

Name of person Interviewed: Phil Ashworth [PA]

Facts about this person:

Age (if known) 49

Sex Male

Occupation Former fisherman

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

Home port, New Bedford

and Hail Port (port fished from, which can be the same) New Bedford

Residence (Town where lives) Dartmouth, MA

Ethnic background (if known) European American

Interviewer: Janice Gadaire Fleuriel [JGF]

Transcriber: Janice Gadaire Fleuriel

Place interview took place: New Bedford Harbormaster House

Date and time of interview: Sept. 23, 2007

INDEX / KEYWORDS

KEYWORDS: Fisherman, retired; New Bedford, Massachusetts; Fisher poet; Scalloping; Dragging; Practical Jokes; Storms; Injuries

[Start of File WAV_0034_001]

[00:00] Born and raised primarily New Bedford/surrounding areas; Father's father was new Bedford Chief of Police 50s/60s; Father was fisherman and state trooper, took part in motorcade for Eisenhower's New Bedford visit; Lived Padanarum as a teen, always on the water; Didn't graduate from high school, went fishing; Born January 1958; 18 when started fishing; Did dragging first and then scalloping; Story of getting hired on first scalloper, captain had only asked if he'd ever fished not if he'd done scalloping; Worked way up scalloping from shoveling rocks to cook, engine room, first mate;

[03:10] Unusual catches—body of Canadian fisherman, airplane off Block Island; Story of getting head injury in a really bad storm, getting airlifted off boat;

[06:21] Story of getting washed off boat and back on in February; Has high respect for Coast Guard—police and protect the way police forces should; Has seen guys killed on dock, at sea; Liked the winter and heavy weather best; Reading his poem *Boats of Wood, Men of Iron* about just getting back in at start of a very bad storm;

[11:06] Writing a book based around his experiences but with many other seagoing elements in it; Reading poem about people complaining about seafood prices need to see how hard fishermen work; At time he was airlifted, weather was on edge of what Coast Guard could do, would have had to be National Guard if Coast Guard couldn't do it; Married his wife after had started fishing; Story of telling her that the wind sound in the wires one night meant they'd be getting beat up offshore, always regretted putting that fear in her; Love-ate relationship with fishing, more often loved it;

[14:58] Can get repetitive, depending on type of fishing (such as shucking scallops); Gets boring in good weather; Explanation of scallop drag bringing up rocks, needing to shovel them; Never realized when young and fishing just how strong he was; 6 hours on/off shifts when he was scalloping, lucky to get 3 hours sleep at a time; Usually fished eight to ten days, by day five or six got bone tired/robotic; Description of "catching the air" – jumping up and forward when boat goes down after a big wave – for fun/contest with other crew;

[19:12] Some times tedious hours of boredom, watching sea go by; Practical jokes on board: Story of rigging the sheet from a guy who took his sleeping bag, so it came off him and guy chased it all around boat trying to catch it; Story of crew hiding clothes another crewmember had washed and hung on rigging at start of a trip, captain telling him they blew away when he came back up from a nap; Putting forks in people's boots in such a way that foot gets stuck when try to take it out;

[23:37] Story of shooting high-pressure air up at cook through the drain pipe from below/engine room area; Never fought on a boat, kept distance if disagreements, save fisticuffs if it came to that for back on the dock; Rough bunch, fights happen a lot;

[26:08] Thoughts about women on boats: Great to have them, seem to have calming effect on crew, and any harassment gets stopped quickly if it happens by other crew stepping in; Some things women physiologically can't do, like shovel rocks for extended periods, because of way their bodies are put together; There have been some fantastic women captains; Thinks Eva Liput, scalloper captain JGF interviewed before, is also a commercial diver, member of Propellor Club;

[End of File WAV_0034_001/End of Interview]

TRANSCRIPT

[Start of File WAV_0034_001]

[00:00]

JGF: This is Sunday, September 23rd, 2007 at the Working Waterfront Festival in New Bedford. And I'm speaking with Phil Ashworth in the Harbormaster's House. And, Phil just happened to come up to us and indicate that he's a fisher poet and he has fishing experience. So we're here to talk about that. So, if you could start by telling me where and when you were born, and maybe how your family got to this area or got into the industry.

