Jiri Nozicka: We're commercial fishermen. Welcome in real seafood. That's my wife right there and she grew up in this place right here. This is her family's business. Her dad was running this place and her mom purchased this place in 1973. I was born in 1973, so I remember that day pretty well. I wasn't here though at that time. I was born in a different country. I was born in Czech Republic. You know where it is? Never heard of it?

FS: Yes. My [inaudible].

JN: Oh, really? Oh, good. Do you like hockey?

FS: Yes.

JN: You like tennis. Do you like soccer?

MS: Football.

JN: Football. There's no football there. There is some, but not as good at it. I'm from there, we don't have ocean there. When I came here and I started fishing, I had to start from scratch. I had to learn absolutely everything about the ocean, about the boats, about fishing operations. When I came to Monterey twelve years ago, I got hired here as a help. I started selling fish and I started going on this boat right here, and I've been on this boat ever since, on and off. Sometimes I go fishing Alaska for salmon, Bristol Bay, but I fished on another boats in San Francisco and Hoffman Bay. But ninety percent of my time when I'm fishing, I spend on this boat right here. So, it's my life here. When you become a fisherman and when you become a commercial fisherman, in order to stay fisherman, stay alive, and actually make a living, you have to become pretty good at it. You have to learn to do a lot of things. You cannot just sustain yourself by doing one thing on the boat. If I hire you today, I'm going to expect you first trip to learn how to sort fish, how to take care of the fish. I'm not going to expect you to know how to fix the net, how to take care of the engine, how to take care of the boat, how to fix the wood on the boat, how to fix the steel on the boat, how to read the ocean. I'm not going to ask you a question about where should I go fishing, what should you go catch? What buyer are we going to sell the fish to? All these different questions. But if you're planning on becoming a fisherman and become like me, where within twelve years, when I actually run the boat, all these things and more will have to be set in your head and become part of your life. When you become commercial fisherman, the ocean is going to have to become your life. This boat, it's going to become your life. It's not going to be just your job. It's not going to be just your occupation or your career. It truly will become your life. The people around the fishing community, fishing business, they will become your life. You will be known as a fisherman, you will think and live like a fisherman. To some extent, in order to become successful and catch the fish that you want, you'll have to start thinking like a fish. You have to start thinking, what do fish do to catch them? You have to outsmart them. The fishing that I do, I have it a little bit easier where we don't have to wait for a fish to bite. I don't use hooks, we use a net. We drop the net on certain spots of the ocean that we know, and then we fish there in these spots, in these areas and then we hope for the best that the fish is there and we catch them. That our gear is working right. So, for me to be successful, I have to make sure that there are fishing nets, then our gear, our cables are in order. They're working properly. They're in tune, they're set up correctly. They do what

they're supposed to do because it's a combination of different parts that makes the whole gear work together. If we are successful and if the fish is there, most of the time we catch fish that we target, that we want. Sometimes we lose the net, sometimes we don't catch anything and that's a loss for us. When I go fishing with this boat, when we go fishing, we spend about $1,500 just on fuel a day. So, if you go for three days, we spend about $3,000, $4,000 in fuel. This is a small boat with a small engine. This engine's been on this boat for about forty something years and it takes a lot of fuel to catch fish. We catch a lot of fish, so when we come in, we load up four trucks like that. If we only load up our normal catch, if we only load up one truck full of fish like that, we lost money and we didn't make anything. If I don't catch fish, my wife, if you just saw me, it's going to cry, it's going to make me feel bad and also try to make me feel better because we will have no money. I have three children. They're nine, seven, and five. So, I have to make sure that I'm providing enough for my family. We drive the car, we eat other food and fish, bread, we have a TV, we have Internet. We live just like everybody else, so we have the same expense. If you ask your parents or your teachers or somebody here, they will tell you how much it costs to raise a family. It's very, very expensive and it's very costly. So, we have to make sure that not only we provide for our family, but we also provide enough for the boat to be able to stay fishing. We have to catch enough fish to pay for the fuel for us, and also to provide for the maintenance. The net plus the fishing gear, if I lose all my fishing gear that's on this boat in one fishing adventure and one fishing tow. Because every time we go fishing, we drop the net in about two miles of the cable behind it, plus those steel plates or cold doors, we drop in the water. If we lose them, which happens, it costs us about $30,000 to $40,000 to replace it. It's very costly to fish. If the boat gets broken and has to go to dry dock, we have to go to San Francisco or Southern California because this boat is fairly big. It costs anywhere between $50,000 and $200,000 to fix the boat. Our last two bills in the dry dock where we spent five years ago, a year ago, we spent almost $300,000 just fixing the boat. So, it's very, very costly. But in return, we are providing not only job for us. You see Shane over there, he's a crew in the boat. He's been here longer than me. If you ask him to do electrically, he'll do it. If you ask him to do welding, he'll do it. If you ask him to do work on the net, he'll do it. He's a good crew. He works on the engine, he can work everything you ask him, and that's the people that you want to keep. He has a job, other crew has a job, but mainly when we filled up the big semi of the fish, there is about twenty or thirty different people in the processing time. They used to have them here working every day. Those people have nothing to do with fishing. They drive a car to work. They come home at 5:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. They have families like you, kids, and that's what we provide jobs for. That guy right there, he drives the fish, he sells the fish. He buys it from us, he sells it to somebody else. Restaurants buy it from him, and the tourist store. You guys go to a restaurant, buy it there. That's the multiplication where when we unload the fish, when we go fishing, not only I'm providing jobs to my other guys, I'm providing jobs, food for hundreds of families. That's what's really important about local fishermen, our American fishermen, [inaudible] Monterey, Oregon, Washington, East Coast, Alaska. We need to make sure that we keep efficient because they are providing jobs for us, for all of us, including me. Because if I'm going to be the only boat left, I won't be able to sell any fish to anybody because nobody's going to be able to buy it from me. You need to have the fish coming across our dock. Anyway, I'm going to describe to you a little bit of my operation, how we fish. Do you know anything about boats? Have you ever been on a boat?

