quotas get cut, winters become longer and colder and slower. So you have to do stuff

MHA: Mhm.

PL: You have to invent stuff or get stuff to keep the whole year going. Keep the guys goin'. Because, like I tell Mathieu, once you let someone go and they find another job, they're not gonna come back.

ML: Right, yup.

PL: I mean, you know. So,

MHA: So, what kind of, you said you have, uh, part ownership in

PL: Part-- One scalloper and one dragger.

MHA: OK.

PL: And, uh, which makes it nice for us, as there are slow periods. There's always projects on boats that, OK, well we need, we need to keep the men workin' and we need the boat fixed and

MHA: Mm.

ML: There ya go. Yup.

PL: It's slow, so

ML: Yup, perfect

PL: lets, uh,

MHA: Good. Yes. That's good.

PL: These guys will take paint brushes or what ev---

ML: Mm, whatever we gotta do. I mean,

PL: Right.

ML: I've been to the point where, like, I run the part of the business and I go and clean the bathroom and take out the garbage. Whatever I have to do, it gets done.

PL: Right.

ML: Because, like my father says, when you're a boss, doesn't necessarily mean that you get to put your feet up on the desk.

MHA: [laughs]

ML: if anything, you have more responsibilities. You, with, you know, like uh—

PL: You wear more hats.

MHA: [laughs]

ML: Yeah, you know, I think Spiderman said it the best, "with great power comes great responsibility", you know what I'm sayin?

PL: Right.

ML: So, you gotta, you gotta know how to--

PL: Step up to the plate--

ML: --deal with that

PL: And do what you gotta do.

ML: Like, if you can't, if you can't go clean the bathroom, what makes you think he's gonna go send you on a big job?

PL: Mm, Right.

ML: And go make em big dollars if you're gonna sit there and complain about cleaning the bathroom, you know what—

PL: And what's your help gonna think if you can't do, and then say, you know, 'you gotta do it'.

ML: Well, I'll, yeah.

PL: Right.

ML: I'll do it.

PL: I don't send none of my guys on any boat job that I wouldn't do,

ML: [in unison with PL] that he hasn't done himself

PL: or haven't done myself

ML: Yup.

PL: And if I haven't done it, I wanna be there to make sure. Because, you know,

ML: Yup.

PL: ---dealin' in this industry with

ML: Mm.

PL: ---fire and gas,

ML: Yup.

PL: ---it could turn ugly fast. So, the last thing we want is somebody hurt.

ML: Mm.

[40:09]

MHA: So, how, um, did you get a partner for your, for your boat? And who runs it for you?

PL: OK, well my partner runs, uh, lets go with the first boat, The Resilient. Um, they're two brothers, George and Todd [Bragden?]. They own another boat, The Resolute. And after eighteen years of knowin em,

ML: Hm.

PL: They introduced me to their sistah. Who I didn't know lived for the last eighteen years of my life, uh, and now we are, we are a couple and, um, and, uh, they're my, I like to describe it,

George is my best friend, Todd's my business partner, who's the other brother and Suse's my honey.

MHA: [laugh]

ML: Hmm.

PL: You know? So I'm kinda melded into that family. But, it works out good because he's the captain. He fishes the boat and when it comes in, I'm kind of a shore engineer guy. He gives me a punch list and it works out good that way. And, uh, I found it very successful and it kinda, you know, helps Blue Fleet a lot, because we've got a guaranteed customer---

MHA: [laugh]

PL: ---that's not gonna go anywhere

ML: Mhmm.

PL: So, we decided to get a dragger. Unfortunately, with the dragger boats, uh, they're havin the hardest time right now. And hopefully, and I do believe that the government with this, um, sectors, and I'm hopin' that's the right way. And we're putting our eggs in that basket and I believe it will work. But right now, it is real tough and, uh, I like to say you gotta nickel and dime that one along until the

MHA: Right.

ML: Hm.

PL: Until the industry gets better. But, they did a fabulous job with the scalloping.

ML: Mm.

PL: And if you told me ten years ago, I remember people when they went from the three and a quarter inch rings to the three and a half inch rings, 'Holy hell!'

ML: Yup.

PL: And 'this is gonna be a ghost town'

ML: Yup.

PL: And 'no more scallops' and, and it's done, it's done the opposite.

MHA: Mhm.

ML: People, people have adjusted to it and it's like you said, it's just the opposite.

PL: There's more scallops out there and

ML: Yup. It's more plentiful because--

PL: [while ML continues speaking] I hope they do that with the fish.

ML: They let the bycatch through now, you know?

MHA: Mhm.

