

Participant: Mr. Kelly Bennette & Sean Queenin

Researcher: Ms. Deanna Caracciolo

Location: Newport

Date: 6/17/16

[Start 0:00:26.5]

DC: So it is June 17th, in Newport and could you just state your name really quick?

KB: Kelly Bennette

DC: Perfect, thanks again for meeting with me. I kind of already went through the goals of this project and if you have any questions, you are always welcome to contact me. Oh! Could you actually also state your name as well? You are also welcome to join in on the fun as well, if you want to add anything.

SQ: I'm Sean Queenin

All: [chuckle]

SQ: I have no input [chuckles]

DC: No input, yeah. So I pretty much want to talk to any fishermen possible who understands the process of it all. If they have relatives in the fishing industry, that's even better. Yeah, I am trying to see if this whole graying this is a real thing. If you think it's a real thing

KB: The whole what thing?

DC: The whole greying of the fleet situation, so aging

KB: Oh, gotcha, gotcha

DC: But first let's go through the oral histories. Do you have any stories, or would you like to talk about how you got into fishing? It's pretty much an open dialog so whatever you want to tell me.

KB: Basically I needed a change. I was with the forest service for 10 years and needed something different. So a mutual friend of ours got me to come down and that's how it started. A little more money

DC: Yeah, so what fisheries have you actually been a part of?

KB: Tuna, black cob, halibut, shrimp, whiting, Pollock, cod, sole

SQ: Dungeness...

KB: Dungeness...I think that's it

DC: Wow, quite a few

KB: Yeah, a short amount of time too

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DC: Any favorite, least favorite?

KB: It all sucks, but I don't know. Dungeness fishing is a lot of fun. I went to dragging to get a little more time off cause we've got a good rotation on the boat and everything so...And its fun as well. But I don't know if I actually have and actual favorite, favorite

DC: Have you notice any changes in the fishery since you joined?

KB: I'm pretty new at everything, I mean, not really I guess. The dragging industry is fighting to survive, but

SQ: Boats are getting bigger...

KB: Boats are getting bigger, yea, it's...I haven't been here for the. From when dragging was like really good. I kinda came in in the middle of the road and now it's prices and what not are down. So I dont know

DC: So not that many changes so much?

KB: Not that I have really seen.

DC: Have you noticed any changes on the ships themselves? Like with people?

KB: Absolutely. Boats are getting huge

SQ: People try it and it's not for them. Or make a few trips and quit

KB: A lot of turn over

SQ: It's not for everybody

DC: How does that impact the boat and its workings?

SQ: I mean as long as you have people I guess; they are just kinda your extra guy that helps do busy work so...

KB: And we only run two at a time on our boat so

SQ: Each boat is different when you pot fish, so we have no less than a 3-man deck. Keith does the trawl fishery so it would be a 2-man deck. Most of them...some do 3 for like the bigger the boat, but for his size it would be an engineer and a deck hand/cook.

DC: Yeah, so Keith called that boat small...

KB: It is...

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DC: And that blew my mind

All: [laugh]

KB: They're just getting bigger every year. I mean, that's the sad part. We were big a couple of years ago compared to the rest of the fleet, but now the fleet is just getting bigger and bigger.

DC: Are they different boats or are they just...?

KB: Rebuilding them

DC: How does that impact the permitting

KB: Well they...

SQ: They can't do it if it's not in their permitting. They have got to keep it within a certain size regulation, but they are probably trying to max out their permits to the size

KB: Yeah

DC: How has your family had a role in fishing?

KB: Well they have to be okay with it for one cause we are away so much. Getting on the boat I'm on now is nice, cause it's a month on, month off so I'm gone for a month, but I'm home for a month with the wife and the kids. It's been a lot better on this boat than it has been pot fishing because they have no rotation, and he worked on the boat that I started on, and there's no rotation, you're gone all the time. So that was tough. But since I made the move a few years ago, it's been a lot easier for the family.

DC: So this is a pretty sappy question, but what does fishing mean to you?

SQ: A pay check

KB: [chuckle] A pay check, yeah [chuckle] I mean you don't want to go risk your life for nothing. So usually the money is pretty good, so yeah.

DC: Well you much enjoy it to stay in it.

KB: I enjoy some of it, yeah.

SQ: I enjoy money more [chuckles]

KB: I mean, nice weather, it's great being out there. The animals you see and everything, it's fantastic, but there's also days that you don't want to be out there at all, but you know that you will get a paycheck so...it makes it worth it.

SQ: Money motivated.

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KB: Absolutely

SQ: The harder you work, the faster you get home. I mean it's all basically how fast you get home, and how much money you have when you are out there. You don't want to get out there and grind on small numbers. I mean, you'd rather go out there and hit a home run every time. But I mean it's not always like that. Sometimes you hit a homerun, sometimes you just hit your head against the wall.

