

Name of person interviewed: Thomas Quintin

Place interview took place: Fairfield Inn, Working Waterfront Festival

Date and time of interview: September, 2012

Interviewer: Madeleine Hall-Arber [MHA]

Abstract

New Bedford native Thomas Quintin journeys from deckhand to captain and describes the struggle of this self proclaimed “dinosaur” trying to remain viable against a growing corporate fishing industry.

Demographic information

Sex: Male

Age: 51

Ethnicity: White

Occupation: Captain, Fisherman, Scalloper

Born: New Bedford, MA.

Key words

Role

Commercial fisherman (captain/crew)

General Social and Cultural Characteristics

Family, family roles, family organization

Social and Cultural Characteristics of Fishing

Other social and cultural characteristics of fishing

Gear and Fishing Technology

Dredge

Boats, ships, vessels

Business and Economics of Fishing and Other Maritime

Making a living

Financing and investment (short and long term)

Fisheries Management

Regulations

[00:00]

MHA: Okay, yes. I'm gonna ask you a couple of formal questions, like what your name is so we have it for the record. Okay. So, what is your name?

TQ: Thomas Quintin, Junior.

MHA: 'Kay. And when and where were you born?

TQ: I was born in New Bedford, Mass in 1961, right at St. Luke's Hospital.

MHA: Great, and did...I assumed you grew up here as well?

TQ: Yup, grew up in New Bedford, went to Acushnet, like 6th grade, grew up the rest there and now I'm livin' back in New Bedford with my wife and 2 kids.

MHA: Great. What, when you were growing up what was your neighborhood like?

TQ: Depends when?

MHA: [laughs] Okay.

TQ: You know, when I was younger we started in the, in the city. Cottage Street in New Bedford. My father wasn't fishin' yet. You know, he was workin' at the cranberry bogs so things, things were tight. Then we moved up, bought a house on Shawmut Avenue. I remember that house. Worked our way up from there, we went to Acushnet as he did better fishin'.

MHA: I see. What kind of fishing was he doing?

TQ: Scallop in' like myself. Both my grandfathers were dragger men.

MHA: I see.

TQ: They both...we were the ones...we joke about it, we say, we, my father was the one who made the turn to the dark side. Because draggin' is considered more civilized.
[Laughs]

MHA: So, you, you said he wasn't fishing yet. Had he fished when he was younger with his father or uncle?

TQ: No, actually when he was 10 years old his father was lost at sea, in a storm in February 1952. And then his married remarried another fisherman and he was lost at sea in 1975. So she lost 2 husbands to the ocean. One tradition we don't intend to keep.

MHA: Good.

TQ: Hopefully, God willing.

MHA: Alright, was that why he didn't go right into fishing?

TQ: He never really told me, I mean he wanted to stay working on land. He tried things, but he dropped out of high school with my mother to get married and things just weren't goin' that well so he eventually got a job. My, the only grandfather I knew, his stepfather, got him a job on a, on a Norwegian scalloper where they didn't a lick of English. It was just him and a bunch of Norwegians.

MHA: Did he pick up some Norwegian?

TQ: No, no. He just learned to scallop there and then he you know got a job on an English speaking vessel.

MHA: I see, okay. And so I assume you're not Norwegian. What is your ethnic background?

TQ: English, Irish, Scottish, French and Portuguese but with a strong...my, my grandfather who fished, he was French-Canadian. He came, his father came down from, they came from France to Canada and then in the late 1800s he came to the New Bedford area.

[03:00]

This is my great grandfather, not the fisherman. And then my grandfather was born in Canada and came down, down here I believe. No they came in 1890 so he was born in the States and he's the one that started the fishing tradition.

MHA: Do you know why?

TQ: No I don't, I never asked my grandmother.

MHA: Yeah just curious. So was anybody else in the family involved in any other aspect of fisheries, any other part of the industry, on the shore side?

TQ: Well my, my, my father's sister, Judy, She was Judy Quintin but now is Judy Pasco [ph] she married a lumper. Turk was his name. She owns a restaurant up in Mattapoissett, Turks, it's a seafood restaurant. So, and his son, Richie, he, he lumps. He, he, he got in the fishing business and now he runs the, the fish section over there. He's a picky one, sometimes he won't even get scallops off of me. He's, you want fresh seafood go there. And I'm not plugging the restaurant it's just, even the guys here in New Bedford, the, the green shirts I call 'em, the State ones. When I told 'em my aunt owns a restaurant, these are guys that inspect seafood and he said, I'm not tellin' you this because it's your aunt but when anyone asks me where to go, that's where I send 'em. She liked hearin' that.

MHA: Good, I'll have to keep that in mind. So, what was your first industry job?

TQ: I started right out of high school, 17 years old. I, I went shacking on the Jupiter with my father.

MHA: So you went straight into scalloping.

TQ: Yup, always. And even in high school I knew that's what I was gonna, I was gonna do. Almost changed my mind though when we left the dock, I didn't even leave the hurricane dike and I got seasick. [Laughs]

MHA: How long did that last?

TQ: I got seasick when the boat turned and I got queasy and my father wanted to drop me off in Nantucket. I almost didn't have a career in fishin'. But, I, I, I joke about it. I say, the first few years in fishin' what got me by was determination and Dramamine. 'Cause I did take it for 2 years, I was afraid not to. That's a awful feeling, seasickness.

MHA: Yeah, oh yes. It's dreadful. So have you, you've always been on a scallop boat I presume?

TQ: Well I tried draggin' a little bit with my brother in law, he owned a dragger, the Creole Belle. And I, I tried it a little bit with him in my 20s, actually got to fish with my sister and his sister. I joke about it. I say 2 of the best men I ever worked with were women. And that's true. They don't shirk, they don't squawk, they don't, they just...they cook good. So, that was interesting but I didn't like draggin' because it, the tows are too long. You, you, you sit down too, too much.

[06:00]

Unless you're doing ground fishing. Some of the hardest work I ever did was ground fishin' on a dragger. And the thing I didn't like most about it was if you got into a little hang, you, anything, like a little snag you could rimrack your gear and be doing gear work for 3 days. With scallopin's you just give it the juice, pull right through.

MHA: Really?

TQ: [Laughs] Yeah.

MHA: So when...how long did you fish with your, your, was it your sister you said?

TQ: Yeah, I, it wasn't long, it was like a summer. We were flukin' and flat fishin' in Nantucket Sound and Vineyard Sound. It was interesting, but I, it wasn't for me.

MHA: And how about your sister. Did she continue?

TQ: She did it for a little while, 'cause she was fishin' with her husband. Sometimes, they had another little boat that they'd fish together. But she had a degree and she went on to work with special needs kids and just recently she got her Master's degree so. But she makes a kick butt chowder. She makes us clam chowder, she won't give anybody in the family the recipe. Nobody. It won the chowder cook off, like 15 years ago. We always told her, enter, enter, enter. She was, you know, wasn't confident. She won, 30 chowders, first place.

