

Edward Bedard: So, what inspired you to be a fisherman?

Greg Young: Destiny. It found me. I didn't find it. It's just something you do. Also, you realize that that's you who are and it's the only thing you like doing. I tried desk jobs. I did all kinds of jobs. I did construction. I did computer sales. I did wine sales. I did attic installation in Phoenix in the summertime, all kinds of cool stuff. Then fishing just grows on you. If you think about it, you're not stuck in an office doing something and you're your own boss. There's dolphins and there's whales and there's sunshine and there's – you roll the dice, you're risking your life, it's fucked.

EB: So, when did you start your career then?

GY: I haven't started yet, no. I wouldn't call it a career. Especially nowadays, fishermen are a lot of jack of all trades. For instance, like someone mentioned, we have restaurants. We have a restaurant. We do wholesale brokering. So, we would run a lot of [unintelligible]. We sold maybe 80,000 pounds of crab to the city. So, we sell to the guys that sell to the Asian markets. Also, we sell our fish to local supermarkets and other restaurants. So, it's kind of a three-tiered business. It's just like a tip of the iceberg. So, to be a full-time, dedicated fisherman nowadays in Monterey Bay is almost – you can't almost make it. There's just not enough money with all the investment in the boat and the risk and the close seasons. The way things are, it's just tough. But if it's in your blood and you like to do it, you could have fun doing it.

Female Speaker 1: What do you love the most about your job?

GY: Going home and sleeping.

Female Speaker 1: [laughter]

GY: Just the flexibility of it. If you wake up and you don't have to go to work, if the weather is bad or you just don't feel like doing it, you don't have to. It's strange hours, but it's rewarding in that reason. You don't have to be anywhere at any certain time. You're your own boss. A lot of people like that. A lot of people like the freedom. I think you'll find in the work world, a lot of people regret that they have to be there at 9:00. I always found myself looking at the clock, "Oh, my God, is it 5:00? I can't wait to get out of here." Something like that.

EB: What is a typical day on the job like?

GY: If you can answer that question, you'd be a millionaire. [laughter]

GY: Because when you start getting in fishing, you realize that everyone thinks they could somehow – they're going to do a better job than somebody else did, or they somehow are going to be able to make it work when no one else could. Every day is unpredictable. Every day is different. You don't know if your boat is going to start. You don't know if it's going to sink. You don't know if the fish are going to be there. Nothing's ever predictable. For instance, if fish are biting really good and you catch a lot of fish, you think, "Wow, I'm going to make a lot of money." You come to the dock, and they're like, "Well, there's a lot of fish, so we're only giving

you fifty cents," instead of – you're expecting five dollars. So, every day is unpredictable and you never know what's going to happen, and it's just every day is different.

Female Speaker 2: What kind of hardships have you encountered?

GY: Boat sinking. Other than that, I've got a concussion eighty-five miles out at sea. I got towed by the Coast Guard. I ran out of gas at Point Lobos at 3:00 a.m. I had a gray white shark bite my boat. I had a whale bump the boat.

Female Speaker 2: Oh, my God. No.

GY: I had a friend of mine got ran under by a freighter and froze to death two years ago in front of the Golden Gate that I was fishing on the day before. So, if you're in the fishing business, you're going to know somebody who died or a friend of friends who died. Pretty much every year, somebody loses their life. Losing your boat is pretty common. Losing your gear is common. Losing your fingers, I still have them all. So, it's really a hard life. Fishing is a very hard life. The guys that make it look easy, they're just really good at it. I'm not even a good fisherman. I'd be the first one to tell you that I suck.

Female Speaker 1: How far out to sea do you go?

GY: Depending on the species you're targeting, a lot of stuff – marine life tends to be richer. The closer you get to shore, there's more chlorophyll, more feed, and stuff. They call them different fish, so either benthic or pelagic fish, like albacore tuna or swordfish, or different kinds of fish you get way offshore. For instance, in the fall, you'll get albacore tuna. We have Bluefin tuna. We get Opah. We get swordfish. Those are at certain time a year. In the shore, you're going to get crab. You're going to get halibut, lingcod, rock cod. So, they're all over. There's different fish everywhere, and they run in different schools. Sometimes you'll see there's a ton of salmon, sometimes there's no salmon. It's the same thing. It's always different. Everything is different.