KB: Yeah, more times than not you hit your head against the wall [chuckles]

SQ: I mean every fish...the captain and I [muffled] the pot fishermen were considered really good, and he was just like for the last month and a half of our fishing, fish just disappeared and then we stacked out our gear a week later, crazy fish appeared like it's huge. I don't know, it's kinda hard when you'r out there

KB: Mhmm

SQ: just plugging away 20 hours a day and just pulling blanks. I mean that makes you day really difficult

KB: It sucks

SQ: Like it or not you can't win everything so. It's basically money motivated crew. It's good to have nice people to work with. That's one of the good things. Our mutual friends both are really good people. I mean you don't meet people like that every day so when you get to chance to work with someone like that you stick around. That's one of the things that...people you work with...that's one of the things that makes us feel great, but otherwise, if they don't work well, they spend a night there and its horrible it's a catch 22. You get good ones, you get bad ones. You know, our generation is a lot softer

KB: [laughter]

SQ: I mean they say they want the money, they say they want to work, never quit anything in my life, I've never heard anybody say I've never quit anything in my life and just see them break down and completely bail on you.

KB: Just completely fold.

SQ: I mean you're a team out there and just walk away. Sorry figure it out...yea

DC: That's common?

SQ: Oh yeah

KB: Absolutely

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SQ: Yea, people will try it - this is not for me, take me in. It doesn't really work like that; we are 100 miles off shore. Took 2 days to travel to get here. It's a reality check

KB: You gotta know where to go

SQ: Yeah

KB: If you don't want to be there, it makes everybody's dynamic on the boat horrible.

SQ: So it's nice when you don't have a shitty crew, and your pulling homeruns

KB: everybody's happy

SQ: everybody's happy

DC: There's not contract or anything?

SQ: I mean there's a contract but you can't force somebody to go out there. What are you going to do? Like - guess what phone check, no you gotta just. I've had somebody lay in the rack for 48 hours, 62 hours, while we are out there working around the clock doing their job and ours. And their just like - nope, let me know when we get in.

KB: Contract, is kinda to cover the boat and the owner. It's not anything...I mean we can break our contract anytime we want to break it. If we don't want to be there, we aren't going to be there.

SQ: Yeah, we are self-contracted

KB: Self-employed...

DC: That's dark

All: [laughter]

SQ: Oh you don't know how dark it gets when somebody cuts on you out there

KB: It sucks

SQ: It's like you get ruthless, you become somebody you don't want to be...you really gotta like...you gotta shame them into working, and then

KB: You don't get any work out of them

SQ: Yeah, you don't get any work out of them. It's a nightmare, it's not fun

KB: So there's happy times, and then there's terrible times and...

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DC: Why don't you tell me a little bit about the happy times

KB: Well, when your hitting homeruns like he was saying. When your pulling full pots

SQ: When your pulling full pots

KB: Full bags. Quick fishing. Yeah, when you can go out there...you know a few years ago when the hake were really good, we would go out there, we hit a hake school and it took us 9 minutes to fill the boat, so... I mean that's it. You're out 30 minutes from town, a little bit more, 9 minutes, you're coming back home to off load, then you're going out to do it again.

SQ: 200, 300 thousand pounds

KB: 300

SQ: 300 thousand pounds, 9 minutes, I mean...that's what you want, that is the best most satisfying part.

KB: Picking pots up and each one pot is 500 pounds of fish in them

SQ: Yeah, I mean when your hauling 60 fish in a pot it's just like, you don't even care what's going on. Before you know it everything is over and just got fish everywhere

KB: Yeah, yeah

SQ: Like it just goes by a lot faster when your making money

KB: everybody's happy

SQ: That's really it. People can tell you what they want, and the reason that they fish, so you can get things like this [gestures to the roof and house]. You work hard, this one last job that you can have not even a high school education and go out there

KB: And make more than some doctors

SQ: And just put your head down and work, and be motivated, and just make money. I mean it's one of the last things you can really do like that for anybody. Anybody can go and try it, but not everybody can do it. It's got a huge fail rate

KB: Huge

SQ: Over 90% of fishermen that want to be fishermen - fail. In the Dungeness...in any crab fishery. Dragging is a little bit easier, but for crabbing it's like a 90% fail rate. So 1 out of 10 people you bring out there will make it. The other ones, they are going to bail on you. Might not be until the end of the trip, might be on the first day, but it's about a good crew and making money.

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[Clip 0:12:31.7 - 0:12:39.9]

DC: Okay, so what are your greatest hopes for the fisheries in Newport?

KB: To keep going, I mean there's...up in Alaska they are trying to take ground fishing away from us, and that's...we have our own quota here in Newport for whiting, so it's ours. I hope the prices go back up. I hope the fishing stays decent. But you know, fishing is on a cycle. Crabbing it just on its way back up right now. It's been bad for the last couple years. Whiting is kinda not on a great...great...yeah, it's not doing the best right now, but I just hope everything - the market, everything turns around, is what I would like so...

SQ: He's praying for 9 minute tows

All: [chuckle]

KB: Yeah, and 17 cent fish, aint gunna happen

DC: SO what about the policy and regulations, can you tell me anything about those?

KB: I don't know a whole lot about that...

SQ: Yeah

KB: Being on the back deck you don't have to get your head into that too much

SQ: That's more the skipper and the people who deal with the permits, that's the people to talk to about that. We are just the cave men [chuckles] We got out there and do hard stuff

DC: That's interesting, I've heard a lot of people really ragging on the regulation

SQ: Well some people just think they know what they are talking about, and they hear what everybody else says, so their like parrots. I'm a realist

KB: chuckles

SQ: I don't know what they are talking about. It's Spanish to me. Let me know what I have to go out there on deck...I mean, some people want to be skippers, they could be week 1 and they could just be hearing stuff, and going around repeating it. Unless you really talk to somebody with some permits, or actually somebody that goes to the meetings. Not, I know somebody that goes to a meeting once, and they said it so, that makes me an expert. You get a lot of those because, once again they do not have high school educations, some of them. And their trying to be somebody so...