PA: OK. Well as you said, my name is Phil Ashworth. I'm 49 years old. I was born and raised primarily in New Bedford, and the surrounding areas. I live in Dartmouth now, with my wife and my two daughters. My family's got quite a history here in the city. My grandfather, my father's father, was the chief of police in New Bedford in the fifties and sixties. My father was a fisherman. He was also a state trooper. And, back in the fifties when Eisenhower came, during the presidential election, he drove up Union Street with a motorcade. And, if you go up to the Social Security building, the Federal building, you'll see a picture on the wall in there. Of Eisenhower's motorcade coming right up here, up Union Street. And, there's a state trooper on a motorcycle right alongside the open limousine. That's my father.

JGF: Wow.

PA: So, that was pretty cool.

JGF: Yeah!

PA: But, fishing... We lived down in Padanarum when I was a young teenager. And I covered every inch of that water. Front, top and bottom, inside and out. And, I've just always loved the ocean. And, I didn't graduate from high school. I went fishing.

And, that was the beginning.

JGF: And what year were you born? I'm sorry, if you said that.

PA: I was born in January, 1958.

JGF: OK.

PA: I'm going to be fifty in January.

JGF: OK. So you went fishing—How old were you when you started going fishing?

PA: Eighteen. That was in 1976. I made my first few trips with the Portuguese fleet, the draggers. And, I spent about a year working on the draggers. And the scallopers started making really big money. But I'd never been out on a scalloper. So one day I saw a boat, the Ellen Louise on the end of State Pier, doing gear work. And I walked up and, the gentleman, Mr. Tinker from Maine. I asked him for a job. And he asked me if I'd ever been fishing. And he didn't *ask* me if I'd been *scalloping*. Just if I'd been fishing. I said, "Oh, yeah. I've got a year and a half experience." He says, "Well come down to the boat the next day with your gear."

So I got down to the boat and we went out and we got down off New York. I got out on deck and I said, "OK. What do we do?" Well I had... There were ten very angry men on the boat. But I worked hard and he kept me on. He kept me on.

And then I was just—started out shoveling rocks and I worked my way through. I was cook, into the engine room, first mate. I mean, really, there's so many years I spent, there's *so* many things I could say.

JGF: Yeah.

PA: Storms...

[03:10]

JGF: Well I was going to say, do you have memorable experiences? Or one or two that you could share, like that?

PA: Well I remember the time that we found—we caught an unfortunate fisherman in the drag. I was on the Chris[?] Sandra. And a body came up in the drag. And,... As it turns out they were able to identify him, because he had laundry tags in his clothes. And, we were out in the cultivated shoals. And he had been lost overboard in Canada. He was Canadian.

JGF: Oh, wow....

PA: Another time we caught an airplane.

JGF: The *whole* airplane?

PA: The whole airplane. I was dragging then. That was down, not too far off of Block Island.

JGF: Wow! Now could you tell when that was coming up that it wasn't a normal catch? Was it that heavy, or [laughs]?

PA: Yeah, the net got hung up. We were struggling to try to get it free from the bottom. And then we *did*. And then all these bubbles started coming up like crazy. And then all of a sudden this *wing* just came up. Maybe about sixty yards behind the boat. This wing just came up out of the water. It was red and white and then it settled back down again.

So we called the Coast Guard and they came out. And we lost the net. They kept it.

JGF: Oh...!

PA: I don't know what ever happened with it, but.

Oh... I've been airlifted. I got banged up on a boat out on the winter fishing grounds. Really, really bad storm. I busted my head open.

JGF: What happened exactly? Do you remember?