Female Speaker 1: What do you normally fish for?

GY: Whatever they're buying now. For instance, this is a salmon boat. So, it's designed for fish and salmon. So, you fish salmon. If you see a boat like this over here, it's got like a big blocking off the side, that would be for crab. So, typically, you fish what you're permitted to fish in open access. So, you have limited permits. They tend to be expensive. A salmon permit for this boat maybe is \$8,000.

Female Speaker 1: Wow.

GY: You can't necessarily just buy it. You have to do some more trading. You have to buy at another boat and trade it and move it around. Crab permits, you could buy it for around twenty thousand right now. Black cod permits are around 250,000. Squid permits are around a million or 750,000. Usually, if you're going to be a commercial fisherman, you're going to get a permit that will make you money to catch those fish, and they usually cost a lot of money.

EB: How has the fishing industry changed since you started?

GY: Dramatically, really. You don't know West Coast. There's some old-timers I talked to. My old friend, (Don Dodson?), used to have a drag boat. We used to go drag boat fishing. We've got a jet engine once, and some giant octopus. But he says when he first started in the business for \$12, you could catch – you were allowed to catch any species.

EB: What is your favorite fishing memory?

GY: That's a good one. Favorite fishing memory. Catching bluegills with my dad in Ohio [unintelligible]. I get up early to mow the lawn, and he can take me fishing. So, we just fish with a popper and a little worm, and then the popper would go down there. It was awesome.

EB: Does this run on diesel?

GY: Diesel, yes.

EB: Diesel. So, how does the pricing of gas and all of that affect you in any way?

GY: Diesel used to be super cheap, and now it's expensive. But I think it's because of the war. There's so many machines that used diesel in the war that they have a diesel shortage. Diesel used to be sort of a byproduct that nobody wanted. Now, they use it for all the war machines. So, there's not a lot of diesel (around?), so it's expensive, I think. I don't know. I'm not a big fan of gas companies anyhow. If I could run it on solar power, I would.

Female Speaker 2: How much maintenance does a boat require?

GY: Every day, you should do something on it. Because if you'd let it go, it gets worse and worse and worse. It's like brushing your teeth. If you don't brush your teeth, you're going to pay the piper. So, you don't have to do any maintenance on it until it breaks, but then it's going to cost you ten times as much. So, the oil, you change every forty hours.

Female Speaker 2: Wow.

GY: So, you change the oil quite a bit. So, these engines will run forever if you change the oil and keep clean air, clean oil.

Female Speaker 1: Does your family have a history of fishing?

GY: No. Actually, my family hates fishing.

Female Speaker 1: [laughter]

GY: My brothers don't even want to come out.

Female Speaker 2: So, you're the rebellious one?

GY: My brother is – graduated top of the class, electrical engineering at Cal Poly. He invented a wireless guitar – digital guitar amp or something.

Female Speaker 2: That's so cool.

GY: He sells to Lady Gaga and all these people.

Female Speaker 2: [laughter]

GY: So, fishing, definitely, it didn't bite him. Like I said, I didn't choose fishing. Fishing chose me because it's kind of – it's hard work sometimes.

EB: Do you have any hobbies outside of fishing, or what do you do on your free time?

GY: Sleep. No.

Female Speaker 2: [laughter]

GY: I used to collect rocks, like minerals and stuff like that. It's pretty cool. I guess that's about it, really. I don't know. Just enjoying life, hanging out, being out in nature. It's pretty cool.

Female Speaker 2: Who do you usually sell your fish to?

GY: That's a secret. The guy that was just calling right now and he's – we brought over eight hundred pounds of crab, but he's going to send back four hundred. So, it will come back here dead, and I've got to go talk, go over there. So, we're going to lose, what, three thousand bucks, or somebody is going to lose three thousand bucks.

Female Speaker 2: Will somebody buy those?

GY: Probably not. They're soft, so they're no good. They're still alive when you throw them in the harbor maybe. I don't know.

Female Speaker 2: Do you have local buyer stuff?

GY: Yes.

Female Speaker 2: Local restaurants?

GY: Yes. Basically, we have what's called a receiver's permit. So, if you have a receiver's permit, you can buy it from the Fish and Game. That's around \$700. It allows you to buy off any boat, any fishermen. As long as you keep records, you can sell to anybody. So, you could sell to Safeway and Nob Hill, grocery stores. That's actually a neat business. A lot of people are getting into that because it's less – it's more consistent than trying to fish. But still, it's worth it.