ML: So, it, it actually, I mean, some of these laws really do make perfect sense.

MHA: Yeah.

PL: Yeah.

ML: Some of em are a little ridiculous. But I'm not really up to par with all the regu--, well, I mean, I'm up to par with the regulations for the scallopin'. As far as the dragging goes, I don't do anything with that. So, I'm not really up to par. He has to stay up to par, with it because he has to drag a boat, so.

MHA: So, and who runs the dragger?

PL: We've just got a captain. He's not a partner or, I, I have another friend of mine's who is a mail man actually. And he was gettn' ready to retire and he wanted a, a second job where he had a little security. It's very difficult leavin' a job where you're twenty years into it, twenty-five years into it and you get at the top of your game. Then all of a sudden you go out of the industry and, where you gonna get a job at the top? You know? And you gotta start at the bottom again.

ML: Yup. Work your way back up.

PL: Right. So, but if you own your own business and. I was able to talk him into being the shore engineer guy. And I, kinda taken over the books on that particular boat. And of course we do the welding and anything else it need to get the boat back out, so.

ML: Hm. Pretty much anythin'. [laughs]

PL: Yeah. Gotta keep the guys goin, right?

ML: Yup.

MHA: Right. So when you bought a share of the boat, I assume it already had decent history?

PL: Oh, yes. Yes, yes.

ML: Oh, yeah.

PL: Well, what happened was, uh, unfortunately, the two brothers, Todd and George, um, they both wanted to be the captain of their own boat. And there was only one boat.

MHA: [laughs]

PL: So, and the industry was changing and, and the prices of the licenses was starting to fly up and Todd couldn't afford the boat on his own.

MHA: Mm.

PL: And it's unfortunate, one of the bad things about consolidation is, is that the bigger guys with the bigger pockets are gonna buy up all the boats. And I'd like to say one thing, there's this guy Frank [Weckashaw?] who owns several boats and he's at the stage of his life where he's gettin' out of it. He wanted to slow down and he wanted to sell boats, not to make the most money but to send them off to fishermen who are gonna fish it and continue the way it's supposed to be. And Todd was at the right place at the right time and he was able to buy that license. But he needed a partner.

MHA: Mm.

PL: And so it, it worked good for me, it worked good for him, and Frank sleeps great at night.

ML: Mm. Everybody's happy.

PL: Everybody's happy.

ML: That's the way business should be done.

PL: Right.

MHA: That's great.

PL: So,

MHA: Yeah.

PL: That's how, that's how like, and it was, you know. I firmly believe, my father was a very religious man, and I firmly believe things happen for a reason.

ML: Yup.

PL: Why I'd get to Hathaway's? You know, they gave me a job over at the, uh, Arrow Fox first. And then the, the supervisor called me up and says, 'Paul, go to Hathaway's because they pay, you know, it's a better job'.

ML: Hm.

PL: Well, I was there at three or four months and this place was payin me fifty cents less than that place, you know what I'm sayin? Of course, I was young and I say, 'and that's a better job?' Right? But then I looked a little more and there was, you know, eventually I could make more money there. So, I left. Why that happened? I don't know. So, but it was a door that opened up for us.

MHA: Yeah.

PL: Um, geez, I was forgetn what, I forget where I was goin with this.

[45:15]

ML: Mm.

PL: Um, [sighs]. Anyway, it'll come back to me.

ML: [laugh]

MHA: [laugh]

ML: I do that to. I get on my rants. [laughs]

PL: Yeah.

MHA: Um, let's see. Um, lets see. Do you see any, do you see much effect of tourism? Is it, has there been a change in the level of tourism in New Bedford and--

PL: Hm.

MHA: I mean, you're on the waterfront, I don't know if the tourists come down here?

ML: I, I see sometimes, for myself I'm not on the waterfront as much as he is with the cranes, but, uh, I am in the downtown area a lot and I do run into people that seem to look like tourists to me with the cameras and

MHA: [laugh]

ML: You know, taking pictures of the cobblestone roads, so. I do see, I mean, and I can't really say if it's more or less, but I mean, I do see tourists here and I have one year, um, I forget. Maybe a couple years back. I went to the, uh, visitin' center in downtown and we dropped a bag off over there.

PL: Oh yeah. Yup, yup yup.

ML: A scallop dredging, scallop bag over there. So, that's where all the tourists go for the visiting center to, for New Bedford. And there were quite a bit of people who came and saw that.