PA: We were... A big storm had rolled through and then the wind switched around and came in northwest and that's when it gets really cold. It was probably blowing fifty, sixty knots. And, we had wind chills about forty below. So we were icing and icing heavy. And... We were on *deck*. The whole crew was on deck with big wooden mallets, and all we did was just bust ice and shovel it overboard as fast as we could. Because as the boat makes ice, eventually it gets—it *can* get heavier than the bottom of the boat. And if that happens they want to trade places. And that's—that's not a good thing.

JGF: No! [laughs]

PA: So we'd been working for about eighteen hours non-stop. And we were definitely in survival mode. And, I was back *aft*. And I was walking forward and it was really slippery and the boat took a couple of heavy seas and weird pitches. And I found myself airborne. And I bounced off the winch, up against the watertight [?], and split my head open.

JGF: Oh, God!

PA: Across the front. And, I guess I was out of it. I don't really remember. The next—you know, really at all, that—then I remember being in the wheelhouse in a survival suit, and looking out, the port hole and seeing a helicopter hovering alongside the boat. And, they dropped down the basket and I got in it. And, I remember looking out, and I saw this guy standing there looking out the door and he looked like a *bug* with the helmet that he had. And, I looked up at *him* and I was getting close to *him* and I looked *down* and I couldn't believe how far away the boat was.

JGF: Oh...!

PA: And, they reached out and grabbed me. They pulled me inside. And I remember looking forward and I saw two more bugs looking at me from the cockpit. And, then, I don't remember.... I remember being taken out of the helicopter. And I remember being in the hospital. And I, I don't—I think I was there a couple of days. I had a really bad concussion. I think I got like sixty or seventy stitches.

JGF: Oh...my God!

PA: You can just see a little line here, but... The back of my head [?]. And, I took a couple of trips off and I went back out fishing again.

JGF: [laughs]

[06:21]

PA: I've been overboard. And we were up, again up on the winter fishing grounds. It was on a scalloper. And I was working the starboard rail. And, I think the captain might have turned just a little bit too early. And I was on the weather side. And, maybe that drag caught on that bottom on that side. As he turned, the boat laid its shoulder into the sea. And, so it was a, really severe angle. And a sea came up on the boat just like it would on a beach. And, it took me right off the boat. And it doesn't take long for a boat to roll from port to starboard. So I went *in*. The boat rolled away from me. And, I watched the scuppers go by, saw the rolling [?] go by, could hear the wheel off to my left, going "fuh fuh fuh fuh fuh" in the water. And then I—All of a sudden here it comes again. I see the rail goes by me, disappears up in the water. And it was like body surging. Put me right back on the deck of the boat.

JGF: Oh my God! [laughs]

PA: I was thrashing around. And this was in February.

JGF: Oh my God, wow.

PA: And I banged up against the main tow wire. And I got my arms around it and I just held on. And, it was just...one two three. I mean, that's how fast it was.

JGF: You didn't have time to be scared or anything?

PA: Oh! No, didn't have time to be scared.

JGF: After it was over did you say prayers or anything? [laughs] Do you get into that?

PA: [laughs] Prayed all the time.

JGF: You did?

PA: We prayed. Yeah, I was... I definitely believe in God. It's... Here they are now! [referring to sound of Coast Guard helicopter flying overhead.]

JGF: [laughs]

PA: I have high respect for the Coast Guard.

JGF: I imagine you must.

PA: I have high respect for the Coast Guard. I believe the United States Coast Guard is what police forces everywhere should be.

JGF: Ah. In what ways?

PA: They police and they protect. And, they will put their lives on the line without hesitation. For people that they don't even know. And, I've never dealt with a Coast Guard member in any way except him being totally fair and totally honest. Yeah, I have tremendous respect for them.

But, I could go on and on...

I've seen guys get hurt. I've seen guys get killed.

JGF: Oh... Get killed like from accidents on board?

PA: Yeah. Right here on the dock. Off shore.

JGF: Wow. But you always went back.

PA: Always went back. I love it. And as crazy as it sounds, I always liked the winter more than anything. I love heavy weather.

JGF: Just, why do you think?

PA: I don't know. I just loved it. I always did. I loved the heavy weather. A fifty foot sea is something you have to see to believe.