MHA: [Laughs] That's great. So when you were mentioning that you weren't crazy about the ground fish...oh about the dragging. That was when you were doing the fluke and flounder and that was the long tows? And when you were doing groundfish, I assume cod and haddock, that kind of thing?

TQ: Yeah we were fishing codfish. Yeah it was me, this old timer, like he was like 70, old alcoholic. And my brother in law and those tows would come up every, my goodness, 40-50 minutes. Bags and bags of codfish and you're guttin' the cod and cleaning 'em and puttin' 'em down and icing 'em up and then another came up. Hard work, really hard work.

MHA: Do you remember around when that was?

TQ: It was in the '80s. Probably mid '80s. I'm guessin'. Couldn't have been much longer than that, because I've been captain for 21 years and I was on deck, on the, on the boat for you know 4 or 5. Early to mid '80s.

MHA: So right now, I understand you're captain and, but sometimes a deckhand...

TQ: Well last year when I finished up the season I got in on Thanksgiving and the boat was being over...they were gonna go right through it, hydraulics, hydraulic winches, insulate the hole. So, the boats took longer than it was anticipated, so I have to pay the bills so I actually made a few trips on deck for the first time in 21 years and then I ended up going mate on the Ambassador with Justin Tonneson, at the tail end of the season. And I just made a trip captain on the Harvester, another company boat, I'll be goin' out this week on that one too.

[09:00]

MHA: So which, which company is it that owns the boats?

TQ: Quinn...Quinn Fisheries. I think that's what he calls it now, I don't know. Each boat has a separate LLC.

MHA: Oh okay.

TQ: It's Charlie Quinn.

MHA: Okay. How many boats does he own, do you know?

TQ: Five.

MHA: Good. Can you describe a typical trip. Like, when you go out in the morning, or evening, or whenever....

TQ: A typical trip...there's no such thing as a typical trip. Like this trip, Monday, we'll be doing gear work you know, that's that's an all day affair. And we ice up, I'll go with the cook, we buy the grub ourselves. So I'll go with the cook to BJs and grub the boat up and save some money. Finish up the gear, sometimes it takes days depending on how bad the gear, you know, the gear is. Generally I, I don't go much passed 1, 2 'o' clock, that's kinda my quittin' time. But right now, we have to use these days up so I'll be there all day Monday. And then probably go out first thing Tuesday morning provided everything's all set. Because the boat's out right now.

MHA: What's first thing in the morning? What, how early?

TQ: Not too early, I got the guys comin' down for 8:30. Drop my kid off at school.

MHA: Very civilized.

TQ: And then, yeah, most of the guys do gear work that time of day. Summertime some guys will make it early because of the heat. I mean, I've done gear work 7 'o' clock in the morning because it's so hot. But generally it's 8:30, 9. Yeah it's civilized on land, it's not when you get there [laughs].

MHA: Okay when you, when you leave, when you go out...do you also leave about the same time?

TQ: It all depends, I mean, a lot of times I like to leave early in the morning to, to get a jump on things. Depends where you going. We'll probably leave early Tuesday so I can get, we're going to area 1 which is off the Cape, so I'll probably leave early in the morning so I can get there at a decent hour and you know, make some tows, hopefully...

MHA: How long does it take to steam there? Usually, about...

TQ: If you get fair tide, you can probably get there in about 10 hours. Head tide, a little longer.

MHA: Okay and how many crew members do you have?

TQ: Well in a closed area you can go as many as you want. There's no limit, but the government restricts you to 7 men for open bottom. And this trip I'm gonna go 6 men and a, and a shacker.

MHA: What's a shacker?

TQ: A shacker is a trainee that just started. Some make it, most don't. I saw one shacker lose, in 8 days he lost 15 pounds. He couldn't hold down anything, anything. My father, I mean I didn't wish the guy ill will but I have other things to be concerned about. My father, and a few of the crew were nursing him like a little sick bird that you pick up on the boat. They give him little pieces of bread and drops of water.

[12:00]

[Laughs] He, he, I was lucky to get him off the boat. He was dehydrated.

MHA: Yeah that can be dangerous.

TQ: Yeah very.

MHA: So your father fishes still with you?

TQ: No he passed away in '96. He, he had a heart attack. He went off bird watching in the woods, January 2nd. I said, at least he had good timing. He kept, he stayed live for the holidays. I'm not trying to be disrespectful. He's in a better place. But, he went out to watch, bird watching, and then there was a snow storm coming. And he didn't come home. My sister found him. They went out with the police you know. Luckily they found him before the snow otherwise we'd find him in the spring.

MHA: Yikes, yeah. So maybe you can describe to me a little bit about what you do and what your crew members do. What's the difference between what a captain does and what a crew member does?

TQ: Well the reason I started breakin' in captain was I knew I was gonna do this for a long time and I was hoping to let the body, get more out of your body because it's a, used to be that the captains were more like Deadliest Catch where they kind of told you what to do, they made the tows, they helped a little, but that is not the case now. The case now is you work almost as hard as a, as a deck hand plus you have the mental stress. Which the crew members don't understand, nor should they. But it's like a double whammy 'cause you're always where to go, it's a highly competitive business. I've had 3 or 4 friends of mine that've lost their jobs just in the last 6 months. Boats bein' sold, guys bein' fired. It's extremely competitive.

MHA: These are on the scallop boats?

TQ: Yeah, yeah. It's, it's getting... 'cause you're getting limited days so you produce, and you produce a lot or you're history. I'm not complainin', it's the nature of the beast you know.

MHA: Maybe you can explain to me. I was under the impression that the scallop boats were under a quota so, it, you wouldn't necessarily be limited as to days.

TQ: Well you're under a quote for your closed area trips. But then you get, like this year you got 30 for open area days. And those 30 for open area days are what make or break a, a season. There's a big difference if you stock 500,000 or if you stock 400,000 for 3, for 3 trips. And it's a young man's business you know. I ain't got much left in me. My wife's not too happy about that, but I said, hey. I'm not, I've told her, I don't want to be pushed out. I want, I wanna go out on my terms and if I want too much longer you get, you know, you will get pushed out the door. As it's, it's no different in corporate America. You have people that have been working 30 years. They build their, you know, their income up and then what happens?

[15:00]

Some young turk gets their job and they're out on the street flippin' burgers at McDonald's. [Laughs] I sound defeatist, I'm not.

MHA: So...tell me, let's walk through a little bit what the day is like. You know...

TQ: Out at sea?

MHA: Yeah.