FS: Yes.

JN: So, the front of the boat we call bow, the back we call – does anybody know? The stern. This side of the boat left side, we call the port side. Right side is the starboard side. If you look at those two plates right there, those steel plates, we call those doors. They function as a weight, and also, they function as a spreader for the net. If I don't have those doors on the net, the net won't work, will be just a piece of rag behind the boat. Then we have main [inaudible], those two drums where we call our main cable. On that cable we determine how deep we want to fish. We can fish on the beach right here if we wanted to if we could. Twenty feet deep if we wanted to, or we can fish three quarter mile deep if we wanted to. We'll have that much cable out. We have a ratio of how deep we want to fish and depends how deep we go, that's how much cable we use. So, on the net, you see on the net reel, I'm going to show you a model later, it's called a bottom trawl net. It looks like a giant parachute or a butterfly net or a sun. Combination between three. Only works when it moves so that boat has to pull on it and tow it through the ocean. When the net is on the bottom, it has to be well balanced. If it's too heavy, it starts digging. You go to the aquarium and you see the ocean there, and you see the coral here and rocks and all kinds of plants and corals. Most of the ocean doesn't look like that. There are places like that, but most of the ocean looks like the beach, or if you go in Salinas and you see the valley, how flat it is, and you have little hills, not the mountains. Mountains are there too, but that's the ground that we fish in. It's flat, has little humps, little slopes, and that's what the bottom that we are looking for and that's what we fish. If we bring this net onto the bottom where it has all kinds of reefs and corals like you see in the aquarium, first thing that would happen, I would lose my gear. I would tear big holes in it. If I have a hole in the net, I'll lose all my fish and on top of it, most likely I would lose the gear altogether. We have our secret map that's being passed on from generation to generation, where we pretty much have mapped out most of the coast of it. We know which areas to go to and not to go to. On top of it, there's regulations. Well, we have state regulations, federal regulations, we cannot fish anywhere we want. We cannot fish three miles close to shore, we cannot fish inside of the bay, we cannot fish in certain depths. We have a satellite out there. There's a satellite tracker. So, the government is watching us 24/7 where we fish and how we fish. We have observers on the boat a hundred percent of the time, making sure that everything that we catch is recorded and everybody knows what we catch. So, we don't just go randomly and catch where we want and what we want to. We have very, very strict rules for how we do this. Most of the rules have been in place. In the past, there have been more common sense. Do you know what common sense means?

FS: Yes.