KB: Rumors, rumors, rumors fly in the fishing industry

SQ: Oh yeah, I mean it's worse than high school, it's worse than middle school, it's worse than anything. Their like females

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All: [laugh]

[off camera wife "hey [chuckles]"]

DC: Yeah, not strong independent women [chuckle]

SQ: Yeah, I didn't say strong independent women, I they're girls [chuckles] They bicker about little things and they hate people during certain seasons. They could be their best friends on land but as soon as they get on the water they will be flipping each other off, pulling guns out...probably not guns out but they'll...I've seen people almost hit boats...I've heard people almost hitting boats head on cause they are so angry at each other. People like I'm a deck hand, Kelly's a deck hand on the other boat [gestures to how close Kelly is] just hauling ass by you. That close. It's just like, people get mad.

KB: It gets ruthless

SQ: Yeah, they are just cut-throat. It's survive feast or famine. If somebody thinks you're taking money out of their pocket, they're going to let you know.

DC: Sound like New York [chuckles]

SQ: But as far as the regulations go...we are cavemen

KB: I'm not up on any of the regulations right now.

DC: It sounds pretty nice to not be...

KB: It's a head ache...it's a head ache. You talk to anybody that deals a lot in that

SQ: cause once you know what you're talking about, then all the other people that know what they're talking about come to you and are like...your boss is doing this and this is my take. I don't want any part of that, he's my boss [chuckles]

KB: Our boss just spent a week and a half up in Kodiak doing meetings. So I don't...it doesn't sound like fun to me.

SQ: It's not our place.

DC: Yeah, I went to one council meeting...I thought I was dyeing and it was like a different language

All: [chuckle]

SQ: Oh yeah...

KB: It is!

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DC: They give you a packet of acronyms this thick [gestures with figures] and I'm flipping and I'm just like 'I missed that letter'

SQ: Yeah

KB: [chuckles]

DC: Anyway, so onto some more of the family things. Do either of you come from a fishing background? Like your family...

KB: I don't

SQ: Both of my brother's fish. We did...my dad [?] lineman, he grew up in this town. My little brother moved away and my other brother stayed here and fished. He's been fishing for the last 17 years I think, maybe 18 now. He's running a boat. My little brother works up in Alaska on a King crab boat, long lining brown crab on the [?] end. He makes 3 months, \$140 thousand dollars a year. He's 22. Out of high school, you work 4 days in a row, you turn [?] for 4 months. I mean, you just can't make that kind of money doing anything on land and then having that much time off.

KB: But it goes both ways, like we were saying. If you don't hit them. You work even harder for longer

SQ: Yeah, the boat I brown crabbed mon up in Alaska, they're up there 9-10 months out of the year. Come home do 1 month's ship yard, 2 months' ship yard. I mean you're basically working your own, but on ship yard you get every other week off, but you're up in Alaska the whole time. I mean you can file for a trip or 2 up there but that's...if your one of those guys, that's 16 grand.

KB: Yeah, your missing out on a lot of money

SQ: Yeah, per trip, I mean you don't really want to miss out on that so. It's just, you gotta really weight your options.

DC: Have you noticed family pressure influencing a lot of fishermen?

SQ: Oh yeah. There's kids growing up...I mean, you just kinda get raised into it. I mean, I don't know. The guy I work for has got a 5-year-old. He's on the boat all the time. Not that he always wants to be there, but he's down there. It's the way, I mean, it's the way they were raised. They have got to teach them how to work hard, cause it's a dying, it's really a dying art

KB: Mhmm

SQ: People are just getting lazier, and they are more worried about camera phones and other stuff. I mean, their reality is, they aren't ready for it. It's a different...you gotta work harder than you've ever worked. I mean it's crazy. My first dungee [Dungeness crab] trip, 4 days, 98 hours, 2 weeks of overtime

KB: No sleep

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SQ: 13 hours of sleep in 4 days. And that was like 25 minutes here, half an hour there. I mean, it was short moments, but, if your fishing is hot, you can't stop. Especially for crab. You really gotta get it while you can

KB: Make your money in the first few weeks

SQ: Yeah first week and then move on from there. Yeah.

DC: I've notice a lot of coffee and a lot of red bull from the people I've spoken to

KB: [chuckles] Yeah, yeah

SQ: A lot of coffee and a lot of red bull.

Mrs. Bennette: We have stopped the red bulls here

KB: [chuckles] We don't have red bulls on the boat, just coffee.

DC: That's good [chuckles] more natural

KB: Yeah right [chuckles]

DC: So knowing with your experiences would either of you encourage or discourage your children to go into fishing?

KB: I'm not going to discourage my children from doing anything. If they want to do something I think, we should give them the tools available to do it. So if they want to do it then that's fine but...I think growing... them growing up with me fishing I think it's...they will see the reality of everything. I mean I want them to go to college first, before they do anything. But if they want to fish then I'm not going to say no.

SQ: And it's hard to say what the fishery is really going to be like

KB: Yep, I mean, my daughter is 10 years, my son is a little younger than that so I don't know what it's going to be like.