JGF: Yeah you would, wouldn't you? I can't even...

PA: What I wrote—one of the things that I gave you that I wrote, I actually know it by heart.

JGF: Well you could tell me on tape if you'd like.

PA: OK.

JGF: That would be great.

PA: The title of it is *Boats of Wood, Men of Iron*. And it was about a very, very bad storm. And... We were very lucky to get in that night. I mean *very* lucky. It was as close as I've ever been. And, again the title is the *Boats of Wood, Men of Iron*. And it starts:

In a boat built of wood,
 from the mountains of Maine,
 with a keel of pasture oak
 Neptune himself couldn't restrain.
 After a full day's steam to the nor'east peak,
 eleven men were fishing eight day week.
 Catching scallops in both foul weather and fair,
 it'll toil the decks with twenty footers everywhere.
 Shucking those clams while standing at the box,
 drags the boat back stuffed full of rocks.
 The captain climbs down and says with a sigh,
 "Let's finish up boys, it's time to fly."
 They step in close to hear what he'll say,
 "It's a storm we have, force 12 on the way."
 With all secure, it's time to dig turn.
 The great, great sea's soon to boil and churn.
 So go ahead storm, give it your best.
 They're full ahead now, bearing due west.

Plunging and ploughing along into the night,
the storm may lose.
This crew is giving fight.
As the heavens above are being torn apart,
we find the crew, to a man, praying from the heart.
With first light comes waves running fifty-plus feet.
So no rest we have if this storm's to be beat.
This grand old boat shudders, struggles to rise,
as mountains of water try to claim one more prize.
With windows blown in, water cascading inside,
this crew just won't quit.
They keep bucking the tide.
After jumping the shoals, then rounding the corner,
they see the hurricane barrier far off to their lee.
Then like a sparkling young maiden worriedly[?] singing her tales
from across the fetch the lighthouse [?].
Finally tied to the dock, eleven weary men rest.
Iron strong men, New Bedford's Best.

JGF: Hmm... Wow!

[11:06]

PA: That's one. I'm actually in the middle of a book. But it's... It's going very well.
It's a non-fiction.

JGF: About your experiences, or what?

PA: It's based around my experiences. But, there's intrigue. There's treasure, pirate ships. United States Navy. Islands around here, like Noman's. It's... It's a nice story line. And it's coming together pretty well. Probably going to be a couple years before I finish it.

I do have one other thing. This is for the people out there that says seafood has gotten out of sight and crazy with the prices. And, as a consumer I understand that to some degree. Because to some degree, I agree. But, keep this in mind. For those who eat fish and scallops, and growl at the price, take the single trip off shore with me to shovel rocks, snow and pound ice. And after one good beating, on a cold winter's day, I guarantee you'll never again gripe about the fisherman's pay.

JGF: [laughs] That's great! Wow, I bet your book will be good. You write really well. I hope you can stay for that panel. People would love to hear you.

PA: Yeah.... It's, maybe. I might be able to. We'll see. I've got to call my wife. Her brother is in the process of moving and [?] truck, and... We'll see. I think noontime is a possibility.

JGF: OK. Well... Did Laura say the panel she wanted you for was at noon?

PA: Yeah. I think she was going to change some stuff around.

JGF: Alright, well check with her before you go. Because that's really neat.

PA: OK.

JGF: Well, I have a couple of questions. First of all, back on your story when you needed to get airlifted and it was a bad storm. Were you lucky that they could even get out to do that for you in that weather?

PA: They were on the edge. They were probably right on the edge of what they could fly in. Because we were out there. They were right on the edge of the weather conditions they could be in. Because of the *winds*, and we were right at the furthest limit of their flight capabilities. Because the Coast Guard—although I don't know about now, but the choppers they used back then, they didn't have refueling capabilities. So, that would have had to been the National Guard. But they got me! They got me, I'm here.

I should have been dead already four or five times out there. Without doubt.