TQ: Well nice thing about it is you just walk up and you're at work. It takes me 10 minutes to get ready. Some of the guys, if they need time to have a coffee and they, they'll get up whatever they decide. Half hour, 45 minutes. Me you can wake me up, I usually get up 15 minutes before it's time to work. Say a quick prayer, get dressed, walk into the wheelhouse, drink my green tea and I'm ready, I'm ready to go. So there's none of that commuting, that kind of thing. So it does have its advantages. It's all, you're either workin', sleepin' or eatin'. There's no in between. So you get up, I mean I'll talk to the mate, see what's been goin' on. How things are goin'. Check the weather while I'm drinking my tea, kind of multitasking. He's out there cutting scallops, he'll go down then once he's filled me in and start cuttin' scallops. And then depending on when you're, you're, your tow schedule is, you know, we'll haul back, handle gear, dump the drags out, go sort, sort through things. They, we get up about a, we work about an hour and a half more with the other, with the other watch together. There's a, there's like a lap where you're working together. Some boats do it longer. And then you'll bag everything that they, that they cut that watch. Bag everything up between tows. Wash it up, bag it up. Put it down the hold. 50 pound bags. Ice the bags off, come back up. Everybody help with the next tow and then that watch gets off to get some food and sleep and wake 'em up 4 hours later to do it all over again.

MHA: Four hours?

TQ: Yeah, generally. Generally. I mean I run, right now I'm running a 10 and 6. Ten hours on, 6 hours off. But that 6 hours off, they have to eat you know, take a shower if they want, whatever, you know. Then get to bed and then of course they have to wake up early and...if they're quick they can get maybe 4 and a half hours sleep. And that's more civilized. Some guys, some guys do 12 and 4s and some, some you know crazy hours.

MHA: Yeah. And how many days is a trip usually?

TQ: Depends where you goin'. Closed areas can be as short as 5 days, 4 or 5 days. They can go maybe as long as 10. Open area trips, you know this year we have 34 days. You might split it into 3. Three 11-day trips, all depending on repairs, you know, breakdowns, weather, all those kind of things.

[18:00]

Summertime's nice 'cause you're not really, weather's not really an issue too often. But I'm gonna be fishin' a lot this winter so...

MHA: 'Cause your boat was down in the summertime.

TQ: Yeah. Then when it was almost finished, I'm up in New Hampshire on vacation with my family, we go every year. I get a call from my engineer. He says, "Tommy I got some bad news..." The welders were welding on the boat, slag, which is the sparks that come from the rod...fell down into the engine room. Caused an engine room fire, the whole boat was ablaze. I'm like, "Wow you know how to ruin a vacation [laughs]. Thanks a lot pal." And my phone wasn't working up there. I mean, I could get texts now and then, I'm eatin' dinner with my wife and my son and the phone rings and I say oh, it's my engineer, why the heck did it have to work? I didn't let it get to me though, you know. God has a plan. I don't have to know what it is.

MHA: Good for you. So, when the boat is at the dock you've mentioned there is some gear work that it's, working on the rings and that kind of thing?

TQ: Yeah, you repair things, bad rings, cut, cut old links out. You put the chafing gear in these rubber, rubber chafing gear. A lot of times you put new diamonds on, which are, which do most of the fishin'. They call them a diamond because they're, they're actually triangular shaped. Your sweep chain that goes along the ocean floor needs to be changed quite often. Twine tops get tore up in the, in the back of the drag. All things like that, make sure everything's you know, good to go.

MHA: And how long does that take about?

TQ: And like I say, it depends. Depends on what area you come from. If you've been soft bottom...if you make a closed area sometimes you have no gear work because, you just makin' a few, you know you might make 20 tows. You know some of these areas have tons of scallops. They're getting scratchier now, but if you're in area 1 like we're

gonna be for 7, 8 days you, your gear gets rim racked 'cause it's hard bottom and you got a lot of gear to do. So it varies a lot, as little as 1 day as many as 4. So it's not just your days at sea, you know.

MHA: Right. So, how, when you think about how the industry has changed over the time you've been involved in it, has, can you talk a little bit about that, what has happened?

TQ: Yeah some good, some bad. Like when government stepped in--I almost left the business because, the, before they stepped in with management, we fished 258 days at sea. And we were, like 15-16 hour days. And my crew made \$25,000 so they were making probably half of the minimum wage. I made \$47 as a captain, never saw my family. And then you got gear work and all that, I was looking into other things but I saw what they were gonna do and I liked the way they were goin' with the bigger rings, limited days, less crewmen so I stuck it out.

[21:00]

A few years later it really got good and it's, it's been very good. Very very good, better than it's ever been, as a captain, now you work a lot harder but you're out there to make money. Like for instance that year, I think it was the mid 90s, for the year the boat stocked \$300,000 the Patience. That was the year. Last year, I had a 10 days trip that was \$420,000 in 10 days. We caught more than we did for a year...for 258 days at sea. The prices have gone up with supply and demand, the best...in my opinion the best thing that ever happened to us was the New Bedford Seafood Display Auction because they got 65 buyers from all over the world bidding on product. It's a, it's a true free market you know. Not some guys with cigars sittin' in a room sayin' this is what we're gonna pay. 'Course they don't like to hear that [laughs] but I've never been politically correct, gets me in trouble. But...it now, now some of the bad that's happenin' is, just like all over the country, we talk on these cruise ships me and my wife in New Bedford when they come in, we've talked on them and then, so they understand. You hear about the farmers that are being bought out by the big conglomerates. Now they're just employees. Same thing's happenin' here. You know it's, it's gonna be a handful of big boys that can weather the ups and downs. The days of someone like me startin' as a deckhand, workin' his way up, becomin' a captain, buying a boat, passin' it on to his kids...you know, those, those are gone. I tell my wife, I'm a dinosaur in this business, you know. I'm just worried that there's gonna be a fishing, fisherman's museum you know instead of a whaling museum. 'Cause right, right now it's...they're already basically puttin' the draggers out of business. And now it looks like they're tryin' to, to do it to us.

MHA: How, how so?

TQ: Well this year, now, last year we had 34 days at sea. And we had four 18,000 pound Closed area trips. Now, because of the yellowtail issue they, they want to give us, and those were 18,000 pound trips. Now this year they want to give us I think 34 open area days and 2 closed area trips which are 13,000 pounds apiece. So you're talking, 18,

36...almost 50,000 pounds less at 10 bucks a pound. And, the difficult thing is, is tryin' to talk any sense into them sometimes because it's bad...a lot of times they use bad science. In other words the reason we can't go, is because the yellowtail are so called, you know, endangered.