So, I mean that was a couple years ago. So, I mean, I guess there is, you know, tourists comin' here. But as far as, more or less I really couldn't tell ya. He could maybe better answer that. But,

PL: Well, I gotta throw another plug for someone. Kristin [Dekiss?]. Since she's taken over the job, she's done fabulous. She's bringin in a lot of extra stuff comin in which, um, I was readin in either the Standard Times or the magazine that they've got over here. There's supposed to be like sixteen, um, boats comin in this year. Crew ships. Five, ten years ago there wasn't a one.

MHA: Hm.

PL: You know what I mean? And now she, you know, she's lookin at that, uh, what'd they call that short, short shipping?

MHA: Uh Huh.

PL: And with the, uh, the dredging of the harbor, there's more boats. Uh, reefer boats comin in to be unloaded. That's not tourism, but, uh, I see a lot more activity, yes.

PL: Yeah.

MHA: So, is there, in some ports I've seen, a lot of pressure on the waterfront for other businesses, like condominiums and hotels and stuff like that.

PL: Yeah, well that's constantly over here, as you well know,--

ML: Mm.

PL: --with the casino in the north part of the river. That could change at any time

ML: Yeah, well, I think the last thing we need right now is, you know, we don't need condominiums on the dock. We need this fishin to keep goin.

PL: Right.

ML: You know?

PL: Boston and the other towns, I do believe, like I say, sayin about the buyers, it's got their act together. I do believe this will stay an industrial port and not a, a yuppie port, per se.

MHA: Right.

PL: Um, they can co-mingle, but I, I don't believe, you know, you've got the weldin and you've got the ice trucks, the fuel trucks, a lot of activity on the, on the docks. And, and my particular self when I'm, I run a crane truck and I bring the heavy gear to dredges in the nets and I'm swingn em constantly over and, and as there's more tourists that come around you have a lot of people, "oh, this is, you know, this is nice"

ML: Yeah.

MHA: [laugh]

ML: Right, right.

PL: And I mean, there'll be a guy twenty feet up in the air cuttin the sparks and [makes noise of sparks flying], Right?

ML: Yeah, And they don't know. "Oh, look pretty!"

MHA: [laughing]

PL: I mean, I'll see my truck, I, the guy, I come home and say, "You got sparks all over the windshield.--

ML: Mm.

PL: "What the heck you doin?" Right?

ML: Yeah.

PL: Well I was workin over here and it was clear. And that guy climbed up the latter over there and the wind shifted and the next thing I know, I m getting sprayed with sparks.

ML: Mm.

PL: You know? That's the only thing, like with the uh motel and and the restaurant movin in there. That's great.

ML: Yeah.

PL: Um, and I hope that they can keep it, you know, a happy bal--, you know, a happy middle, where everyone can get along.

MHA: Mhmm.

ML: Oh, the thing is too, is like, you know, you go you get the hotel over there and the first thing they wanna do is go check out all the boats.

PL: Check out all the boats. Which is not a bad thing.

ML: It's not a bad thing and it might spark some more interest and you know. So, I mean, it could go either way. You know? I mean, you never know. Time can only tell, you never know. I mean, but it's like he says, you don't want extra people hangin around the dock goin, "Ooh, look! Pretty fire!" or--

MHA: [laughing]

PL: Right, right. And--

ML: [while PL continues talking] "Ooh, look! Pretty, uh, heavy plate!"

PL: --you can't get your trucks to come down because--

ML: [while PL continues talking] Yeah, and then it's like, yeah, right.

PL: --they're parkin right in the dock, you know?

ML: [while PL continues talking] Now he's tryin, he's tryin to do his job

PL: Like, get up to Boston and try to get around, you know? The boats? Forget it. They're getting pushed out.

ML: Yeah. He's tryin to do his job and he's tryin to look out for other people. It's a big distraction. He's on the phone and he's lookin out for other people, he's lookin out for the guys that he's workin with. It's like, you know? So, it can go either way. You know what I'm sayin? You don't know. So.

MHA: Yeah. In some places they have, uh, a kind of, um, in [Chatham] which is much smaller.

PL: Right.

ML: Yeah. Right.

MHA: It's much less--

ML: We do work over there too.

MHA: -- industry. Um, but they do have the fish pier that has a second level

PL: Right.

MHA: So that tourists can actually see what's going on,

ML: Mhm.

PL: Right.

MHA: But not get in the way.

PL: Right.

ML: Mm.

PL: Now, like on New Bedford, like you take pier 3, or fishermen's pier, whatever they're callin it, that's not a bad dock. Because you have a nice open area and then you can keep your boats in the works so you can come in the middle and see everything. But if you go the next pier down, they call the cement pier the steam ship pier. That's a very difficult dock.

ML: Mm.