JN: You hear it a lot probably. In the past, those rules were more common sense. We had a mash size on our nets where the small fish goes through. I'm going to show you later one of the nets that has the same size mash as on the end of the net, where it shows that fish that is big as my hand, which fits a rock fish, it's about four to six years old. At that age, spans between four to six times in its lifetime and that fish still has the chance to go through the net and escape. So, the small fish goes through. Again, the natural obstacles keep us from different and most productive grounds actually. So, that's different things. When we bring our fish on the boat, we drop the net in the water, we drop all of our cable and we tow it for several hours, sometimes four hours, sometimes for eight hours. Depends on how, where we are, what we're fishing for. A lot of fishermen, they use different timing for themselves as well. Depends on what boat they

use. When we come to an end of this one tow, one part two tow, we bring the whole net back into the net wheel, bring all parts of our gear back, and then we pull the whole catch with the end of the net, that's the blue part of the net. We bring it in the net middle of the boat and we dump it there. Sometimes we catch up to forty different species of fish at once. So, my crew or when I'm the crew, we have to sort it all out, all at once. Sort it out in different compartments. If you look inside of the boat, there's the part of the boat we call the fish hole. That's where we store our fish. You see this contraption right here, that's our ice chute. When we go inside, you'll see our ice plant. We put anywhere between three and five tons of ice every time we go fishing. That keeps our fish fresh, we don't freeze our fish and we make most of the two-day trips. If we make three-day trips, it's very rare. So, all of our fish is very fresh and it has to stay fresh and usually gets processed and sold within the week. It never gets spoiled, never gets bad. Most of our fish, because it's high quantity fish, it's really cheap. For some fish, we get up to $4 a pound if we keep it alive in certain species of fish. Now most of our catch gets sold off the boat for about $0.30, $0.40 a pound. When it comes to the market, you guys can buy them for about anywhere between $3 and $6 a pound. So, most of the restaurants, if you buy a red snapper or sole on your plate or some cod, and they cost anywhere under $20 a plate, most of the time it's been caught by trawl. Because if you use any different method hook and like, most of the time the fish from those methods are much more expensive because those fishermen, they have a higher quality fish because they take one fish at a time so they take better care of them. They usually do only one day fishing, they go out in the morning and come back in the afternoon. So, it's even fresher than my fish. Usually, they look better because if I catch five ton of fish at once, they get scratched, they get a little smashed sometimes, so they don't look pretty. So, we get a little less price for that reason. But we need this kind of fish. Some fish you cannot catch any other way than we do. Sometimes because of the depth, you cannot drop the hook half or three quarter of mile deep. Another thing, you cannot catch enough of Dover sole or sardines or rock cod for that matter, even with the hook and line to provide jobs for thirty to forty people and still make profit off it. That's the reason why the trawling. Another reason is because when you trawl, you have no season. There's always some kind of species of fish living on the bottom of the ocean. Most of the flat fish like Dover sole, they're there on the bottom on these spots all year round. So, if there's a season, let's say this is the market that buys salmon, rock cod, crab, all these different species of fish, and then it buys my fish, what happens if the salmon season is bad or it's off and there's ten people working here, they need a job. The season for this boat never ends. So, this boat can fish all year round and provide jobs in between the season, between the crab season, salmon season, tuna season and all the other seasons that come throughout the year. Sometimes they come bigger, sometimes they come small. So, that's why it's really important. Have you ever heard of bottom trawl in your adventures, in the school? You guys learn about fishing and ocean and things like that? You probably heard the term overfishing? Never heard of it? Maybe I won't even talk about it then [laughter]. You're probably going to hear about it. It's a term, it's called overfishing. It means that some species of fish, when the scientists go and take the samples and try to figure out do the math, how much fish is in the ocean, they do different models and they figure out how much different fish is in the ocean. If some species goes below certain levels the way they think, they're supposed to be naturally. If it gets below let's say forty percent of their original biomass, they call it, which means that the amount of fish that were originally there before man ever started fishing for it, which is a guess. But that's the amount where it's declared overfished. Sometimes certain species of fish have a decline on their own. It's a natural cycle. You have sardines, you all heard about sardines and its