[24:00]

But the reason they're shutting us down is, these areas that we go into, we're catching too much yellowtail. So, so if the yellowtail are there and you everything you can to avoid 'em, but they, your eyes are telling you that there's a lot of yellowtail, but you know, some guy in a lab is tellin' you that there, that they're not. I mean, it's kind of, sometimes it's pseudo, pseudo-science. And they do, the government battles a lot with the environmentalists. Some of the real whack jobs, you know. I tell everybody, on the cruise ship I tell 'em. I'm an equal opportunity offender. I said you can trust me when I tell you stuff. And I am, because I tell fishermen, and I always have, that we are our own worst enemy. We overfished. The industry, we did, and that's the truth. So they get mad at me. Then I tell the government you know, you were part of the problem because in the late '70s, early '80s when they passed the Mag[nuson], the 200 mile limit, they got to the point where they would anyone with a pulse a boat loan. And, and, and anyone that was dumb enough to sign the papers, got a boat. Then we overfished the thing and then, I, I tell the environmentalists which I have, some of them, not, not the ones that are moderate but one of them I went up to in, after one of these meetings I...when they were blaming us for everything under the sun, I, I said hey pal, I suppose it's our fault that the dinosaurs went extinct too right? So they all, they all don't like me. [Laughs] Well at least I'm honest. You know, so when I say that about the yellowtail, it's not because, it's not a self serving motive. When the fluke...when they were shuttin' 'em down with fluke. I don't catch fluke. And they were shuttin' 'em down all up and down the coast for fluke and I, I mean, I called the, the, the powers that be and said, look, we catch fluke everywhere. There's ton of 'em. I, I have no interest, I have no monetary interest in it. And I'm for conservation you know, proper conservation. I always said, scallopin', we were basically, until recently, we were the poster child for, for proper management because it's been very successful. You're gonna make mistakes...

MHA: So what about the yellowtail, do you keep that, are you able to sell...

TQ: You have to keep it now, because they want, they wanna...

MHA: Count it?

TQ: Yeah, yeah a record of what you, what you have. So you have to keep it up to, I don't know what it is now, 11" I think, 12"...somethin' like that. Some of these areas that they send us in to, you know, that they don't open in the, in early summer. In early summer many of these areas don't have any yellowtail but now in the fall, they start to move in and, and, and then that's when they're letting you in.

MHA: That's good timing. [Laughs]

TQ: Yeah. It's almost like they, you know, they got an ulterior motive. I, I don't know where they figure it out. You won't see yellowtail and then they come in. So now you're catching...and there's areas they don't give us access to.

[27:00]

Like, like up on the northern edge. Scallops are dyin' of old age up there. Tons of 'em. And when you're up there and you make a tow, you make such a short tow you're not interacting with the, with the yellowtail so you catch very few of 'em. I think they're trying to, to work something out where we have access to that. In other words proper management...

MHA: Is that because of the, of the Canadian line? Is that why, or is it...?

TQ: No it's part of Area 2. It's, it's, only the southern end of Area 2 is open to scallopin'. The northern edge part is, is not. We were up there this summer, it was...on the open side...tons of scallops. Not, not one yellowtail. Just scallops. Just...plain through. You go up there now, you'll catch yellowtail and I'm no expert on, on fish. I try to tell these people you know fish are pelagic they swim. You know, they swim.

MHA: Yup. They do have tails.

TQ: Yeah [laughs].

MHA: So how, how is your family or your community...do you consider yourself part of a fishing community? I should ask that.

TQ: I sure you do, yeah yeah. Definitely.

MHA: Do you interact a lot with the other fishermen and?

TQ: You always do. I mean my, like, when my grandfather was lost in 1952, that was a very tight knit bunch of people and the, and the wives...they stuck together through the years. You know, and I'm the grandchild but yet we still went over the Hokanson's [ph] house and, and the Gusheau's [ph] Christmas...they played cards every, every Friday night. They, they get together and play cards and we still maintain contact with, with some of them. And there's a big Norwegian presence in the, you know, I joke about it. I say your name ends with "sen" and you live in New Bedford or Fairhaven, you're tied to the fishin' business. Enoksen's, [ph], Hokanson's...Isaksen's...you know, they've done very well but, they've done very, very well for themselves...Didriksen's you know. We're, we're, we're the oddballs. Quintin...French Canadian. Where we come from, my other grandfather was a Newfoundland...goofy Newfie. He was from Newfoundland, the one that got lost in 1975. That was the Pappy that I knew.

MHA: Right.

TQ: He used to tell fish tales and stories and you know, you're a little kid, you're mesmerized by it, my mother gets ticked off. I was born to fish, my son isn't though.

MHA: That's what I was gonna ask, yeah. He's not interested or you're not interested in his...

TQ: I didn't want him...I didn't him to but it was a blessing. When he was 3 years old we were down here at this Working Waterfront Festival and where they, they have the little, you know, boat tour well that day I was with him on the dock and there was jellyfish in the water and I thought I was close enough to him. He went after those jellyfish, he went right off the end. He went down like a ton of, a ton of bricks. He went right down to the bottom.

[30:00]

Bubbles comin' up. I was in there, in 2 seconds. You know pulling him up and he's been petrified of docks and salt water ever since. Loves to swim, but not in the ocean so. He wants no part of it. Put, put him up, put him back up there was no ladders. So I had to pull myself back up, in shorts and the barnacles on the bottom of the thing was gashing my legs. I was bleeding, and my wife, I mean she wouldn't talk to me. The look...if looks could kill I would have been dead that day. I didn't do it on purpose, I thought I...

MHA: Now how old was he?

TQ: Three. He was like 3 or 4. Not very old. It's when they first started, so it's been going 9 years, he's 12 yeah I think it was the first year or so. The Working Waterfront took care of my, my problem. He will not fish. My nephew on the other hand, he's already fishin'. My sister's kid. He's 15, he fished this summer so it looks like the tradition's gonna continue in the, in the family. He likes it.

MHA: So what are the changes in regulations and these changes [END AUDIO 1]
[00:00]

MHA: that you were talking about where you can no longer plan to start as a deckhand and work your way up and end up buying a boat. Has that made any changes in the community or, that you've noticed has...

TQ: Well...I don't know if I quite understand the...

MHA: Well I guess, sometimes when you have regulations, particularly that's what...well I should ask you rather than tell you [laughs]...what do you think has made that change, that difference between being able to start as a deckhand and end up as an old boat owner.

TQ: Right, right, you're right it is the regulations because of that piece of paper is what's worth so much money. It's called limited access. It's really no access. Limited access there are no more permits, you can't get 'em. Seven years ago, my previous owner, here's a good example, he sold the boat for \$900,000. At the time, I talked to my wife about buyin' it and so I went and talked to the bank and the bank said, yeah no problem. Put \$300,000 down, put your house up and you're all set. And I came back, I said well God don't want us to own a boat 'cause I ain't got \$300,000 in my back, in my back pocket. But...3 years later, 4 years later the, the, the piece of paper was worth 3 million. Now it's probably 4 million. So the only guys who can buy boats now are those that have the collateral to back up the next purchase, you know, unless you're crazy or you hit the lottery. You hit the lottery you're not gonna buy a boat. 'Cause they can just like to do it now. They can just step in with a stroke of the pen and say, hey you can't fish. You know. I'm kinda glad I didn't buy the boat to tell you, to tell you the truth. Although 7 sevens ago, by now it'd be paid for you know so you wouldn't have as much to, to worry about. But, but I, I, I wouldn't recommend it to anybody. You know, I...

MHA: You wouldn't recommend buying into the industry or going fishing?

