

Interviewer: Kenny Corder from the island of Molokai started fishing when he was a kid. He's been a commercial bottom fish fisherman since 1988.

Kenny Corder: My dad was a charter boat captain in Kewalo basin. But I wasn't allowed to do that. I had to get straight A's and B's in school. My last year in senior year, 1983 in Mililani High School, I was lucky enough for my Fridays I had all elective classes. So if the boat was avail... If I could go fishing with my dad or with somebody else, I would go. My mom said, "You're going towards your future. I know you're already gonna be a fisherman." And I got my license, my charter boat, captain's license in 1985. In 1988, I had a falling out with the owner of the boat that I was running and he didn't wanna pay me. And I said, "Okay, no problem. I'll take the sampan down the road and I'll go bottom fishing." And then, one day after I came in, my boss had gone to the Hawaiian billfish tournament in Kona, but he didn't leave me any capital to work with. So I was gonna be stuck there for three weeks without any money or anything like that. Jubilee Logan noticed, "Kenny, you're still in. You're been in for two days already. What's going on?" And I told him the story, and he took his shades off and he looked at me straight in the eye. He goes, "I wanna take you on my boat." We got outside to Diamond Head. He took his shades off and he said, "Oh I hope you know that I'm selling this boat and you're the only person to go fishing with me on this boat. You own this boat now." And I'm like, "What?" "Yeah, you're gonna buy this boat." Three months later I had the boat paid off in full. There's a 35 foot sampan, Hayashi sampan. It was built in 1948. And I think it was in October or November 1988, I didn't have a name for the boat, so I named it the Munchkin. Muchkin was my nickname they gave me down there at the wharf at Kewalo Basin when I was 16. And it was the smallest bottom fishing boat at the time, in the fleet. First teacher that I had was Jubilee Logan. I mean my dad taught me the basics...

Interviewer: Fishing, yeah.

KC: -- but that was more trolling. But bottom fishing was Jubilee Logan. See his style of fishing is different than anybody else that I've ever fished with. His style of fishing was speed, accuracy, and strength. 'Cause with Jubilee you were not allowed to sit down. You ain't sitting down. You ain't catching no fish sitting down. So you have to stand up the whole day. For example, that would be like being on the back of an aku boat, standing there all day like this. He would make me stand there and just watch him sometimes for hours. If I got in trouble, if I did something wrong, "You stand over there Kenny and you watch! I'm gonna teach you how to do this right!" And I gotta stand there on the back of the boat, and if you try and you fall like that, "Kenny! I told you! You gotta...!" You know, that's the way he was. At first, I started catching uku and paka. And then one of the old timers, I think... Not sure who it was. A old timer from Hawaii Kai. He said, "Kenny! We're on the third finger, we're on a pinnacle. You ever try catch onagas before?" "onagas? Are you crazy? That's too deep!" Oh, I caught about 400 pounds of onaga in 2 days and ever since then, I never went back to uku again.

Narrator: Catching the fish is just part of a fisherman's workday. Equally important is getting that fish to the market.

KC: I'm a United Fishing Agency guy. All my fish go to auction. If I go out there and I catch 100 pounds, 200 pounds, 300 pounds, auction's gonna take everything. Throw it in a box, send it down to them. Whereas if I go to a different market, "Oh, we only want 50 pounds of this. We want 20 pounds..." Well, if you want 50 pounds of this and 20 pounds of that, you can go to auction and you can buy what you want. Because I'm not gonna waste my time trying to meet your needs, your needs, your needs and your needs.

Interviewer: That's what it is, it's time yeah?

KC: Yeah, and people on my island, nowadays you'll see they'll fish one day then the next day they'll be on the street selling fish. Why am I gonna spend my time on the street when I can wake up in the morning, put all my fish in a box, send them to Honolulu. And when you guys are pulling up to go on the street, I'm going out to go catch another load of fish. Now the last couple years, my theory has changed a little bit. I'm not a go-getter as much, like I was telling Clay. If I do 50 to 75 pounds to maybe 100 pounds at most of the day, I'm super happy. I don't have to go out there and go catch 150 or 200 pounds. You know. I'm a gentleman fisherman now. Now I'm getting old too. I just don't feel it. But my driver's license says I'm old.