JGF: And, when did you get married compared to how long you'd been fishing? Has your wife sort of had to...?

PA: I met my wife when I was fishing. And I married her when I was fishing. And... I made one mistake one time. We hadn't been married all that long and we were living in an apartment in Fall River. We were on the second floor and it was close to the South Watuppa Pond so it was wide open. You could see, way across the pond. And one night we were laying there, and the wind was just whistling out of the southwest. Actually it was southeast. And—have you ever heard the phone wires moan at night? When the wind goes through them so hard it “Zhoooooooooooo”. It was doing that that one night. And I looked at my wife and I said, “Well, if you ever hear the phone wires doing that you know we're getting beat up offshore.”

JGF: Oh oh. [laughs]

PA: That was probably one of the biggest mistakes I ever made. Because I instilled a worry and a fear in her that she didn't need. And I regretted that for years. But, I always told her—and I think she believed it—that, no matter what happened if anybody was going to get back it was going to be me. You know.

JGF: Uh huh. Wow.

PA: That's just how it is. It was... You *have* to love it. It's a crazy job. It's actually a love-hate—There were times when I would hate it. But, I would say that there was more often when I absolutely loved it.

[14:58]

JGF: What would you say you hated and what did you love? Or could it be the same thing depending on the day [laughs]?

PA: Yeah. It could be the same thing. Depending on the type of fishing you're doing, it can be very repetitive. Standing in the scallop box for hours on end, doing nothing but sucking, shucking them out of the shell. You just stand there and cut and cut and cut and cut and cut.

I find, in the *good* weather, it actually gets boring. Because it's just—it's the same thing over and over and over again. And... The drags come *in*. They get emptied *out*. They get set back *out*. You tear through the pile. You shovel the rocks overboard. You pick up your basket. You run with your basket.

JGF: And the rocks... You mentioned rocks. I never heard that term. So what are the rocks?

PA: A scallop drag can pick up just about anything that's on the bottom.

JGF: Oh, so you mean real rocks!

PA: Rocks. Rocks.

JGF: OK. I thought it was like a term for the leftover shells or something.

PA: No. The typical drag is fifteen feet long. Depending, if the boat has the horsepower to tow it. And, on the opening of the drag you hang what you call rock chains. And it looks like windowpanes. And, the size of the windowpanes determines the size of what's going to get in that drag. So if you have windowpanes that say, are a foot by a foot, then, you can get rocks, you know a foot across. And, depending on the type of bottom—and we have some *very, very* hard bottom, right around here—you can get bagfuls of rocks... Thirteen minute tows, five minute haulbacks—for every eighteen to twenty minutes you can have two piles of rocks on the boat, that are fifteen feet long, as high as the rail and out from the rail maybe three or four feet. Tons and tons of rocks. And, you just... It's *extremely* hard. It's man-killing work.

JGF: Yeah, I bet! Those are not....

PA: I didn't even realize it, back then, when I was a young man, how strong I was. I could grab the front bumper of a Volkswagen—you know, the older ones, with the engine in the back?

JGF: Yeah.

PA: And I could life the front wheels two feet off the ground.

JGF: Oh my God!

PA: I could pick up a fifty-five gallon drum of oil and walk away with it.

JGF: Wow!

PA: And, it was just natural. But... Work. Work. It's... You work twice a day, on a scalloper, six hours on, six hours off. This was back in the day. And, it worked out, if you could sleep three hours twice a day, you'd consider yourself pretty lucky. So, after...

JGF: And this how many days?

PA: Back then, we'd usually fish eight to ten days. And after four, five, six days, you start to get that bone weary tired. Where, you almost turn out into a robot. And you just..., the same thing over and over and over and over again. But... I've said it before, I'll say it again. It's what kept things interesting.

JGF: That's interesting!