TQ: Goin', goin' into the business. I just don't know where it's gonna go. I'm glad I'm at the tail end of my career not the beginning but it's sad because it's a family tradition. And it's, that's common especially like I said in the Norwegian community...Newfoundland too you know, you got the Bruces, they're 3 generations of fishermen and and you know, and the Isaksens, the Tonnessens, so, so many...you know Enoksens, they fish, fish, fish. There's a lot of heritage, tons of it. That's what I mean. Me and my wife are in the process of writin' a book called *Sons of the Sea* that's gonna go into that. Into the generational and the price that fishermen pay. Not just fishermen 'cause there's all those shows on TV with the rah rah and the big waves and the bang your chest kind of stuff but more so go into the price that the children pay and the wives pay because they're a single parents when you're, when you're out but it looks like it's gonna be talking about it, you know, in it from a historic perspective you know.

[03:00]

I hope I'm wrong but like the draggers, it's, I feel bad for them.

MHA: So when, when you think about fishing and as a family tradition, way of life and so on and the mothers were single parents for those periods of times, but what were the benefits?

TQ: Oh lots of benefits. Yeah, yeah you get all pumped up. My, one of the benefits we have is, as husbands, is our wives, have a good, they have a opportunity to forget all the stupid stuff we did while we were home. [Laughs] So every trip it's like, it's like a honeymoon. You know and we do a lot of stupid stuff. It kind of comes with the territory. [Laughs] Unfortunately. We're a very kind of maverick kind of bunch you know. We're like the cowboys of the 21st century. It's really true, I'm not being melodramatic. And so many people have a romance of, of the sea you know that because

they haven't done it, you know. That's why these shows are so popular. You know. But, that that's benefits. The vacations. You know, we always never wanted. We always as kids, when my father was a boy they went up to New Hampshire every, every summer for a summer vacation. He'd go fishing with his dad. When I grew up, when I was growin' up did the same thing. And now I do that with, with my boy and my daughter. So the money, the money's good. I can remember when I was in junior high school, I was a big baseball fan. And I knew the rookies, I knew the baseball salaries. The major league salaries. And my father, I said wow, my father makes as much money as, as the starting rookie salary in major league baseball. I was like, wow. He's loaded. So it's, you know, you have your down years. But that's another plus. Now the plus is, you spend a lot of time with your family because they have limited your days. If you can keep your job. I've got to see my kids grow up and they don't want for, for anything. So there are, and another advantage with limited days is until this year is abnormality, but you're pushed out in those storms. It used to be that 5th day, you got out. If there were storm warnings, they wanted you to leave. Now you can pick your spots. You know so, there's plenty of advantages. It's not all down, you know...don't mistake me. It's definitely not all bad.

MHA: Well what do you see as the future when it is gonna be limited to these few people who own the whole fleet. Well, the deep pockets. How, how will that, how do you anticipate that affecting the industry and the life in New Bedford?

TQ: Well that's a big concern with us independent minded fishermen, there're a lot of us.

[06:00]

You know, that's just, you know, kind of comes with the territory. What we're concerned about is they're eventually gonna get to the point where you're just salaried. You're just an employee, and the captain gets this salary and the deckhand gets this salary and the owners make all the money.

MHA: Right now it's still a share system?

TQ: Yeah and that share keeps, every year, they keep takin' a little more. You keep getting a little less and they think we, we make too much money. And like I said, I'm not politically correct, I don't care who hears this. [Laughs] I ain't got much time left anyway, but if we make too much money they must really be making too much money because they're sitting on their...[Laughs]...I'll probably get fired for this. But they know, on the other hand they were bright enough to work their way up. I mean, some of them got lucky I mean, Roy Enoksen is one of the biggest guys around and I mean there was a time in the early '80s when it was bad, he almost lost the few boats he, he had you know. Then, then he's a huge success story, biggest scallop company in the, in the world. So I, I don't knock guys for doing well. They're successful, I wasn't smart enough to save my money or lucky enough to buy at the right time. But I am lucky

enough to you know have my health. So. You can scratch that last part so I don't get fired.

MHA: [Laughs]

TQ: I'm only kiddin'. I'm only kiddin'. But they do say that, they do say we make too money. But we're riskin' our lives all the time. This is not a thing, you know, when I talk about my grandfather getting lost in '52 and then my second grandfather getting' lost in '75, this is not a thing from '52 and '75. It still happens today. A few, a few years a good friend of mine was on the Atlantic and it tipped over, in at Christmastime, right off Cape Cod and he got out of the wreck, but he didn't get to the life raft. Hypothermia...I talked to survivors and he, hypothermia your arms and legs don't work anymore, your body is persevering your internal organs. So they stopped workin'. So he couldn't...they saw him drift away. Never found his body so. I've got quite a few...in a 32, no 34 year career I've got, my goodness, quite a few friends and relatives...close friends and relatives on that wall at the Seamen's Bethel so... That's the thing, when you pay \$18 a pound of scallops or \$9 a pound of fish, remember there's a cost to, there's a cost to it.

MHA: Right. Have you ever taken safety training?

TQ: Yeah, yeah I was one of the first guys to do it. I went to Mass. Maritime in the, in the late '90s and did the one-day course. They had you do everything. In fact, the boat that flipped over, another good friend of mine was there, on the Ocean Rain to rescue the people and he had been fishin' with me for years.

[09:00]

And when they got the guys that were alive, they brought them aboard the boat and they were all suffering from hypothermia and the crew members and the captain of the boat, they wanted to throw 'em in the hot shower. But because I had gone to the safety training and said, 2 things you don't do. You don't give them anything hot to drink, you don't put 'em in a hot shower. And the reason bein', I learned in that safety course, there was a cold water cruise ship that, that capsized you know, smaller one, couple hundred people were, were in the water and they were rescued by a, by a freighter. And when they got them aboard the boat, they took them to the galley and they gave them hot drinks and, I don't know, like 20% of them ended up in cardiac arrest dying in the galley because you have to slowly warm the body. So he called me to tell me that probably saved their lives which was really, it was nice.

MHA: That's gratifying yeah. So how about your crew, have they taken any of the SMAST courses or any of the other...

TQ: Well, I don't have, I don't have a crew...I have a new crew now. I had a steady crew for years and a lot of them, I didn't make 'em take it but they did take some of the training at SMAST most of them. They are all out and about now. And of course we do the drills with 'em so that they know. But I mean I had a point that my crew was so

steady I could have any crew member do the safety drill because they, they knew it by heart. And the important thing is to keep it simple. Too many bells and whistles and we're you're in a stressful situation you, you're not gonna remember.

MHA: So when you do the drills, do you actually put on the survival suits?

TQ: Sometimes you do, sometimes. You don't deploy the life raft or shoot flares. Or things like that but it's important to maybe, at least once a year have 'em try them on because it takes a little while to get in those things. When I did it down at Mass Maritime, it was winter time. Not only did they make us get in 'em, they made us jump in the water and get into a life raft in, in, in the water. It's not as easy task.

MHA: I know, I did it once. [Laughs]

TQ: Yea, it's hard. You kind of have to bounce, you gotta...if you're, if you're the first one it's tough. The other guys get the help. So you did that, huh, so you know what I'm talking about, you speak from experience.