Like today, you lose a bunch of money.

Female Speaker 2: Do you see many young people going into the field or less (than that)?

GY: No. No, most of the old-timers are dying off, and there's very few young people. I'm not even the youngest. A handful of new guys started...

EB: There is opportunity.

GY: There is opportunity. Actually, this is a transition time right now. If the MLPAs – they start to work and then the resources is protected, then – it's funny, they always think the fishermen are at odds with the environmentalist, and they're really not. The fishermen are the first guard, as environmentalism is. You'd be surprised to know how much fishermen know. The environmentalist would just – they would love to have that information. It doesn't get shared all the time. But I mean, they're literally out there all the time. They know exactly what's going on in the ocean. If any of those things settle down in the next five or ten years, there probably would be some really good opportunities for people that wanted to do something. Because the price of salmon is up, it's never been higher. Wholesale off the boats are anywhere from 7 to \$8.

Female Speaker 2: That is because they protected the salmon fisheries for the past few years?

GY: No. The problem with the salmon fisheries, they renew every three years. So, it's one of the most ideal fish. It's actually one of the best things you can eat for yourself for your health. But in California, one of the biggest problems we're having is with the water. So, there's a lot of diversions. In the Central Valley, there's going to be a vote for the Peripheral Canal. There's a lot of water going down to the – I don't know how to say the name, but Westlands Water District, they are very political and they politicized water deliveries in California. A lot of people making a lot of money, and it's very political. So, salmon need water to live. They need clean streams, and they're not getting them. It's just a political battle. The more you find out about things, you find out that people that are in power don't always have – they're kind of there first. Everything else comes second.

Female Speaker 2: The whole picture.

GY: [laughter] So, when someone tells you there's no salmon because fishery caught them all, that's not even close to the truth.

Female Speaker 2: I do not know if anybody asked this, but did you start the restaurant because you were fishing, and why did you pick salmon?

GY: I started the restaurant because fishing failed, actually. So, I was fishing salmon. If you look at something for one hundred years, it was a no-brainer. Everybody was making money on it. Then all of a sudden, in the last five years, it'd been a complete disaster. It was declared a disaster. There were close seasons. The fishing wasn't very good. You couldn't make a living even fishing at all. So, we said, "Oh, let's start the restaurant," because I was in wine sales. So, I

knew wine, I knew fish, and I worked – grew up in a restaurant. So, we started that, and that's a lot of work. It's all work. You guys are going to enter the work world. So, my stepfather said somebody great to me once because if you're not careful, you'll be working.

Female Speaker 1: Do you go out alone on the boat?

GY: Yes, I've had.

Female Speaker 2: Then you can man all these different things (all at once?)?

GY: Yes. On a salmon boat this size, you can do it singlehandedly. Yes, it's pretty easy.

Female Speaker 2: Where do (sanddab?) live?

GY: Just on the bottom, 150 feet of water in the sand. They're one of my favorite – personally, one of my favorite fish to eat. They're really tasty. They're really...

Female Speaker 2: They are smaller?

GY: They're smaller, and they've got a bone like a little halibut. But they've got a really sweet flavor. They're really good.

Female Speaker 2: Nice.

EB: How many pounds of salmon do you try and catch a day?

Female Speaker 2: [unintelligible].

GY: So, if you have a commercial permit, your limit access – you've got no limit. You're allowed to catch as many as your boat will fit. So, these are the fish (boats here?), and they're refrigerated coils. You could fit maybe five hundred pounds on the side or four hundred or maybe eight hundred. So, we've had that full. We've had this full, both sides full.

Female Speaker 2: Wow.

Female Speaker 1: Wow.

Female Speaker 2: And when you get back to the dock...

GY: But you also (lose some of the day?).

Female Speaker 2: – do you have help unloading and people come right down?

GY: Well, they have the commercial hoists. So, depending on what your load is and what you're doing, you can use the commercial hoists. So, everything just [unintelligible] or you can just do what I do. It's just wheelbarrow, hand cart, or carrying by hand.

Female Speaker 2: Wow.

GY: It's all work. The golden days, everything is dragging coolers and...

Female Speaker 1: Can you sell directly to the public?