PA: It kept things interesting. We used to do this thing called catching the air. And that's where we'd go all the way to the front of the boat, and we'd turn around and face the stern. And as the boat was coming up off say a twenty or a thirty foot sea, just when it got to the peak and it started to drop, the boat would be falling away from you. We'd take three or four steps toward the stern—running steps—and leap into the air. So the boat's going forward, the boat's falling and you're jumping up. So you can literally find yourself fifteen feet in the air—

JGF: [laughs]

PA: —and sail twenty feet back towards the stern. And that's what we used to call catching air.

JGF: For fun?

PA: For fun.

JGF: You weren't afraid that you'd sail right off the boat?

PA: Ah... You kind of stayed in the middle.

JGF: [laughs]

PA: And you'd pick your times.

JGF: Oh my God!

PA: It was an ongoing thing.

JGF: Oh, that's hysterical. Was it like a contest or something?

PA: Yeah. Yeah, you'd see who could get the highest and who could get the furthest.

JGF: [laughs]

PA: But you know, we were back then in our early and we were thought that we were almost indestructible. You could take a shot that would put most people in the hospital and shake it off and get up and go back to work.

JGF: Man! I'm listening to you and I'm just getting seasick listening to you talk about what the boat does, or the waves. You know, that's the part that I just admire that anyone can do that.

[19:12]

PA: Yeah. It's an interesting life. It's an interesting profession.

And then, of course there's always hours of—you know, tedious hours of boredom. I can't tell you how many times I've just, leaned on the rail for hours and just watched the sea go by.

And, it was a few years my finally convinced me to take her on a cruise. And she said to me, she said, "Oh, won't it be beautiful just sitting there and watching the sea go by?" I said, "Deb, I got news for you. There's not much to look at."

JGF: [laughs]

PA: You know? Unless you see a group of whales or porpoises or, a stray turtle once in a while.

But we also had fun. Playing practical jokes. Fishermen are great practical jokers.

JGF: Yeah.

PA: Some of the things that I've seen. The jokes, the pranks that are pulled on each other, are just... Inventive? Oh, boy. Creative.

JGF: Yeah? What's an example?

PA: Oh, I have a good one for you.

There was a new good guy on the boat. And he came on board and he really didn't have much. And, he had the habit of taking things that belonged to other people, without asking. Like socks, T-shirts. Halfway through one of the watches, at midwatch—what we call mugup—I went down to get a coffee. And, I found him *in* my sleeping bag. And, wearing clothes that he'd been on deck with for like three days.

JGF: Oh.... Oh, yuck.

PA: So I was pretty—I woke him up. I was pretty angry. And I got him out of it. And I took it and I threw it over on my bunk. And, it might have been a couple months later that I go down there again and he had my sleeping bag *again*. But this time it was unzipped and he had it on top of him. So I just very carefully, I took it off without waking him up. And he had a sheet over him. And, I went up on deck I got a piece of nine-thread which is just a light rope. And, I went down there and I tied it off to the edge of the sheet. And I ran it up the doghouse stairs around the mast over the hatch cover. And I got to the railing and I took an empty five gallon [wink?] bucket, and I filled it up with water, and then I leaned over the boat—we were steaming at the time, we were jumping a shoal—and, I dropped it all

overboard. Now the heavy bucket of water probably went five, six feet down. And, boat's moving ahead at ten knots. So, that's like a sea anchor.

PA: Well. All of a sudden, here comes this guy's sheet, up the doghouse, across the deck, around the mast, up over the hatch cover, across the deck, up over the railing to the water. And he was two feet behind it all the way trying to catch it.

JGF: [laughs]

PA: And—[laughs]. That was hysterical. We were like turtles on our backs. Everybody was just dying. We laughed about that for days.