PL: And uh, if you don't get there at six o'clock with your workin equipment, you gotta fight the cars there.

ML: Mhm.

PL: And, as, as the motel and the restaurants fill up you'll find more people. But, like I say, Kristin's on top of things. She, she does, I don't agree with everything she does, but I agree with everything she's doin is for the best of New Bedford

ML: Right.

PL: And we're glad she's drivin that boat.

ML: Yeah, definitely.

PL: You know? So, if there's a problem, we'll be knockin at her door

ML: Oh yeah.

PL: And throwin it on her lap and let her deal with it

ML: We're comin. [laugh]

PL: Yeah. [laugh]

[50:44]

MHA: So, the politicians here in New Bedford seem to be pretty supportive.

PL: Yes.

ML: Yeah, Barney, yeah, this uh, that guy—

PL: Yup,

PL & ML: [simultaneously] Barney Frank.

PL: [as ML continues speaking] uh, the mayor, every--

ML: He seems to be really, like, like supportin us really, I mean

PL: He is an economic engine in New Bedford.

MHA: OK.

ML: So, um.

PL: So,

ML: We're all about that.

MHA: Yeah, good. Um, let's see if there's anything else that I, um, maybe, is there anything else that I haven't asked you that you can think of that you would really like people to know either about your own business or about fishing in general, about New Bedford in general?

ML: Hmm.

PL: Um, not really. I mean, like I say, you know. I got my own little business and my own little world and everybody has their own little thing to do but, uh

ML: We try not to, uh, bother ourselves with uh,

PL: Other people's problems.

ML: Other people's problems.

PL: Like I say, if there's a problem on the dock, I'm not gonna, I'm gonna go see Kristin, Right?

ML: Right. Yeah. We're not gonna, we're not gonna try to be the heroes cause we don't have the means and ability to take care of it. I mean, if we had the power to do it, then believe me, me and my dad would be, uh--

PL: Yeah. We'd do what we could.

ML: --Out there and fightin for it, but, you know, we'll support and help out the best we can. But, you know, for the most part we don't. We, we got our own thing that we need to make sure that we're OK, and our guys are OK.

PL: Yeah.

ML: And you know what? Supportin this makes sures that we're all OK. So,

PL: Yeah.

ML: You know? We're all in this together, so therefore, this particular thing, we're, we support it and we will always be there for that. Cause it affects us.

PL: Right.

ML: You know? So, we're always, we're always gonna just try and take care of our self and not [pause]

PL: [while ML starts back speaking] Over step our bounds.

ML: --get involved. Yeah, and over step our bounds or step on peoples toes. We just, take care of our little circle. You know?

PL: Let the world take care of itself, we hope.

ML: That's right.

MHA: Yeah.

ML: We hope [laughs].

MHA: Well, it sounds like you have a really great business and a really, uh, wonderful way of approaching the world and, uh, other people. So,

PL: That's the way we were brought up.

ML: Mm, yup. From generation to generation to, hopefully, next generation.

MHA: Yeah. That's really fantastic. Um, just gonna skim through my questions here—

PL: Mhm.

MHA: --to see if I've missed anything. [flipping through papers] And, Alex, do you have any questions you'd like to ask them?

Alex: No, I think you've covered it all.

MHA: OK.

ML: Mm. Yeah, we like to talk.

PL & MHA: [laughs]

MHA: That's very interesting. I, uh, don't know a lot about your business; about the welding business.

PL: Mhm.

MHA: But, um, I always find it fascinating to talk, talk to what, since I've been more focused on the fishermen themselves and the fishing families. To hear about the support businesses is so critical.

ML: Mm.

MHA: It's so important. I know, in a lot of the ports where there's even more consolidation than here, it's been a struggle cause they've lost a lot of people like you who can do things.

PL: Right.

ML: Mm.

PL: Well, we are losin' that here. There's no doubt about it. Like I say, you know, it, I like to tell the guys, the employees, you know? This particular life is like musical chairs, right? And everything's fine and dandy till the music stops. And it does stop on occasion. When it does stop there's a seat missing, Right?

ML: Mhm.

PL: So, somebody's gonna be out of a seat. You know what I'm sayin? So you gotta make sure that your'e dancing to the music--

MHA: [laugh]

ML: Mhm.

PL: But you gotta be aware and, and you know? As that music stops you're gonna make sure you've got a seat.

MHA: [laugh]

PL: And that's where, I keep on sayin, we're gonna do what we gotta do. And, you know, we are the... I don't wanna be doin this, but--

MHA: [laugh]

PL: You know, in your life you wanna est--, pretend to be number one. You wanna come and rebuild the dredges, and we'll do what it takes. And we're gonna be around tomorrow. So--

ML: [While PL continues speaking] We're, we're--

PL: Whatever it takes.