SQ: that's a decade of just waiting, I mean, of roller coaster up and down. You never know. There might not be any fishing to be had then. I mean honestly, there's so many boats, so much reassurance. Everyone is pushing each other. The boats are getting bigger. The price is going down so it drives everybody to work harder to try and get it done faster. There's only so many times you can make a 300,000-pound tow. I mean as bad as it is to say and as much as you'd like to have it, there's only so many times that you can really do that until it's gone. There's so many boats out there covering a lot of ground, hopefully it stays sustainable.

KB: Yeah

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DC: One thing I have been noticing is there's a lot of divorced individuals in the fishing industry

KB: [laughing]

SQ: Fishermen are the most dirtiest people when they get to land, with a pocket full of money. I mean, you pull into ports like San Fansisco other places like that, fishermen, their like live by the seat of their pants, they fly by the seat of their pants.

KB: Not all of them

SQ: Not all of them, but like some of them. They are married, going into whore houses and strip clubs.

Bennett's Wife: yeah, but that's with any job. We used to be fire fighters, and you know how many cheaters there are with fire fighters?

SQ: Yeah, but...

Bennett's Wife: I mean everybody...

KB: I think it's the fact that your gone so much so you just don't care. Or some people just don't care. It's pretty easy...they fish in southern California a lot, so it's pretty easy to pull into port and just...you know...

SQ: Or if you're an Alaska fisherman you get a hundred thousand dollars, you're just pulling up to bars. Basically in your off time, a lot of fishermen are drunks. They are going to hit the bars, they are flashy, they show off money, some don't pay their taxes. They just pay for fun. They don't expect to be around...some don't expect to be around forever, so they are just living for the moment. Other people...it all...

KB: I've heard stories of Alaska fishermen having families here and families up there, and neither one of them know...

SQ: Yeah, a guy who works for my brother's boat, 9 kids, 7 different women, and he's got another kid with another woman on the way.

DC: Sounds exhausting...

KB: Right!

All: [laughter]

SQ: I mean they are gone so much; they don't have to deal with that reality

KB: But there's no excuse. There's no excuse for what some people do. We have a good family dynamic here. She works hard here at the house [gestures to wife], and I work hard and I'm gone, but you don't have to do those things. There is scum everywhere

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SQ: Just some people you work with aren't great people, but they are good workers.

KB: In the industry you're in

Bennett's Wife: It's everywhere, that I've been in life

SQ: But more often than not, you work hard, you don't have to be a good person to make it fishing. As long as you can make it on deck and you're not going to quit. I'd rather have that than you be a good person. I'd rather you help me out.

Bennett's Wife: Be safe...

SQ: Exactly

Bennett's Wife: Be safe rather than getting killed...

SQ: But it doesn't make them a good person once they hit land. The sauce changes people. They get their hands on drugs.

KB: A lot of drugs in the fishing industry. A lot of drugs

SQ: You have a pocket full of money. What do you want? What do you want to try today? You want to just go buy a truck and go jump it off a cliff? You can do it. You want to buy a bunch of drugs; you want to go party all for your 2 days in town. You don't even have to show up back to the boat. You have a pocket full of cash, and you're just going somewhere not on your way home. And skippers, they put so much trust in themselves and then they don't feel like they get support when they get home. So they are just like 'I don't need this, I'm going somewhere else. I mean there's a hype, but not everybody.

DC: I'm sorry, this must be making you feel so much better [speaking to Bennett's Wife]

Bennett's Wife: Oh I know about the drugs

SQ: Oh she knows

Bennett's Wife: That's been one of our biggest things, is the deal with him is you're on a clean boat. Because that's dangerous.

SQ: And there's a lot of people that take it out on the water.

Bennett's Wife: But there are clean boats

SQ: Oh absolutely

Bennett's Wife: and that's all we have been on is clean boats

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KB: Well we've been on one that isn't and I didn't last very long on that one

Bennett's Wife: But so you can do it, and there's good guys out there, and there's a lot of people that don't want to be on a boat that's not clean.

DC: Is that one of those questions you ask when you go

SQ: You get a drug test.

KB: There's a lot of boats that will drug test you

Bennett's Wife: And those are the boats we are going to be on

SQ: Yeah, and if you get hurt and it's over a thousand dollars, if you want to get covered by the boat...drug test. If you are out there all doped up, high, on meth, or whatever, and your messing up and you hurt yourself because your all high and gagged-out, that's on you. It shouldn't be on the boat so...

Bennett's Wife: which is how it should be

KB: Yeah, we have swabs and alcohol tests on our boat. So if there's any question then you go up to the wheel house and you get your test done.

SQ: Cause you have 24 hours to do that test before it's no good. So if somebody hurts themselves you have to do it within 24 hours

DC: Sounds stressful

SQ: To be a skipper, not to be someone on deck

KB: So it's all out on the skipper now for sure, but...

DC: Aright so switching gears a little away from drug use...

All: [laughter]

DC: What would you say attracts younger people to the industry these days?

KB: Money

SQ: Money

KB: Pure money

SQ: The flashy...you see me roll up on a Harley [motorcycle] how did you get that? You fish...I want that. they see things that they want. They see that you can go out and get them. And that's what they

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want. Everyone wants what they can't have, but some people, like I said, some people work for it, some people see the reality of it and don't want to work for it

KB: there's a lot of people that go do a trip or 2 on a boat and then quit. They get their money and then they quit and then they hang out for a couple week and then get another job. I mean there's guys I've known who have been fishing for 6 or 8 years and they have been on 20 different boats. They just jump ship all the time. That's because they get some money in their pocket and they don't want to go to work.