canopy row and big sardine era. After the sardine era ended, a lot of people said it was due to overfishing because fishermen caught all the sardines. Even the famous scientist Doc Ricketts said, "They're all in cans," when people ask him where all the sardines are. Well, at that time, not too many people knew. Fishermen knew and they kept telling others that fish move, the condition in the ocean change. Ten, fifteen years later, they actually found out that the sardines are in cycles. Their reproduction levels, they're having babies when they have the booms and pass. So, there is sixty years of very large biomass of fish in sardines' case and there's forty years or sixty years of where they're not there at all. That didn't mean that when the sardines left there was no fish in the bay or along the coast. The sardines like little warmer water. When the sardines left, because the cold water replaced the warm water, the cold water replaced it with another fish, the squid and anchovies and other species of fish. So, when you have this body of water here that you see right here, has a certain temperature, and has a certain attribute that provide food for anchovy, and it gets locked in. If you put a fence around it and keep the same temperature and you provide or you let the little pool there, that fish is going to stay there. The moment you're going to put the colder or even warmer water, the fish will want to get out. These conditions naturally change all the time throughout the year, throughout the decades. It's very cyclical. It's a long, sometimes a hundred-year-old cycles. So, every hundred years, you have the cycles repeat, so it's always very different. So, if you hear overfishing sometime, it doesn't mean that they've been fished. Sometimes the scientists declare some fish overfished even if nobody fishes them. It only means that their natural cycles of population have declined. It could mean that the conditions in the ocean has changed to favor different kinds of fish. That's a little bit of education on that side. So, when we put the fish down, we put them down in the fish hole, we sort them out and when we come in after two or three days of fishing, when we fish, most of the fisheries like [inaudible] you guys saw squids' boats probably, just saw some. Most of them they fish either during the day when the fish is cooling during the day, but most of the time they fish at night with the lights where they have light boats. They attract them to the lights. The squids pull up and they're able to fish for them. So, there's certain times of a day that you can fish. With trawling, we fish 24/7. We fish all the time. Some fish you don't catch during the day, some fish you catch during the night just as these guys. But we can always go to different depth and try to catch a lot of fish at that time. Because we spend so much money on fuel and expenses, our time is very valuable, we need to keep fishing all the time. So, that's why all the time become very tired. We don't sleep, we don't rest. It's very, very physical, and very demanding and physical manner. In there, you're going to have coolers, you're going to have freezers, you're going to have some storage space. Like I said, we don't do much processing, so this unloading and lately became like a storage for a lot of our fishing gear. That ball behind you, if anybody has a question, that's a buoy for mooring the anchorage. That's what keeps the chain that holds the anchor down out in the harbor.

MS: How much does it weigh?

JN: This thing weighs about, I don't know, a pound maybe or fifteen-hundred pounds. So, this is what the fish market's going to look like. We use the baskets like those to unload the fish. So, it's a pretty small basket. It fits about three hundred pounds of different kinds of fish, some fish about five hundred pounds. They have to be shelved, so if we unload twenty or thirty thousand pounds of fish, it goes one by one. It takes time. Then this scale over here is one scale. We have another scale that we always bring out in front of the boat. That's when we unload, we use

that one. That tank right there, if we have a crab season, we sell crab or live fish, that's where we keep our live fish. If we want to cut fish, there's a cutting table there. When there's thirty people cutting here, like in the past the tables would be two rows of the tables going sideways and there would be two people on each side, probably row of fifteen. They would be cutting fish thirty days and nights. Yes.

FS: Are you [inaudible] ice all the time?

JN: When we need it. There's a machine that produces it. This one produces about four ton of ice a day if it's working right. Like I said, if I go to Salinas with the truck, or if we order, there's an ice company in Salinas, Grower's Ice. There's another company there for ice too mostly for farmers. If I were to order a truck, it cost me about $1,000 to get ice for a fishing trip on the boat to get enough ice for one fishing trip. So, we provide our own ice if the machine's working and we save about $500 a trip. So, it's a big difference. So, we have the machine working when we need ice. When we don't, when the weather's bad, nobody's fishing, we turn it off because it costs about $100 a day just on electricity when we produce that. Again, it's very costly. Repairs, they're very costly, so, we try to be very conservative in everything we do. This place over here, it costs a lot of money to rent. The expenses and lease, it's about $8,000 a month for this space. So, it takes a lot of fish to process or produce. Actually, the last fifteen years, this place has been subsidized by the family, hoping things will get better and that we will make it down the future. So, far is not happening, but we try. Anyway, you can see some harpoons right there with teacher's hands. It's just everybody is curious. There used to be a whaling going on here, so those are whale harpoons, actually a real one. So, that's the operation here. When we bring the fish here, need to store it here, store it in the cooler, we'll just ship it out. If we process fish, we cut them in here, freeze them, store them on ice. It's about the whole storage. This would be the squid net. If you have sardines, that would be about the same size. If you want to catch a macro, which is a little bit bigger, either use this or they use even a little bigger. That's main material they use for same. If you want to catch anchovies, which are smaller than as big as my thinking, they go right through. So, most of the anchovies, if somebody's catching squid and they catch anchovies instead, anchovies go up. If you have one hole in the net, let's say this big, fish figure out really fast how to escape. They go in by thousands immediately. So, the fishermen always have to make sure that there's no holes, their gear is proper and functional. This is a different type of size of the net, a different material called this plastic. It's a combination of different materials. This size of a mash, if I have my net made out of this kind of a mash, I'll be catching prawns. Do you like prawns, big shrimp? They'll catch these. The shrimp over here.

[end of transcript]