ML: We're not givin up [laugh]

PL: [While ML continues speaking] We're not givin up.

ML: We're not givin up that easy. We're goin—

PL: [continues]--We're not gonna be the richest. We're not gonna be the richest people out of New Bedford, but--

ML: We aint gonna be the poorest either, but

PL: Right.

ML: You know, we, we just—

PL: Hopefully we're gonna hit the fifty year mark.

ML: Yeah, we wanna, we wanna just, you know, be comfortable. I mean, yeah, who doesn't wanna be rich? But,

PL: Right.

ML: I mean, lets face it. I mean, we got--

PL: We gotta be happy first.

ML: You gotta be happy first and, you know? Sometimes, like they say, money don't always bring ya happiness. But,

PL: Right.

ML: So, you know, you just take it a day at a time and[pause]

[54: 59]

PL: Another thing about the waterfront, like I said, I've lived it my whole life, but, the people in this industry are the best. I mean, people that go out there fishing, that risk their lives. People don't realize that,

ML: Mm.

PL: The energy and effort it takes to come in and bring a pound of scallops or fish in. You know what I mean?

ML: It's a lot of work. Like I said,

PL: Right.

ML: I've been out there. And I've only been on a four hundred pound boat, which is a small boat.

PL: Mm. Which is--

ML: These guys are comin' in at eighteen thousand pounds of scallops.

PL: Right.

MHA: Yeah.

ML: Out on deck,

PL: Forty and fifty foot seas.

ML: Yeah,

PL: They're earning their fifty pounds of scallops, you know? They're--

ML: Out on deck for like, what? Like sixteen hours a day for two weeks at a time. Like,

PL: Right.

ML: And like--

PL: [while ML continues speaking] You gotta respect and admire these people.

ML: --So these guys come in and they demand a little respect, you know? I mean,

PL: Right.

ML: And they should deserve it.

PL: Right.

ML: And now, like, you know. Now they're like, the price of fuel goes up and the regulations and now it's like, now they're bustin their hump just as much as they were, but not gettin, they're gettin less back money wise. You know, because of all the regulations. So, that's not fair. You know?

PL: Well, and in the draggin, and in the scalloping like I say,

MHA: They've done pretty wealthy

PL: They've done—

ML: Yeah, and the draggin.

PL: They should not, I don't understand why they wanna consolidate. I don't understand why they wanna do anything else in the scallopin industry. Because, they've got that machine runnin fine.

ML: Yeah.

PL: And I pray to God that, you know, there are always gonna be fish out there. And I pray to God that the regulators regulate it so that it's like the scallops is; enough fish to go around. Like I say, most of the fishermen I know, the last thing they wanna do is exploit the fishery. I mean,

that's their bread and butter. And when I say 'these people' they're my friends. Their kids are my friends, their fathers are my friends, they've all been out there. They all want this business to continue like we do. I mean, I don't see leaving the waterfront. So there's gotta be enough fish and scallops out there to support us.

MHA: Do you consider, uh, New Bedford a fishing community?

PL: I do.

ML: Oh, absolutely.

MHA: Yeah.

ML: Absolutely.

MHA: And, and what is that mean?

ML: To—

MHA: For in your definition?

ML: To me, like, OK, let me put it to you like this, OK? Um, I squeeze links. Then we turn around, we give it to the boats. And I, like, now these guys are on the boats become my friend. You know what I'm sayin? Or, now I have the empty buckets to turn around. Sell em to the guy who paints the boats, now I have another friend. And we all call eachother up and I could go through this phone and I could find, you know, scallopers, painters, um, my friends over at IMP, my buddies at Ship Supply, you know? I, all kinds of people are out there I met just through the company.

PL: Reidar's the perfect example. I mean,

ML: Reidar's. Perfect Example.

PL: There's a lot of jobs there that, we compete with each other.

MHA: Right.

PL: I mean, they squeeze links and sell gear over there. We squeeze links and sell gear. And I'll see em on the boat and I'll [makes throat clearing noise] And they'll see me and,

ML: Yeah

PL: But then when I need nets, I'm goin to Reidar's

ML: Yup.

PL: Cause they make the nets.

ML: Now if,

PL: And if they need a crane job, they're callin' me because they need the crane.

ML: Yeah.

PL: So, yeah, we're, we're a community.

ML: Yup.

PL: There's no doubt. I consider them,

ML: I'm here doin this Working Waterfront Festival because of Reidar's. That whole family.