SQ: Yeah, go where they are needed

KB: They run out of money, they go find a job. And there's a list, there's a list of guys. I mean we are looking to hire one right now, and there's a list of guys that just keep coming down to the boat looking for work. I mean there's always somebody to replace you. If you can't cut it on the back deck, there's somebody knocking on the back door.

SQ: There's somebody that wants to make money.

KB: There's somebody there behind you to take your job. So if you can't produce, if you can't do the work, if you can't do whatever there is somebody to replace you. So the guys that really want it...

SQ: I had a heart condition for 2 weeks and 2 trips. Couldn't even breath, couldn't barely even do my job but I needed money. I just wanted the money and I didn't want to let my buddies down...though it would pass.

KB: That's the thing you have that friendship on the boat and you want to be there for everybody else on the boat.

SQ: Cause you have seen them get so many times before. You don't want to be that guy, cause you know how it feels to be let down...so it's just like you gotta go. I mean you don't get time to go to the doctor, we have to go turn, turn, fucking go, go...

KB: If the boats not fishing, you're not making money.

SQ: Yeah, so you don't want to bail on anybody or do anything bad like that.

DC: Do you think that the biggest motivators for young people, like you said is money, do you think that's changed over time? Or do you think that it has stayed...

SQ: Oh no, it's always been about money.

KB: I think that it's always been about money but there's also a handful of people out there that really, really enjoy doing what we do. And 90% of the time I enjoy it, I really do.

SQ: Our buddy Chad, he loves it 100% of the time

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KB: [nods head] He loves it

SQ: He doesn't want to do anything else. He loves it. He sport fishes when he's off

KB: I mean I've got a little boat in the driveway, I love being on the ocean, I love being on the water.

SQ: I get sea sick, I hate it. I want to be anywhere else, but I can't make that kind of money anywhere else. Not in that type of fashion.

KB: Uneducated person on a land job

SQ: Yeah. \$10,000 a week, \$20,000 a week. I mean, you just...one trip Dungeness crab. First trip you fill up, that 14-16 grand.

KB: And that's in just a couple days

SQ: Yeah, you work hard for it but...

KB: And there's a lot of free work too, that's the other kicker. With our boat, we are probably in ship yard for 3 months total, 4 months total a year. That's 5 days, 6 days a week that you don't get paid for 8-10 hour days. It's just part of the gig.

SQ: You do whatever you do to get the boat ready. Once the boats fishing that's when you're making money. When it's not and you're just doing maintenance, or other things, that's all on you. Some boats pay like \$10 an hour. Like company boats or some of the better boats that are bigger that do well and have more ownership and get paid for quota instead of leasing quota. They can afford to do stuff like that. Pay for ship yard. The boat the Trojan, the boat that I work on for brown crab, they pay 10 bucks for ship yard, but I mean you're doing it. 10 hours a day, 8 hours minimum. Just busy work.

KB: It's just the way it is though; I mean that's the industry. You know? You need to keep your boat fishing...you need to keep...

SQ: You need to keep it nice, maintenance. I mean if you don't want to do it, somebody else will for free, just to make a trip.

[talking and joking with Kelly's children]

DC: So when you get into port, how does the process of getting payed actually work?

SQ: You off load what you get, you get payed a certain price after they see how much you have.

DC: Like just cash?

KB: No, it's all on the books. If you work for a legit operation, it's all on the books. So you off load and you know how much you off loaded. The plant pays the owner; the owner pays us checks.

Participant: Mr. Kelly Bennette & Sean Queenin

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SQ: You get a percentage.

KB: Yeah, it's just a percentage of what we catch.

SQ: Bigger boats like his [gestures to Kelly] get 5 or 6. Smaller boats...

KB: Ours would get...we would get 10 or 10 and a half if we didn't have a rotation. But we get 5 and a quarter percent but we have a rotation. But I get 5 and a quarter percent whether I'm working on the boat or not. So I'm still getting paid even though there out fishing right now.

SQ: I work 9 months out of the year. DO a bunch of ship yard? I get 10 percent, but, your gone 9 months out of the year. And it's a smaller boat, so you don't get as ... I mean our boat holds 60 thousand ... 69 thousand, compared to their...but I mean we do completely different fisheries but they can pack for 10...we pack enough for 4 days. Basically for black cod, and 2 weeks for crab.

DC: So would either one of you want to become an owner or skipper?

KB: [nods] Mhmm

SQ: No way. Too much responsibility. I mean, I don't know. I've been on boats that have gone down. Ive seen when shit goes bad. I've been hurt. If that happened to somebody else or if I was in control when the boat went down and I had people's lives in my hands. I don't want that. That's too much stress for me. The pressure on that and then you have to produce. If you aren't a producer, if you don't make money, you might as well pack your bags and kick rocks. That's too much pressure.

KB: There's a lot of pressure on the captain. A lot of pressure.

SQ: You gotta...you can't have excuses.

KB: But there's a lot of...like our boat, they're not going to turn the boat over to you until they know for a fact that you can do it. So right now Keith is going to start training me because our other captain quit, and so talking with the owner and Keith, they're not going to just turn the boat over if they don't feel I'm ready. So that's good for one.