JGF: Oh... Oh my God! [laughs]

PA: Oh. The things...
Another time, this kid Bobby came on the boat. He must have just gone out drinking the whole trip. Because he left his bag, his gear on the boat. And he didn't wash it or anything. He showed up the day that we sailed. And, he was in a bad way. He was hurting. So he just hit his bunk and, we steamed out. And he came out with two five-gallon buckets. He took all his clothes from the trip before. And he washed him all off. He hung them all over the rigging. And he went and turned in again. So me and another guy went up and we took, almost all his clothes except for like a T-shirt here, a pair of socks there or pants over here. We put them all in a bag and hid them in the engine room.
And, the captain was Norwegian. And I'll never forget this. This guy's name was Bobby, and we were just going by Round Shoal in Nantucket, about ten hours out. And, Bobby come up out of the fo'c'sle. And he's standing there on deck and he's looking around, and he realizes, "Wow! Where's all my stuff?" [laughs]

JGF: [laughs]

PA: And, Yosten[?]-his name was Yosten[?]-he comes out of the wheelhouse and he goes, "Bobby!", in his Norwegian accent, he goes, "Bobby! Bobby! Your clothes! They all fly off!"

JGF: [laughs]

PA: [laughs] And we hid them in the engine room. We finally gave them back to him after a couple of days.

JGF: Oh...God!

PA: It was—It was things like that.

JGF: Oh, that's so funny.

PA: And... A boot, that you pull on?

JGF: Yeah.

PA: If you take a fork, and you put it in tine forward, facing up, if you put it in there, and somebody doesn't realize it and they put their foot in the boot, what happens when you try to pull your foot out, the tines dig up into the bottom of your foot and the heel of the fork jams into the heel of the boot.

JGF: Oh!!

PA: You can't get your foot out! Because it gets caught up in the sock.

JGF: OK! Yeah.

PA: You cannot—Unless your boot is big enough where you can get your hand down inside the boot [?], the only way to get the boot off is you got to cut it off. I've lost three or four pair of boots like that. And I've probably caused at least that many other people to lose their boots in the same manner.

JGF: [laughs] Oh, my God!

PA: I could go on for hours. I mean I did it for so long.

JGF: They should do a panel next year on the practical jokes. You could lead it. I think that would be great.

[23:37]

PA: Oh... Practical jokes. Oh, you want to hear a really funny one?

This is probably the best one. I was on a—At the time it was a relatively new boat. It was *huge*. Big, big, big [?] fishing boat. And I was the engineer. And, [?] out of the engine room and I saw this clear, plastic *hose*. And I didn't know where it went to. So I investigated it. And I realized that in the galley there's a drain, on the galley floor, right in front of the two sinks. And that was what that was to. And the clear plastic hose was so that if the drain got clogged you could easily take it apart and clean it out.

And, I was sitting there eating one day. And I realized, every *day*, at certain watches you could *set* your clock by the cook standing there washing his dishes.

And I was down in the engine room and I looked at this and I got an idea.

JGF: [laughs]

PA: I took the clear plastic hose off the bottom of the pipe that led from the drain. And I got the air hose. Hundred and ten pounds of air.

JGF: [laughs]

PA: You know, I'm standing there. And it's a three quarter inch pipe, and I'm looking, I'm looking up, I'm looking up and looking up. And I finally see this *shadow*. I can tell he's standing at the sink. I take the air hose and I put it to that pipe and I gave him a shot of hundred and ten pounds of air.

JGF: [laughs]

PA: And of course, I couldn't see his reaction. I dropped the hose and I run up into the galley, and the guys at the table, they're dying. I mean they're absolutely hysterical.

The *cook*—I didn't think about the nasty drain. When that air came up, all the gunk that was in that thing, it was all up between his legs, all over his clothes, all over the ceiling, all over the galley. The *captain*, who I *thought* was going to be mad—called him One-Eye Jack, because he was missing an eye—he was more hysterical than everybody. I mean he was literally crying, choking, crying. And he says, "Phil," he says, the guy—I don't remember the cook's name, he said, "he came three feet off the ground. Just like a cat!" You know when you startle a cat?

JGF: Yeah, yeah, yeah [laughing].

PA: And he jumps straight up. [laughs] I mean I wished I could have been there to see him.

JGF: Yeah. Did you get fed the rest of the trip? [laughs]

PA: Yeah! Ninety-nine percent of the time it's all taken in the spirit. You know?

Sometimes, you can go too far and it causes bad blood.