PL: Right.

ML: Hans, Tor, the sistah,

MHA: Right.

ML: ---the motha, the fatha, all, and they're great people. Just this morning I was just talkin with Reidar this morning.

MHA: Yeah.

ML: Himself, you know? Great people.

PL: Even before Reidar started his business, I mean, he's part owner of a boat. And I used to do the weldin on the boat. That's how I first met Reidar.

ML: Yup. Great guy.

PL: And then when he started, I had nothing to do with the draggin and, and he was, we was the scallopin and he was mainly in the dragging and in the nets. And I didn't have a boat at the time. I had nothing to do with the draggin end, so, it was just cause I was doin a little bit of weldin for him and I did my job. I was reasonable and then he needed, when he started his business he needed crane work. And he called me up and, I mean,

ML: Yup.

PL: I got my hand in his pocket, he's got his hand in my pocket, everyone's happy.

[all laugh]

ML: Yup.

MHA: Now, how bout, um,

PL: And not just Reidar. Just Reidar in particular, you know?

MHA: Right.

ML: [While PL continues speaking] Yeah, there are, there's a lot of other people too, just with the same thing.

PL: --But there are a lot of other companies around here like that.

ML: But they're like,

PL: Yeah.

ML: For us, they're like the main ones for us.

PL: Yup.

ML: You know? For the most part.

MHA: And how about, you often hear, from an outsider's perspective, you often hear 'fishing is a way of life'.

PL: [simultaneously with ML] It is a way of life.

ML: It is. It is.

PL: There's no eight to four on the waterfront.

ML: Nope.

PL: I mean, when the scallop was bad, I was unloading the clamboats. And the clamboats and quahog boats are coming in twenty-four hours a day. I'd be there two o'clock in the morning unloading a boat and when I'd get done I'd go back to the shop, jump in the truck for a nap till eight o'clock and then put on the other hat.

ML: Hmm.

PL: And then come back and keep the Blue Fleet end going, you know?

ML: Mhm. You did.

PL: It's a way of life.

ML: Yup. He used to, he used to like, there was a time where my immediate family was getting worried about him because he was working so much and he was—

PL: [while ML continues speaking] You know, when the scallop was, the scallop was tough,

ML: You know, you get stressed out, money gets tight

PL: Money gets tight and,

ML: He got stressed

PL: What do you do, right?

ML: You know?

[59:47]

PL: Infact,

ML: [while PL speaks] Try and make the--

PL: It was part of a, me and my wife's, uh, problem with our divorce.

ML: Yup.

MHA: Yeah.

ML: So, I mean, she'd seen me workin all the hours and say, 'Paul, where's all the money?' Right? And I'd say, 'Honey, it's, it's, it's not quite there yet'.

ML: Yeah.

PL: But they're good people. They will pay it.

ML: Yeah, they will pay it but,

PL: Tough times don't last.

PL & ML: [simultaneously] Tough people do.

ML: Yup.

PL: And, uh, it all came around, unfortunately. It took a toll on, the marriage.

ML: It did. It took a toll on our family too.

PL: I actually get along great—

ML: Well, now they do.

PL: Yeah.

ML: Now they do, but.

PL: I mean, it wasn't, you know?

ML: I mean, it wasn't easy for us kids either to watch.

PL: Yeah.

ML: Our parents, but we all knew as kids that our dad was doin' everythin' he could. You know, it wasn't easy. And if, you know, some people, it's like my dad said, tough times won't last, tough people do. And look, twenty two years later--

PL: Yeah. That's right.

ML: --Here we are talkin' to you guys.

PL: Yeah.

ML: You know? So, that's---

PL: [While ML continues speaking] And business is as good as ever in the scallopin--

ML: ---inspiration to me. That's my inspiration because I know what I went through as a kid and I saw him struggle and I didn't, maybe, didn't have the newest things in the world, but I always had enough. My father always made that. He did whatever it took to make sure we had enough. Didn't have the best, always had enough.

PL: I only need to get by.

ML: Always had enough. Always had enough and sometimes a little bit extra. Sometimes. But, we struggled and now things are good. And that's like inspiration for me. So, like if I ever have a kid I, you know, now I know how to act. I know how to be a man. You know what I'm sayin'? He taught me how to be a man and that's what a father does. And, like I said, he's my father, he's my friend, he's my boss.

MHA: That's great.

PL: Yeah, I tell him all the time, I love him like a father, Right?

MHA: [laughs]

PL: The fatha away from me, the betta.--

[All laugh]

PL: --now get back to work. Especially when he's goin' out fishin'. I love that line, 'The fatha away, the betta. Get out there!'