MHA: Yeah it was very embarrassing [laughs].

TQ: It is.

MHA: But you know, could save somebody's life. So.

TQ: It sure could.

MHA: Yeah. So, let's see. You said you had a long term crew, about how long were they with you?

TQ: Most...one guy that's with me, I broke him in, in, in...he's 40 now. I broke him in when he was 19. Another guy that was with me for a long time, he was an ex serviceman, he was in Kosovo and Bosnia, he was with me for 7, 8 years. When I, when the boat tied up, they all went different ways. I only have 1 boat now, so a lot of these guys are looking for, you know, 2 boats. So...

[12:00]

MHA: Oh to make up the time?

TQ: Yeah so they're fishing 1 captain with 2 boats. Some companies do it, some companies don't. But next year with what they're givin' us, I don't know what's gonna happen. Just play it by ear.

MHA: So do you find your own crew or do they, or does the company assign...

TQ: Yeah yeah you're you're responsible for your own crew.

MHA: How do you find them?

TQ: Usually you know, you've worked with 'em. Word of mouth. I, I tend not to hire anybody without some kind of recommendation. And I do random drug tests, I'll have...I always have the drug testing kits on the boat. And I tell them. And I also tell them look, you got the right to drug test me anytime you want too because you know you have every right to know that I'm not on anything. My life, your life is in my hands. I just tell them don't think I'm stupid to take 5 drug tests in one trip so they're all been used. You get one shot. It's not like oh I took my drug test now I'll go smoke some grass. [Laughs] They do try stuff like that too. I fired a few guys at the dock you know. Come down scratching, noddin' you know right away they're on dope. So I say well you know, you have the opportunity to take the drug test you know. I know you're gonna flunk it. [Phone rings] Oh that's embarrassing....sorry, shut that off. Shut that off, I forgot about that sorry. Yeah I gotta lower the volume.

MHA: So what has made you happy with being a part of the fishing industry and being...

TQ: Happy....

MHA: With all the challenges and everything, why do you stick with it?

TQ: It's a, it's a testosterone kind of business, it really is you know. It's pride when you come in, you have a big trip, you know. We always say the, fishermen's nightmare is Butler's Flat Lighthouse on your starboard side, you're going out. Your dream is when it's on your portside and you got a trip in the hold you know, you've got this big trip and you've done well and you know sometimes, these guys make 20, 30 grand in 11 days. You, you know. We got years when we made that. Obviously it's...I used to like it more. Now it's more, just pay the bills. I used to enjoy it more. I still enjoy in the, in the spring and summer when things are going well and you're, you're you know you're cranking out a big trip and it's competitive.

[15:00]

But you get older, your testosterone lowers some, somewhat. Not, not too much. You can't you still, you still have it. It's, it's you know it's the last frontier. I mean we even take pride in the fact that it's the most dangerous job on the planet. Most people would say, that's crazy. But it's kind of, you don't think it's gonna be you. You know, but neither did the other guy. You know, life on the edge. That's why there's a lot of chemical dependency in the business. I myself was, my father was an alcoholic. He stopped when he was in his late 30s. I, I was an alcoholic too, I stopped when I was 34. When my father passed away. By the grace of God. My kids don't remember me being a drunk. They make the excuse, work hard play hard. But you know, my, my wife didn't have me when I was out. And she didn't have me when I, when I was in. Early in our marriage you know. I still feel guilty about it but, that's what draws you to it. The, the

it's, you know, it's a very testosterone based business. Like you know man against the sea kind of thing. And boy you see some...you see some stuff [Laughs].

MHA: So why'd your wife put up with you?

TQ: You'd have to ask her.

MHA: [Laughs]

TQ: Probably my daughter....

MHA: Maybe it'll come out in the book.

TQ: I'm sure it will, yeah well, to be honest, I caused a lot of damage in those early years and in the early, late '90s, I wasn't drinking anymore, I called her from Cape May 'cause I came in from a storm to get some positive re-enforcement, she'd told me she was leaving with my daughter. She just, 9 months we were separated. But God did some amazing things. It will be in the book, it will be, you know. We got a great marriage. She's gonna be down here cookin' at, at the Working Waterfront here at 1:30.

MHA: So, what, what if you had to analyze all the people that you've worked with and have known and done things, worked, fished with. What characteristics would you say make a good fisherman?

TQ: [Laughs] Well you ever heard the expression...you ever heard this, a strong back and a weak mind. Scallopers. My pappy who was a dragger man, now, married to my grandmother now. He would \$500, \$600 a trip and my father would be making \$3000, \$4000 every trip and my grandmother would see that money you know and she'd be telling my pappy, she'd say Ron Ron, why don't you....high pitched voice, she was a sweetheart....why don't you go scallopin'? Why don't you go scallopin' Ronnie makin' us so much money. I'd seen her do this.

[18:00]

She, she...he goes up to her and he, pats her on the lap and says Arlene I love you dearly more than anything on the earth but I will leave you before I ever go scallopin'. [Laughs] It's, it's, you need to be a...strong work ethic, scallopin' I'm talking about, draggin' too. You know but, scallopin' is a different animal all, altogether. You can't have any fear you really can't because if you're afraid, you'll get hurt. You have to respect the ocean, but not fear it. And that kind of an independent streak in you which is tough because they still have to take orders you know. You know, be kind of self motivated. That's why so few people make it. I tend to gravitate towards guys that have somethin' to, to work for. I used the analogy, did you ever see the movie Cinderella Man? He's a boxer, and he fought the first time and he didn't do very well. And then the depression, the second time. So what made the difference. He said, I know what I'm fighting for. I tend to gravitate towards the guys that have kids, families. They want a better life for, for

their families which a lot of fishermen do that. That's what I want to get through too when we do the book that you know, there's plenty of guys out there. It's not all bad rap, they run down and buy drugs. There are tons of guys I've worked with, particularly at Eastern you know, you get your bad apples, but my particular experience is people that want it, you know. That want a better life for their, for their kids because it does provide very well. My mother always told my father, it's a good honest living. I gained a new respect for my father when I started fishing. It's like wow, you're crazy. [Laughs]

MHA: So maybe we can just go into that a little more, the drug aspect is something that has been following the scallop fishing for as long as I've known it. But I've heard that lately with more people making so much more money that it's, it's they're fewer people, fewer druggies.

TQ: I would agree with that, I would agree with that 'cause a lot of companies now are doing random drug testing so that they do the gear work so, and, and, you know I mean the problem with the drug addict is like say they use heroin, if they're a heroin user, if they don't bring it on the boat, they're useless for 2 or 3 or 4 days. And they're no good to you. And if they do bring it on the boat, they're useful but they have it on the boat and your permit it's on the line, so. I think that's why guys are doing that but you are right with that, you're, you are getting less of it. You'll always get it but I mean, let's be serious, any blue collar job you know, carpentry, construction, whatever it may be. Masonry, you do get it. But it has gotten better and more guys are puttin' a little money aside, you'll always have some of it, but I agree with you there.