SQ: You have gotta prove yourself.

KB: Yeah absolutely.

DC: Well congratulations

KB: Thanks, we will see how it goes

DC: So why do you want to become...I head why you don't want to become [gesturing to Sean]...but why do you want that?

SQ: Money

Participant: Mr. Kelly Bennette & Sean Queenin

Researcher: Ms. Deanna Caracciolo

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KB: It's more money

SQ: You get double up and you don't have to work.

KB: Yeah and you don't have all the grunt work that we are used to doing.

SQ: You're not on deck

KB: But the things that I am learning is there's a lot more paperwork and a lot more phone calls, a lot more stuff you have to do. Like on our boat we have to...every trip we have to do something to be able to keep fishing. We have...I mean it's never ending. He's on the phone all the time. When we are coming in if there's a problem on the boat, we have to make sure we get somebody down to the boat. As soon as we hit the dock that guys there to fix it so we can keep going. It's a lot of pressure, like he was saying, on the captain for sure. But it is, once again, I want to better my life, more money helps that. It's...and honestly, you can't work on a back deck for the rest of your life. You're going to get old, you're gonna get frail. And you can do that up in the wheel house a lot easier than you can down on the back deck so...

SQ: Has some smarts [chuckles]

DC: So what the barriers for young people to enter the business then? Like what barriers have you hit while trying to move up the ranks?

KB: You just gotta work hard, that's the biggest barrier. It's the biggest hurdle

SQ: Yea, you're going to put more strain on yourself than you ever have, for a longer period of time than you ever thought you could stay up. I mean when somebody asks you if you can stay up for 24 hours and work, I mean of course you say yea cause you want the job and you want the money, but until you stay up 24, 48 hours, 36 hours, just working straight, you have no idea if you can do it. Some people go crazy.

KB: You can do that on land really easy. Like I've don't it on land really easy. Its 10 times harder out on the ocean, especially in bad weather.

SQ: Yeah, it's so much physical effort that your exuding that just to get up and walk and keep your balance. I mean, the boat always in motion. Your muscles, your all of it is just...basically you're always moving.

KB: Always moving even when you're in your rack, you're still moving. It's tiresome.

DC: What about the ability for someone to come in and not necessarily get their boat from someone else, but the startup costs for someone to buy the boat and the permits and start on their own?

SQ: Depends, I mean for a boat his size [gestures to Kelly] multi million dollars

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KB: Millions and millions of dollars

SQ: For a boat my size 2 million dollars. For a boat like a 50 footer, probably half...I mean the permits...the boats not the expensive part. It's the permits

KB: A black cod...a top tier black cod permits 800 thousand dollars.

SQ: 800 thousand dollars for 40 thousand pounds of fish

KB: Yeah.

SQ: Your Dungeness crab permits, I mean when California was hot, people were selling those for 200 or 300 pot permit like 250 thousand dollars.

SQ: His boat, before it went to pot limits, they bought a California crab permit, but it's...so before they went to pot limits, if you had a boat that fished hard and had a good history then you're typically going to get a 500 pot permit when they allocate that. So when his boat bought one they paid 250 thousand dollars for that permit just to be able to fish. I mean that's no gear. That's a piece of paper that says here you go there's you 250 thousand dollars. You know?

SQ: Yeah, it says you can put your pots in the water and we won't lock you up if we catch you.

KB: Right

SQ: Yeah, and then each pot ...probably 200 dollars with line buoy, pot, you got 500. My first year we had 1300 pots.

KB: Yeah, without pot limits

SQ: Yeah. I mean it's...

KB: A friend of mine just bought a 36 footer, salmon/crab boat. He got a 250 pot permit and a salmon permit and the boat for 100 thousand. SO it's not...and the boat is nothing special. It's a nice little boat, but it's...in my eyes the younger generations...if you're not in a fishing family it is almost unobtainable

SQ: Yeah

KB: I mean there's no way that either one of us can go to the bank and be like 'I want to buy this boat, its 3 million dollars.' They are not going to give you a 3-million-dollar loan for it. Your going to have to have some financial backers. It's a big process to be able to get into it.

DC: SO what would you guys say is the average age of fishermen?

KB: [chuckle] ...old

SQ: There is no such thing as an average age. On his fishery, they go all the way up to 60, 70. On deck.

Participant: Mr. Kelly Bennette & Sean Queenin

Researcher: Ms. Deanna Caracciolo

Location: Newport

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KB: It's...in my industry it seems like the generations are older. There's not a ton of really young...

SQ: It's the more seasoned, salty scene. The younger generation, those are most of the crabbers, but they haven't really seen as bad...like they haven't seen it as bad as those other guys. They have it easy compared to what...I mean we had it easy compared to what...just the advances...the thing about fishing is that it's always advancing. Nothing is set in stone. If there's a better way to do somethings, put it on the table and that is an option to completely change it for everybody. I mean, say you do Dungeness crab and you figure out a thing that lands the pot for you...I mean if you can figure out things...

KB: Make it easier...