ML: Go deep!

[all still laughing]

ML: You know,

PL: I got Rodney, you know Rodney [Avalah?]

MHA: Sure.

PL: His wife Sharon, she's a peach, you know? So we were talkin and I told her, you know, she's you know, we we're kid bashin and I say hey, you outta tell him this line. And I told her, she laughed like hell.

ML: Yeah, she loved it.

PL: Can't wait for her to use it.

MHA: [laughing]

PL: 'I'm not ya motha, but I love ya like a fatha'.

ML & MHA: [laughing]

PL: 'Get outta here, get back to work.'

MHA: I might even try that. [laughs]

ML: Yes. [laughs]

PL: Yeah.

ML: [laughing] I like that one.

MHA: Alright, uh, so I think that, I think I've asked you most of the questions that I thought of ahead of time. So, this has been fascinating.

ML: Mm, it's been fun for us

MHA: It's really, really helpful to hear.

[1:02:08] [End of CD Part 1]

ML: Anytime. We like to talk, so—

PL: Usually I have to pay people to sit and listen to me talk.

MHA: [laughs]

ML: [laughs] Yeah. Yeah.

MHA: Well, I, um, I might, if I come up with some other questions or some other thoughts, I might give you a call because--

PL: Fire away.

MHA: -- the fishing industry is really interesting to me.

ML: Mm.

PL: Mm.

MHA: And the whole, all the industries that are, the businesses that are associated with it.

PL: Yup.

MHA: How it all works.

PL: I mean, Lars [Venarudes?] another classic example of another family run business over here

ML: Yup. Yup, Lars.

PL: I mean, his kids are in there.

ML: Yup.

PL: I remember Lars when he was just a regular captain, not even a boat owner, Right? And now he aint got enough fingers to count all his boats.

MHA: [laugh]

ML: Mm.

PL: And, uh, my sis-, my sister-in-law, or [___'s] wife's sister, she's the manager or the, she writes the checks over for Lars, Lisa.

ML: Oh, yeah, yup, yup yup. Lisa, yup.

PL: Like I say, with Lars, he had his brother-in-law there. He has his kids, every time I go there I say, 'you gotta be one of Lars', right?'

MHA: [laugh]

ML: Yeah.

PL: 'You look like Lars'

ML: Well that's What I get at the shop.

PL: Yeah.

ML: You know it's funny too. Cause like, I, people have told me, I mean obviously I look like my dad, right? And I, sometimes I answer the phone cause my dad, he's got a great sense of humor. So, when I call, when people call the shop I'm like, you know, 'Blue Fleet, Mat speakin.' And they're like, 'Hey, Paul. I need this this and that.' And I'm like, 'no, no, no this is Mat.' 'Oh, stop goofin around Paul. Listen, get the crane truck down here.'"

MHA: [laughs]

PL: Right.

ML: I'm like, 'no this is Mat' So, you know. But, he calls like he's always, like the people in the shop always have smile on their face. He's always on the phone. Most of the time he's happy.

PL: Most of the time.

ML: Most of the time he's happy. You know, so. It's great. It's all, it's a, ours is family owned and operated. Reidar's is family owned and operated. Lars is family owned and operated

PL: Yup.

ML: I mean,

PL: You could name a dozen corporations, like Danny [Earlickson?]

ML: Danny [Earlickson?]

PL: And Snapper and his family.

ML: Yeah, I mean

PL: Janice and Julie, Kristine and Julie. Julie G

ML: Goin right down the line, you know? So,

PL: Yeah.

ML: And all of our families know their families and it's just, it's great. You know?

PL: It's a [___?] community

MHA: How, how are you affected by, um, the um, few owners who do own lots of boats now. Um,

PL: Well,

MHA: How, I mean, they obviously don't have their sons running the boats and, you know it's changed the

ML: Mm.

PL: Well, yes and no.

ML: Again,

PL: I mean, it's, there again, take Roy[Eniksonson?] for instance. He's got twenty boats of his own. And he's managing, uh, O'Harris Fleets, so they've got twenty five boats there. But, his son-in-law, Peter I deal with. His son's in the office. His wife, uh, his wife, uh, Peter's wife is somehow involved in the operation. Um, you have Carlos Rafael [sp?]. He doesn't have too many family members in his business, but I believe he had like five daughters. And you know, fishin is not a way of life for, not for all women,

ML: Most women, for most women.

PL: Right, most women.

ML: Right.

PL: But, uh, Yeah. So, I, I mean most of em are, you know.

ML: We all deal with em.

