

Steve Marshall: Thank you for being here. It is February 8th, 2014, at the Cortez Maritime Museum. I am Steve Marshall.

Thor Vayne: I am (Thor Vayne?).

Shannon Kelly: I am Shannon Kelly.

Deja Brown: I am (Deja Brown?).

SM: We are here with Karen Bell. I am going to ask you some questions about Cortez. So, Thor, go there. [laughter]

TV: So, you were born here in Cortez?

Karen Bell: I was actually born in Bradenton.

TV: Bradenton? All right. Cool. When did you move here? Do you have parents here?

KB: My dad's family is from here, the Bell/Fulford side, so paternal. I lived here at one point. We lived in Northwest Bradenton. My mother had us move out here at some point so that we'd be closer to dad because he spent so much time at the dock. But she didn't really care for it too much. So, we moved back to our house.

TV: So, when was that? Childhood?

KB: Yes, that was, gosh, years ago. I was maybe 10, so in the [19]70s.

TV: What school did you go to?

KB: For elementary school?

TV: Yes.

KB: Palma Sola, Manatee, University of Florida, Florida Atlantic University.

TV: [inaudible] Bayshore?

KB: No, I went to Bayshore when they were building Sud. I was in the first class going through there. So, we went half year, I guess, split session. Then the other half of the year, they finished the school. We went over to Sud.

TV: Okay.

SK: What are the names of your parents?

KB: Walter Bell and Sandy Bell.

TV: Your grandparents?

KB: Aaron Parks Bell, so it's A.P. Bell Fish Company. My grandmother's name is Jesse Blanche Fulford. Then you know what's sad? My Jane – what's my mother's – Kowalski, I think is my mother's mom– but not from here. New York, from New York, my mom's from New York.

TV: Did your grandparents fish and stuff too, at Cortez?

KB: Well, my grandfather did. Aaron did. My grandmother, she maintained the house, which was, they had seven children. Also, she's a Fulford. I think she had eight other siblings. There were nine of the Fulford children. So, Grandma Bell or Fulford Bell, her house was like the hub for the community every Sunday. As little kids, we were forced to come out here at 1:00 every Sunday for dinner. We hated it because we had horses. We wanted to be doing that. But now, of course, you appreciate it years later. Grandma, I remember, all she ever did was work. I mean, she was either cooking or splitting peas or in the garden or doing laundry, because she took care of her immediate family. Then she took care of all her sisters and brothers and their family too, big extended family.

SM: Do you always have big family gatherings?

KB: Well, on holidays we did. Again, it's funny because when you're little you – we really hated coming out here because we thought the kids were mean to us, the other kids here, because we weren't part of the clique that was here. Then, of course, we have the horses. When you're little, that's all you care about when you're a girl. We just want to – now our brother liked to fish. I had a brother who died at 16, but he fished from like 14 to 16. He was always on the water. So, he liked it more here. But anyway, yes, we preferred to be at the barn.

SM: So, when did you start getting more involved with Cortez and started to find yourself coming here more often, liking it, things like that?

KB: Well, I think the irony of it, when I was little, I didn't appreciate it for what it was. What it took was me moving away. Then I think you start to learn like what you really had is – the pasture is not always greener on the other side. The final thing was I went over to Boca Raton to finish school. I had gone to University of Florida, first time ever away from home. I didn't focus on school. I'd always been like a really good student and honor student. I went up there. I had my own apartment, which was really generous of my dad. Well, I didn't go to class. I had no oversight. I was too young. No one was watching me really. So, I didn't go to class at the time. I got put on academic probation after the first semester. I freaked out because I had never ever been not a good kid. It's not that I was doing anything that horrible. I just wasn't going to class. So, I was whatever, I was drinking and going to oyster bars [laughter] and all. But anyway, yes, just the new introduction. So, then I go down to Florida Atlantic in Boca Raton because I thought I needed smaller school, is what I decided. Dad was really disappointed because he loved the Gators. They're the Owls. They're not comparable to the Gators. So, I go down there. I got a job at IBM. I was interning at IBM. I think that's what made me realize I really wanted

to come home. It's not that I didn't like IBM, but it was extremely structured, extremely – you had to dress a certain way. I was in marketing and acquisitions. It was more just conservative than I was really accustomed to. That coast of Florida isn't anything like this coast. This coast is very, at least what I'm used to, very friendly, very laid back. They say that about the whole Florida West Coast. It's just a more congenial-type environment. Over there, it's more people from all over, more not – families that have been there a long time. So, that's when I realized I wanted to come back. I can even remember I called my dad. I said, "You know – he wanted me to stay with IBM because I had a job offer. I said, "Dad, I really miss home. I want to come home." He really didn't want me to. It's funny because we have this relationship where he'd always tell me what I should do, and I usually didn't do that, [laughter] Not anything horrible, but I wanted to come home. I think he thought the fishing industry was too tough for a woman. I think he thought the regulations were getting harder and harder, and that it's just a difficult life. There's nothing I would rather do than what I do.

SM: Aside from what you said, you finished college. Did you know that you wanted to go into the fishing industry, or you just want to come home?

KB: Well, I don't think I realized it until the latter part of college when it was coming down to picking, was I going to stay at IBM? Because I had a job offer, but I just didn't want – and I don't know what you guys do. Because they always say to you when you're in high school, "What are you going to do?" I had no idea what I wanted to do. I had no clue. Even in college, I knew I liked marketing. I had started in engineering, and I hated it. I just realized truly when I started working, because I think that's really when you get more reality of the workplace, that I didn't want that kind of 9-to-5 job. I didn't want normal. I'm not saying this is abnormal, but this is definitely extremely different than a 9-to-5 lawyer job or a desk job. The marketing was interesting because we reviewed accounts from all over the country. They had to go through our section to get approved to sell IBM products. But it's still nothing as personal or as unique as what I do now.