[21:00]

MHA: I wonder if it's also because drug testing is easier now, so it's more...

TQ: Maybe, maybe. There's guys that try to beat the drug test too, you know they, they have so many you know. That's why you have to just give it when they don't expect it. There's guys that'll have a urine sack you know, really. And they heat it 'cause it has to be...they know the temperature. Because you just can't take cold urine and put it in the test, it knows...it comes out of you at a certain temperature. So there's always somethin' you know. It's like anything, there's always some kind of way to beat it and they have, they sell these things that are cleansers and all that you know, supposed to beat the test and so that's why sometimes you have to just take a, just right there. You know, generally I don't give too many drug tests because I know my guys, you know.

MHA: Well especially if you've been working with them for a long time, know their families and so on.

TQ: Right. I took one not too long ago, I almost failed the thing. I don't know if it's the vitamins I take but if you have, if you have any line at all it's, it's, it's, it's a negative on the one I take. And like the marijuana one, and I don't do any drugs I don't smoke grass or nothin' but the marijuana one was just a faint, faint line and I said geez, I almost

flunked my own drug test. I said, that'd be embarrassing [laughs]. Maybe it was the poppy seeds I have on my muffin or something, I was like jeez. You know.

MHA: So have you seen anything unusual while you're at sea? Have you have an extraordinary experiences?

TQ: Yeah yeah. One, one that they really like to hear when we talk on the cruise ship was the craziest thing I ever caught, it was a...I was draggin' with my brother in law, my sister wasn't with me, or or...it was just us. And we were fishin' right in Nantucket Sound at night and we hauled back the net and pulled the cod end up everything gets funneled to the cod end, and when the cod end came aboard the boat the whole, the whole net was like, like shaking, and it was making a noise...it was going...[noise] ...[noise]....like it was, it was makin' like growling or something. I turned to brother in law I said, hey Wayne I think you caught the Loch Ness Monster here. I didn't want to pull that cod end pin, let it out on deck. I told him, I know it ain't a shark, because sharks don't growl. I'm like, what the heck...I had no idea what was in there and I didn't want to pull that pin. So you had to, something was in...the whole thing shaking, so, so finally we pull the pin and out drops this enormous brown skate, like a Manta Ray. It was about, there was a little...almost as long as this table, lengthwise. Tail to nose, and it was about 20 feet wide and it was one angry critter.

[24:00]

It did not want to be on that deck of that boat. But I mean, what the heck the biggest skate I ever seen was you know, a wingspan, a man's wingspan. So I'm thinkin' to myself, I'm lookin' at this thing I said, well we'll push it out the stern ramp which is about 10 feet. We couldn't get it out that...it wouldn't fit, it wouldn't fit. In the mean time, it's wrestlin' and tryin' to grab you and everything. So finally we figured out, we latched, we did a couple of half inches with some twine on its tail, we picked it up, put it over the side, wouldn't hurt it just for the rest of its life it's going to have a little rope on its tail and we cut thing and let it go. And I was like, "Whew. Thank God we're done with that thing. I said I never want to see one of them again. I'm glad you know we got rid of that thing." True story. Two tows later, we caught his wife. They must travel in a pair. [Laughs] Like halibut do that a lot. A lot of times you catch 1 halibut you catch another, so we got another one. I never, I never seen anything like that since you know. I don't even know what type of thing it was. Kind of mega...mega skate. It was insanely large. Course you'd never get that in a scalloper because you have the rock chains. And we caught some sturgeon a few times, they're very heavy. Something only about 5 feet long, it's hard for, even in my prime I was pretty strong to pick it up and get it over the rail it's almost like it's made out of lead.

MHA: It looks like it with its bumps, the armor.

TQ: Yeah yeah it looks prehistoric. And another story that people are interested in a lot are storms you know. And the biggest storm I was ever out in, I was only in my 20s. Early 20s, it was my first steady job of full share and I always told people the waves were

50 footers 'cause that was a guess until I read the Perfect Storm and they had measured 'em with a buoy out there, they were 70 feet. But I don't like to exaggerate 'cause you can get plenty of exaggeration on television shows. But it was in October or November of 1980 or '81 and they gave 20 to 30 knots and it blew 100 knots, which is about 115 miles an hour and those seas were enormous. And I was too young to be afraid you know you think you're indestructible. But that storm, 2 boats actually were lost in it. One of them, pitchboned. Pitchbone is when comes up on it...kind of like the Perfect Storm movie comes up with the bow and the wave and the wave tips it over, lands on its wheelhouse. There was 1 survivor. He, he popped out of the wreckage and the life raft inflated right, right in front of him. Tossed around like a cork for 2 days, there's a book on it by a local author. It's called, what the heck...*Fatal Forecast* because they got it off so, so bad. But something that's extremely interesting, that very few people know because very few have ever seen it. When it blows that much, when it blows 100 you no longer see the water. It's no longer green, it's no longer blue. It's just froth.

[27:00]

It's like these enormous frothy mountain waves, all white, all frothy. Hope I never see it again. The biggest I've ever seen as a captain was probably 40, 50...maybe 50, maybe.

MHA: That's big enough [laughs].

TQ: Yeah. One of my, my engineer got hit by a wave and this wasn't even that storm. We laid through that storm, I steered by hand because the autopilot was out. And a steamer didn't even see us. There was a steamer coming down on us and this, well between these 40 footers, 50 footers, and I'm seeing this steamer, tracking him, he's coming down on us, he's coming down on us. I finally called the guy, give him my positions, say what's your intentions. He, he said dude I don't even see you. 'Cause the waves were too big. So we're, I'm on the radio trying to not get hit and I love the Coast Guard they've saved, you know, when they're...I tell my guys you don't, when they come on the boat you don't give 'em a hard time, that's your job. But anyway this particular time, I'm conversing with them on 16, the Coast Guard gets on 16 and says, vessels conversing on 16, 16 is for hailing and, hailing and emergencies only. Switch your traffic to working channel. I said, hey pal, I got a steamer coming down on me with 50 foot seas, I'd say that's an emergency. I'm not getting off 16. He never said another word. I wasn't either, because you can you can you can switch and lose 'em on the next channel. And I wasn't gonna take that chance. But my engineer in the storm, it was the next trip I decided to lay because it was getting too rough. So we had scallops to bag up and it was, it was a Alberta Clipper where you get a strong low off of Canada and a high pressure here in the Maritimes. And so you get northwest winds and it'll blow sometimes 30, 40, 50, 60, 80 miles an hour. Sometimes it's crystal clear 'cause you're in the high pressure. So it was a bright clear sunny day but these waves were maybe 25, 30 feet. And he was puttin' the last bags down the hold and I'm steering by hand and he, he told me this from...I didn't see it happen I just saw the wave hit. He said, "Tommy I was puttin' the bags down the hole and it's bright and sunny and the next thing you know everything goes dark." The wave was so big, it, it hid the sun from him. It hit him and

then he said, "I was happy when I hit something because I knew I was still on the boat." He got smashed into the winch. And that guy, he's one tough dude. He worked, after the storm we set out again, he worked for a couple more days. And he was sleeping in the sitting up position and finally he said, Tommy you gotta bring me. There's something clickin' inside. I said look, if you tell me you gotta go in, I, I, I know you gotta go in. I know...so we brought him in, he had 2 broken ribs. Guys worked 2 days with 2 broken ribs. [Laughs] Not for the faint of heart.