PL: You need ship supply. And now that's comin down to an end of a generation where Harriet, you know, is probably gonna be the last on in the line runnin that business.

MHA: Yeah.

PL: You know? But, it was her uncle that owned the business before, right? He started it, Right? I don't know how long, you know, it was before my time so I don't know if he started the business or if when he came over if he had uncles or cousins involved. But, the Crugar [sp?] brother, right? Crugar up there, that family's been there around forever. I don't know of any business in the waterfront that has got no family name to it.

ML: Huh.

PL: I mean, do you?

ML: Yeah, and we deal and, we pretty much deal with even, the guys who are bigger, uh, like have all those boats and stuff.

MHA: Right.

ML: Like, he still deals with them even though, like, it might not be directly, but like he said, indirectly because he still deals with somebody from the business.

PL: Right, like dockside we might do crane work from there, if he didn't have a crane.

ML: Right.

PL: And Carlos Rafael, we build his dredges for him and--

ML: Right. So,

PL: And do crane work for him. He's got his own welders, they get their own welders.

MHA: Mhm.

ML: So, but like he said though. It's yes and its no. You know what I'm saying?

MHA: Yeah.

ML: You know, you might lose on one end, but you gain on the other. So you break even, in a sense.

PL: You hope. Yeah.

MHA: [laughs]

ML: You know, and, and so it all works out.

PL: When that piece of pie leaves, we look for another piece of pie.

MHA: [laughs]

ML: Yeah, it's that. You know, no more lemon meringue, we go for the, uh, cherry pie.

PL: Chocolate cream.

ML: Or Chocolate cream.

MHA: [laughing]

ML: You know, so. We're all, but, you know, because we know all these different families and family owned and operated businesses, you know, and we all get along. It's like 'oh, call Paul. He's a good guy.' You know?

PL: Yeah.

ML: Let's give that work to him. And, you know, vice versa. You know what I'm sayin? Like, we throw work at other people. People come by, they want nets and stuff, 'well we don't do that here, call Reidar's'

PL: Call Reidar's.

MHA: Right.

ML: You know what I'm sayin? And, you know, they, they throw work our way with the crane service and stuff, so it's

PL: Yup.

ML: You know, One hand---

PL: [While ML speaks ____ ____?] another family business, Right?

ML: One hand, Yeah.

MHA: Yeah.

ML: One hand, one hand washes the other, so we all stick together here, you know?

MHA: That's right.

ML: And look at, that's what we're all doin right now t this festival. We all stick together. I mean, my dad works like crazy and he comes over here, he, uh, donates the rings and links that are squeezed during the competition.

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ML: Uh, plus he lets us, you know, use the squeezes, it's, you know---

PL: Reidar's, it's—

ML: ---everybody chips in. Reidar's, everybody.

PL: They do it, ten times the work

ML: Yeah, they do. They do a lot for this festival. And God bless them for that, because

PL: Yeah.

ML: Like I said, if it wasn't for them,

PL: The whole family.

ML: I wouldn't even be here. The whole family does.

PL: Yeah.

ML: There's the, Reidar and Tor's sister, uh, whats, uh,

PL: Kristen.

ML: Kristen. Uh, she's a peach.

MHA: Right.

ML: She's wicked nice, you know. And she's, she actually kinda helped me cause I had a little stage fright there with the mic talkin during my link squeezing competition. And this year she helped me out with that, cause the last year and, she's like, you know 'don't worry about what you're saying'. And now this year I could, you couldn't even get the mic out of my hand. They're like, 'alright, alright'. You know?

PL: couldn't get the mic out of his hand.

MHA: [laughing] You know, so it's great. Everybody, and you meet soo many different people that are like soo interesting. I love this festival, I really do. And I encourage anybody to come down from anywhere and just, come check it out.

PL: Come check it out.

ML: If you're into, if you're into, you know, the fishing thing, come check it out. Even if you're not, you'll be surprised what you'll find.

PL: Right.

ML: You might find something.

MHA: Right.

ML: You'll be like, 'Wow! I didn't even know that.' You know? So, like a lot of people, that's the best part for me when I tell people something and they're like, 'Wow, very interesting!' You know what I'm sayin? I like that. So, you know, that's great to me. I love that. So, I don't want this to stop, so... Don't take our fish away.

[All laugh]

MHA: Right. Well this has been great. Really, really appreciate the time that you've spent.

ML: Not a problem.

PL: Hope you can use something.

MHA: Oh, I'm sure we can.

ML: Yeah, I hope so.

PL: Pleasure to meet ya.

MHA: Very nice to meet you both.

ML: OK

[End of Interview] [CD Part 2: 6:32]