SQ: I mean if your inventive and smart and see things in a different picture, that is what people are looking for. They aren't just looking for the drone that just shows up and just does it. I mean they do, but if you think outside the box, that's what people look for. But I mean the younger kids, they didn't have to work. There's no spanking anymore there's no discipline, there's not pushing for wanting to do good. There's no reason for kids to...they don't want to please their parents; they just tell their parents how it is. I mean that's more often than not, I see kids screaming and I just don't really see...I mean the younger kids, that's what the Dungeness crab fishery and crab fishery is, but the more you see it, the more you should do it, the softer it gets. The more younger kids that come up...they just think that they are a fishermen because they made a trip. They don't understand the reality of it, and just because you do a season doesn't mean shit. You gotta do back to back years, you gotta really...you gotta be a fisherman, you gotta feel like you will do anything and it's just kids these days...they don't have the drive or the want and they don't want to please anybody. Like I don't want to disappoint anybody, I'd rather make them happy. But kids these days, they don't have that. They are just like 'I'm out for me, this...this...this..., selfie [clicking noise].'

DC: So do you see people taking selfies out there all the time?

KB and SQ: Oh all the time [chuckle]

DC: [chuckle]

SQ: You catch some crazy cool stuff out there. You get a lot of pictures

KB: Mhmm

SQ: But yeah. It's just the generation is different. It's changes. Like my little brother never towed a net in his life, in 17 years. Some people catch them one by one or ton by ton...

KB: [chuckles]

SQ: I mean it's...I don't know. There's completely different people out there. everybody's different. The more...people are softer these days. Unless you grow up in a fishing family and really know how it is, and they have seen it, there's just not a chance.

Participant: Mr. Kelly Bennette & Sean Queenin

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Location: Newport

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DC: So do you think this average age, which doesn't sound like there really is an average age, do you think the ages are getting older or changing?

KB: I know with my boss; he wants younger guys in the industry. So we don't have a really young crew, I mean I think the youngest is 30 on our boat. Ehh that's a lie, its 27. But a lot of the trawl industry is an older generation for sure. but like he said, pot fishing is a younger generation. But as far as captains go, there isn't a ton of young captains go so it's...yeah. So I think, in our industry, I think they just definitely higher than not.

DC: Do you think that has an impact on the impact on the industry or Newport itself?

KB: Well I think...yeah you...once these guys start retiring, you lose a lot of history, you lose a lot of knowledge. So I don't think it's...I don't know, I don't think it's gunna have a huge effect. Unless...I mean you need somebody to replace that guy...

SQ: There's gunna be pluses and minuses

KB: Absolutely

SQ: People come in, this is how a wheel spins for this long. Some people are just set in that. The younger generation comes in, I mean, they have got the right stuff, they have got technology. I mean there's so many things advancing.

KB: [chuckles] the technology in the trawl industry is crazy huge. Just to be able to, for us just to be able to go out there and sustain our fisheries. Because we are trawlers, and we tow a huge net, whether it's on the bottom or in the water column, but you need to have all this technology to be able to maintain the fisheries and not...not wipe a bunch of fish out. So if you don't stay up on technology, you're not going to sustain

SQ: Your bycatch increases, you start killing more things that don't need to be killed just because. I mean shrimping, shrimping, you go and you get smelt, these little fish...when I was shrimping you just be up on the belt, there's a conveyor line and its shrimp and fish. Picking fish off, getting poked in the fingers. Just getting infections from spines in your fingers. Well there was a guy up there, all they did was put lights on their doors. Eliminated 99% of the bycatch. The fish get spooked by the lights, doesn't effect the shrimp, the shrimp just stay where they are at. So fish will clear out of your nets and then bam...they don't get killed. I mean technology, advancements, things like that...it's the little steps that keep it sustainable

KB: Everybody needs to do it too

SQ: Yeah

KB: But it takes money to do it

SQ: Yeah! I mean it's not free. I mean advances...

Participant: Mr. Kelly Bennette & Sean Queenin

Researcher: Ms. Deanna Caracciolo

Location: Newport

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KB: It takes a lot of money

SQ: I just invented a new wheel, this is how much it costs.

KB: I know we spend hundreds of thousands of dollars every year in our operation just to maintain our boat with the technology. I mean it costs a lot of money.

DC: Every year?

KB: Oh yea absolutely. I mean he doesn't have to but he wants to maintain it. He wants to do good. We want to fish for a while. That's a huge fishing family that I work for and all the differences over the last 30, 40 50 years. He wants to be able to maintain so his grandkids can still fish.

DC: So what would it be like if the businesses, or the business that you used to work for, and the business that you work for now, if they were sold corporate?

KB: I mean that's happening every year too

SQ: That's a coin flip. If you are doing good and you have a solid crew, they will keep you around. But if not, they have no problem sweeping you out the door.

KB: Absolutely not cause there's always somebody to replace you.

SQ: Yeah. Especially with the corporations, they have so many boats and so many other people that they trust and know. If you're going to sit there and give them guff or any kind of hard

KB: They're not going to deal with it, yep.

SQ: We got somebody else who is willing to do it. And then 2 other people behind him and we know them and trust them. They worked for us for years. So if you have that attitude about it you don't need to be here. So get out of my face, get off my boat.

KB: Typically it seems like if it goes to a bigger company then, they do keep most everybody around if they are good.

SQ: Yeah, I mean most people that are doing it, and especially if they have been on the boat for a while, they have the knowledge of the boat so the corporations want that and they want to keep the boat safe and making money. So if you have people the produce and are safe and smart, they will keep you around.

KB: That's know the boat

SQ: But if you are just some idiot that's going around waving your finger around trying to tell them how it is they are going to tell you to suck it. Get out of here. For a corporation to play it by the rules, I mean, get out.