[30:00]

When guys complain about pain, I say look you're in the wrong business. We all have pain. It's just part of the business you know. Get a desk job, I don't wanna hear about it. 'Cause it's true, there's gonna be aches and pains. I have carpal tunnel you know it's just. You're in the wrong business.

MHA: So if you wanted to tell somebody who knew nothing about the fishing industry, some of the other people, maybe festival visitors maybe somebody hears you sometime on the radio, what would you like to tell them that we haven't asked you about already?

TQ: Jeez I don't know. I, I...I don't know. You've asked me a lot of questions. But what I would like to tell them is I think I'll rehash it. There are a lot of fishermen in this country and in, and in New England I know particular that are hard working, family guys that, that don't do drugs. That simply want a better life for their children. That don't want their children to follow in daddy's footsteps

[END AUDIO FILE 02]

But are happy to have a occupation that has allowed us comin' out of high school without a Master's degree, to earn a Master's, a Master's pay. I guess that's what I'd probably want to tell people. Don't...don't believe everything you hear on TV about the you know, the damage we do to the ocean floor which is a bunch of baloney. Because the independent studies that they do at UMass and the with the Smolovitch and stuff and the cameras and show...they take pictures before we've been in an area and they take pictures after we've been in an area and I can guarantee you, except for less scallops you would never be able to pick where we been. Obviously if we tow through coral reefs in Florida you'd be doing damage to structured bottom. Of course you would. You, you know. But you'd also do damage to your gear. We're not out to destroy the habitat. I tell people, you don't go to the Midwest and see a farmer pulling a plow through his field and say, oh my goodness look at what that's guy's doing...he's rippin' everything up and turnin' over...he's turning the soil, he's tilling the soil. I had a boss that explained it that way. You, you have to harvest. They don't harvest their crops, their corn. You say oh jeez look what they're doin'. You know, terrible, they're rippin' that corn off by its roots. [Laughs] That's what I would say. 'Cause there's a lot of good intentioned people in this country that get bad information, you know. And it's frustrating because I see it, that's why hopefully I can have some impact with these cruise ships and maybe the

book because it's not like I'm sugar coatin' it because I will get everybody mad at me. So I hope...

MHA: How did you get involved with the cruise ships? How did that come about?

TQ: Laura Orleans who runs the Working Waterfront Festival, I saw the book that she did with the, you know and I was looking for someone to give us some help on, on writing our book. Maybe recommend people. So I bought the book and I, and I called her. We had a meeting with her and her husband Charlie and, and got to know each other and we just started to click. What she does is fantastic. Somebody's who's never been in the business comes 9 years ago, and does it and all the volunteers and everything. They put working, you know, in a, in a good light. It's just amazing you know that that she has that heart for fishermen. And she can see the forest from the trees. You know. More people, I'm sure she's had an impact on on people. And all of you that that do this. But fishermen's memorial on Memorial Day beginning of the summer, I was here because my grandfather's, plus plenty of friends. We were here and she came up to me afterwards and said they always look for speakers. And they asked if I would do it. And then I brought my wife into it and we do like kind of, we kind of bounce back and forth.

[03:00]

I'm the star, I tell my wife. You're the token...trophy wife. [Laughs] She's very talented. She's very talented. She finishes the whole thing with a story about us finding out the sex of our, of our first child which just cracks 'em up. But that's how we, that's how we started speakin' on the cruise ship.

MHA: And you mentioned earlier that you're glad that your son's not following in your footsteps. Why is that?

TQ: My dad didn't want me to do it either. You know, 'cause you know what it's like you know. And he's too smart to do somethin' like this. My brother's very smart you know, both my brothers but my, one of my younger ones, he's got his Master's degree. I said you got the brains, I got the brawn. But yeah, I just, and I don't see a real future in it. I hope I'm wrong, I do hope I'm wrong. I mean maybe they'll be a few lean years with scallops and as there's more recruitment and small stuff, because there's tons of scallops. They'll do a better job managing where you go but what's gonna stop us is unfortunately is this court cases and what they call endangered species just like a toad frog stops the loggers or you know. Once they peg that endangered species on somethin' there's all kinds things they can, they can do.

MHA: So how do you, when you look at the future of the industry what do you see?

TQ: I wish I had a crystal ball. You know I mean it could do both ways. They could go well, it's scallopin', draggin'....I don't see any hope for draggers. They got all these different species and the mess that they have. Look they've cut down to a pittance for fishin'. It's not that fishermen that are doin' it. I, someone explained it well to me. The,

the, the ecosystem..like the seals right. I didn't know seals, they gobble down cod fish, they love cod fish. Hey I grew up, I mean I've been fishin' 34 years. Up until 10 years, I saw 1 seal in 22 years of fishing. I, I, 1 a harbor seal goin' out. Now they're everywhere. And then you get the seals, we're not fishin' for the cod, there's ton of cod so the seals are being fed. Now you get a bunch of seals, I know this is a simplistic way of putting it, but to put it in lay terms. So now you got seals everywhere, so now what do you got. You see the sharks are everywhere, they're comin' in for the seals. It's like this vicious, this vicious cycle you know. I mean I read about the turtles being you know, they're protected and now they can't get 'em off of beaches. And they did an air survey last year, was the cover of US News and World Report, my mate, mate showed me. Says never been more turtles. So how do you not interact with turtles, when they're so many, even though we don't.

[06:00]

They've done a great job with turtle drags and the turtles...I never caught a turtle in my life. And then I brought an observer and I told the guy, it was like the kiss of death, I said look I ain't never caught a turtle, you're not gonna see one with me. This is a true story. My mate caught 3 turtles that trip! And I wasn't lying, I'd never caught a turtle. I started calling my mate the great white hunter. That's, that's crazy. I mean what's the chance of that happening? Never get one.

MHA: That's the famous last words.

TQ: And get 3....that was me, my fault. But the future, I can't tell you where it goes you know. It could be where the Endangered Species Act shuts us down completely. It's all grown with....you know, suspension nets, like they do in Japan. Or calmer heads could prevail and you have rotational management with you know, conversation. Level-header conversation. Not one end where you know, fish the ocean dry or not the other end, where don't touch it. Balance would be nice. But if I could tell you which way it was gonna go, I'd know whether to, well I can't buy a boat.

MHA: [Laughs] Goodness. This has been really fascinating, unfortunately I think we're, I've used up more time I was supposed to.

TQ: Well that's a good thing, I guess I'm interesting.

MHA: Yes you are.

[END INTERVIEW]