The one thing I would never allow to happen, was I would never get involved in a fight on a boat. If I had a disagreement with somebody, and it was really getting ugly, I would just keep my mouth shut and keep my distance, maybe switch *watches* if necessary. And if it came down to fisticuffs, we waited until we got to the dock.

JGF: Wow.
PA: We were a rough bunch of guys out here.
JGF: Yeah... Oh yeah, I see some of them [laughs].
PA: There's a rough bunch out here. So, fighting, is...
JGF: It happens, huh?
PA: It happens. *A lot.*
[26:08]
JGF: Wow. Interesting.
Well.... You could go—I would love—You should come back next year and let us get more from you. Or, over the course of the year. You're a great storyteller! I do have one at eleven. I want to ask you one question in keeping with this year's theme, if I could. What do you think about women on boats?
PA: I think it's great!
JGF: Why?
PA: Oh... Good question. Good question.
I've actually fished on boats with women.
I think, *one* thing is, is it has a tendency to install a little bit of peace and calm.
JGF: In the crew?
PA: In the crew.
JGF: Huh.
PA: Why, I'm not exactly sure. Of course you always get the one or two idiots, who, you know, try to...
JGF: Harass?
PA: Harass, and do stupid things. But, that doesn't usually last too long.
JGF: Interesting.
PA: You might get one guy say something, or act in a manner that he shouldn't be. And very *quickly*, there'll be other members of the crew that'll come to the rescue.
JGF: Oh, interesting!
PA: Depending on the type of fishing, there is just some work that women physically are not capable of *doing*. Just the way they're put together.
JGF: Yeah. Right.
PA: On a scallop boat... I've seen women on scallop boats. And they just don't have the physical strength and the stamina to do the kind of work that these men are required to do.
JGF: Yup.
PA: It's a natural thing. It's a physical thing.
JGF: Physiological, kind of? Yeah.
PA: It's, you know—Have you ever seen the thing where, you can take a chair and put it near the wall? And bend over?
JGF: Yes.
PA: Without bending your knees?
JGF: Right.
PA: Put your head against the wall, pick the chair up and stand up?
JGF: Right.
PA: Alright. Women can do that.

JGF: And men can't.

PA: Men *can't*. It's the way their bodies are put together.

JGF: Yeah.

PA: And this is the same thing.

JGF: Yeah. There's other movements or whatever that the men have to do...

PA: Just to pick up a shovel. And, shovel rocks. For all you're worth hour after hour after hour. Women just aren't put together that way. But, mentally, psychologically, they're more than capable of handling the job. They can handle *wheel house*. There's been some women that have been *fantastic* captains, in the industry. Look at Linda Greenlaw. Everybody knows the movie *The Perfect Storm*. I mean, she was one of the best sword boat captains on the east coast!

JGF: Yeah. Two years ago I interviewed Ava, or Eva Liput? A scalloper captain.

PA: Yeah, Eva. She's a scalloper captain. She's also a commercial scuba diver too, right? I'm not sure.

JGF: Oh! If she is we never got talking about that.

PA: Unless it's a different Eva.

JGF: I don't know.

PA: But there's another Eva, that, she does a lot of diving. As a matter of fact she belongs to the Propellor Club.

JGF: Huh! Oh, that goes and fixes propellers...?

PA: No, no. It's just a club of people that have got sea experience. And they meet regularly. Just recently I was invited by a friend of mine. We went out on a [?] cruise out of Warren, Rhode Island. And it was just a bunch of guys that, you know, had years and years of sea experience. And they get together and they just, you know, have some dinner, have a couple drinks, laugh and tell sea stories.

JGF: *That's* where we need to bring the tape recorder.

PA: Yeah. Oh..., boy! But the vast majority of those people, you know are all, sea captains. They spent most of their time on big ships.

JGF: [Talking to next person to be interviewed.] Wow! Well, thank you so much.

PA: You're very, very welcome.

JGF: I wish we could keep talking. This was a really pleasant surprise to have you stop in.

[End of File WAV_0034_001/End of Interview]