Participant: Mr. Kelly Bennette & Sean Queenin

Researcher: Ms. Deanna Caracciolo

Location: Newport

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DC: Will it change Newport at all if the fleet goes corporate?

SQ: No, it wouldn't effect Newport as much as if fishing came to a stop. If fishing came to a stop, that would affect Newport.

KB: Absolutely.

DC: Do you think there is a possibility of that?

SQ: I mean...

KB: Everything is possible but

SQ: I mean people get shut down for years. If there's nothing to be had, then they are just going to tell you...I mean they'll shut it down for shrimp and salmon there putting on the list. It's been so hot; people are having million-pound shrimp seasons.

KB: Guys on the back deck were making 200 thousand dollars during shrimp season. Last year was a crazy season.

SQ: I mean the price keeps going up and shrimp keep going down, but now they are on kinda smaller limits for salmon, shrimp, tuna. And that's wide open. Tuna is pretty sustainable. But the other ones, there's so many boats that are getting bigger and getting good at it. It won't be around if they keep going at it the way they are. I mean if they keep catching...I mean they'll take it until the last shrimps gone. They could. They think it will come back.

KB: We need regulations for sure. There comes a point where regulations are starting to outweigh what we can do. I mean there needs to be a balance there for sure, but it's not...I don't think it will effect, like he says, I don't think it will effect Newport unless no fishing, you know?

DC: So do you think there is a tipping point in communities, where it gets to a certain point where corporate America and change, and there's no going back?

SQ: Well Newport is a town that's...it's more if you do it right. If you do things right in Newport, you will be around.

KB: Yeah.

SQ: If you don't do it wrong and you have...and you take short cuts and you don't care about the town they will run you out. They won't show up...I mean there is no support.

KB: You have to have a good relationship with the plant.

SQ: Yea, and the community

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KB: And the community. But if you don't have a good relationship with the plants then you're not going to go fishing cause you have nobody to sell to.

SQ: yeah, cause they have so many options I can pick from. 20 boats, why should I pick you if you are being rude and not listening? I mean they have other people that are good too and that they are buddies with.

DC: So plants will literally just turn you away?

SQ: They won't...they can't...I mean as long as you have a set agreement, like we are offloading to you. But yea. Some plants...I mean I've got all this product. if some people don't have a game plan and come in, they don't know, the plant doesn't know...if they don't know the boat...if you don't fish for that plant, they don't know if you have been out there...if you are only allowed a 4-day trip, they don't know if you have been out there for 6. They don't know the product that they are getting. They don't know anything. They don't know you from a hole in the ground. So if you come in consistently with a bad product or with a lot of rotten product. Plants will cut you off. They will be like 'no you're not going fishing, you're not bringing us anything that we can sell, your just bring us...your just killing the ocean and you don't care. But other boats that do it right...it makes a difference. The plants really like...yeah, it matters. If you aint corporate, I mean as long as you catch a good product and are fair it wouldn't be an issue. But when you start coming around trying to push around your power and this and that, people...they will stick to their guns before they. They just won't go fishing if that's the case, until they can find somebody else to offload to. And there's always somebody who you can sell it to. Cause seafood...you can only get it on the west coast or the east coast.

DC: So remind mem again how you got into fishing.

SQ: I got kidnapped by my own brother [smiles]. I got really sea sick and didn't really want to go fishing but I broke up with my girlfriend and hadn't really hung out with my brother in 6 years, went tendering for 2 months over the summer in southwest Alaska and been fishing ever since. I mean, money, spend time with my family, it was perfect. But I didn't really enjoy it, I mean I enjoyed time but I mostly enjoyed the money. I enjoyed the work. I really like the work, but you just can't do it forever.

DC: What did you do before?

SQ: Asphalt, construction just a bunch of constructions for the most part. I've done it all, but I have been fishing for the last 5, maybe 6 years.

DC: And what are you doing now that you're done?

SQ: I just got my heart condition like a month ago.

DC: Oh! So you'r still figuring it out.

SQ: Yeah, going to doctors' appointments. I just had a doctor's appointment

[talking to KB children]

Participant: Mr. Kelly Bennette & Sean Queenin

Researcher: Ms. Deanna Caracciolo

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DC: What about do you have a spouse or kids?

SQ: No, I have a girlfriend

DC: What does she think of it all?

SQ: She's supportive. She grew up in this community. She knows how it is. She's understanding. She knows I love her and won't do anything to jeopardize us so that's the main thing. She doesn't like me being gone, but she wouldn't like me being home all the time either. I mean if your gone fishing a lot, I mean your relationship relies on water cause your gone. So it's different when your home all the time.

DC: Is there anything else that I missed that you think would be good for me to know?

SQ: Fishermen are full of shit. That's the main thing.

All: [chuckle]

SQ: They will tell you...have you ever heard a fishing story? It was the biggest thing I've ever seen [both Kelly and Sean gesturing - arms wide, show how big a fish could be] I mean it's like that ...

KB: Rumor mill

SQ: You just really gotta...who your talking to and take little pieces of information and take it with a grain of salt because most of it just mostly lies. I mean it might not all be lies, but definitely exaggerated or not completely the truth. But for the most part...

DC: That's the take away you want me to have? [chuckles]

SQ: That's it, I'm just telling you.

[end 0:56:15.2]