GY: You can only sell off the boat. You can sell only whole fish and not allowed to process. So, a lot of people want to come down. They want a fillet or something, and you're not – just the way the environmental health laws are, you're not allowed to fillet fish, and (sell them?). I can do that if I go to the restaurant because I have – it's different.

Female Speaker 2: But we could come buy a whole fish right off the boat?

GY: A whole fish, yeah.

Female Speaker 2: Cool.

GY: So, the fishermen really want 8 or \$9, so you're looking at a ten-pound fish. It's going to be one hundred bucks.

Female Speaker 1: How long have you been out on the sea?

GY: Just three days or something. After a while, you get too greasy, you want to take a shower, and you want food.

EB: Just like [unintelligible].

GY: Just sleeping there or passed out here on this deck or whatever.

Female Speaker 1: Wow.

Female Speaker 2: How many days out of the year are you fishing?

GY: Not that many. Not as many as I used to. But I'd be happy with one day a week. I kind of don't go that much because I've got the restaurant and other stuff.

Female Speaker 2: And do you work at the restaurant?

GY: Not anymore. I fired myself.

Female Speaker 2: [laughter]

EB: How often do you eat fish?

GY: Oh, I'd eat fish every day. I love it. I absolutely love it. Usually, it's sushi. I love sushi,

raw fish, cooked fish, fish, oysters, clams. I mean, I love it. It's my favorite food. I think most people don't realize they never really had a really good piece of fish or really fresh fish. If you have it really fresh, it's fantastic. I would say it's like a macadamia nut. You always think, "I don't really want it." And then you have one, and you're like, "Wow, that's pretty good. I'll have another." [laughter]

Female Speaker 2: How much local fish does your restaurant sell?

GY: We're trying to be almost all local fish. But we do certain things you can't – so, seafood, there's certain benchmark things you can't get. You don't get many lobsters out of the Bay Area. You don't get what I call hard-shell calms, like the littleneck clams. You don't get razor clams. Like scallops, really good scallops, you don't get around here. So, if you're a full-service seafood restaurant, just by default, you really have to start carrying things from all over the world, which is bad on the carbon footprint and all that.

Female Speaker 2: What are some other jobs that kids like this age could get into if they were interested in the seafood industry?

GY: I guess you got cars. You could drive, right?

Female Speaker 2: Some of them.

GY: Yes.

EB: Almost.

Female Speaker 2: Almost.

GY: So, you can do processing. You can do...

Female Speaker 2: [unintelligible]

GY: – delivery sales. Just work on boats. These guys, they're cutting kelp from the Abalone Farm. So, they go cut kelp, and then they go deliver that to the abalone. They feed the abalones up there in Davenport, which is pretty cool.

Female Speaker 1: Oh, wow. What sort of technology do you use?

GY: This has been improving, basically. Electronics really help you find the fish. So, you've got a GPS – the GPS chart plotter will put you under the chart. You can see exactly you're at. They have a radar, and they have a radar overlay. So, even if you're in the fog, you can see exactly where you're at and how deep it is. Then you can see where the boats are. Then you have a fish finder, so you can see if there's bait underneath the boat.

Female Speaker 2: Do you have kids?



GY: Three kids.

Female Speaker 2: Do you want for them to continue it also?

GY: No.

Female Speaker 1: [laughter] Do they like it?

GY: They don't really like it, no. Well, I've got a four-year-old, a twelve-year-old, and a seventeen-year-old.

Female Speaker 2: Does your seventeen-year-old go out here?

GY: Sometimes, yes. They've been out.

Female Speaker 2: They do not really like it?

GY: They don't really like it. [laughter]

GY: They're too smart.

Female Speaker 1: They are too smart. Do you take your boat on vacation?

GY: Take it out on vacation?

Female Speaker 1: Yes.

GY: No, I've got a little boat. I sometimes do, yes. Take it to Lake Powell. If you guys ever want to go to a fun spot, go to Lake Powell, even if you just rent a houseboat or something. It's got more shoreline in the entire West Coast of America or North America.

Female Speaker 2: Oh. Where is it?

GY: It's in Utah and Arizona, on the border there. It's all sandstone cliffs. It's just pretty awesome.

EB: (I just went?) up there.

GY: Yes, it's really cool. It's a fun little lake.

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