TV: So, what is it that you exactly do here in Cortez?

KB: Well, it's funny because I say I pretty much do everything, which I think any small business owner, you have to do everything. But sometimes I say I'm the janitor. I do export sales of containers. I do all the permitting of the boats. I do anything legal for the company. I definitely do the money. I'm really controlling. I don't let people touch the money because, you know how you hear about companies getting robbed of 100,000? I think, how does that happen? How does someone not notice that? Because I would know. I would know immediately if someone moves stuff around. But anyway, so with a small business – I mean, sometimes I feel like I'm a counselor because when you talk to the fisherman, you have to realize – dad always said, "You're in the worst position because you have to try to keep them happy, but then you have to also deal with your customers who you have to keep them happy. You're right in the middle of it. It can be a difficult position to be in."

SM: How did you get to own and operate A.P. Bell Fish Company?

KB: The first 20 percent that I acquired was – I don't own it by myself either. I own it with my

Uncle Doug who is the baby of my dad's siblings. The first 20 percent, my one uncle died, Uncle Buster. His name was Jesse Nathaniel Bell, but they called him Buster. When he died, he kindly enough – which I'm shocked that he did it because they're very conservative and strange about women being in the business. But he put in his will that I had the first right of refusal on the 20 percent of his stock. That everything went to his daughter, but he put that in there, if she were to sell it, I had the first option to buy it. So, I bought that from her. Then when my dad died two years ago, I acquired another 27 percent. So, I am 47 percent. Then another uncle died and left it in a trust. I'm the trustee of that trust, which pretty much lets me, with another uncle, Chester, we are able to make the decisions. Then the other brother owns 26 percent, 27 percent, something like that.

SM: How long have you been in this business?

KB: Well, I got out of school in [19]88, from college. Prior to that, I had worked in the fish house in the weekend. Or after school, I'd come out and answer the phones and all. So, you could say either [19]88, full time, or prior to that, a few years, summer job or after school, answering the phones. So, long time.

SM: What was it that you liked about being around this kind of business? I mean, I have been in your warehouse and stuff. You have a lot of things going on, just as busy, fish smell. You have all the things that you have to deal with. What is it that attracts you to this kind of business?

KB: I think probably my favorite thing about – it's actually not just the business, it's the whole community – is the people are extremely unique. They're very – what is the word I'm looking for – where they can do anything resilient, I guess. No matter what happens to them, they have been able to carry on and make things work. Then I love how they're very real people. They don't ever not let you know what they think. I mean, very rarely do you have to go, "What did they mean by that?" They're very direct people, the fishermen. Then the same thing on the other side of customers. I have a friend in Egypt we sell to, who, during all the turmoil over there the past year, we've kept in touch, email. It's just interesting that this little, tiny village – we just shipped to Genoa, Italy. We have a customer in Sardinia. I talk to him regularly. Then aside from U.S. customers, when we ship to New York and Canada and a lot throughout Florida. So, no day is ever the same. You have boats unload. We have customers in Europe. We ship to Romania, to Chile, South America. Yes, it's just cool because people don't realize that this little village is so far-reaching. So, who could ask for a more interesting job than that? Then add to it, in [19]95, I bought Starfish Company. [19]85, [19]86, I've had this since [19]86. No, it's [19]96, I got it [19]96. Yes, because [19]86, I was still in school. So, in [19]95, [19]96, I bought Star. What I love about that little restaurant, aside from the food is excellent, if you've never been there – did you get that?

SM: [inaudible] tonight.

KB: Okay. You'll have, sitting at the bar, you'll have a fisherman who maybe you've had a few too many beers. You'll have some German person or wife and husband. Then you'll have a lawyer and maybe a plumber. Or you just never know when...

SM: Last year we had Amish ladies [inaudible].

KB: Yes, it's just weird the way that people are drawn to that place. Yet I think part of the drive's is, one, the food's good, but it's an interesting evening. It's not like your normal restaurant where you just go – and not that there's anything wrong with spending time with whoever you go with, but it just adds – this picnic tables are amazing. You'll get just different groups of people. Really cool.

SK: Being a woman in the fishing business, have you ever come across any discrimination or chauvinism from the fisherman or anything like that?

KB: Well, it's funny that you say that because I think it's there, but I actually think it's an advantage being a woman. Because I can say things to these fishermen, and they're big burly guys, that they wouldn't take from a guy. I can scold them like I'm their mom, and they don't react. They're pretty respectful around me. Of course, I control their money too, so they're going to be a little better about it. I would never deny that there's not discrimination in the world. Of course, there is. But there's also the way people cope with things, I think, that you can make it really a liability to you, or you can make it work for you or at least not hurt you. I mean, some people let things really bog them down. I actually think it's an advantage. I can call dealers. For them to talk to a woman, one, it's a little unusual. Two, I can get away with saying things to them that no one else would maybe say. So, I like it.

SM: Did you experience more of what Shannon was saying, earlier when you were younger? Because you mentioned that one of your family members was not sure if a female could handle –

KB: Well, you know that's exactly true. If anything, I've experienced more of that from my family. Again, my dad, he had all brothers except one sister. So, there were seven children and six boys. I think, for them to watch a woman in the business was difficult for them because they just don't see women in a business role. But what I had always countered back to them is my grandmother, truly, Grandma Bell, was really like the hub of the family. Even after Aaron died, Grandma still was the one who – and I think it was a part of respect thing. They would go to her before they make decisions. Because upon Aaron's death, it was her company. She not only held that household in control, she still directed what she wanted with the fish house and all. So, they might think it's not for women, but a lot of times women are really good multitaskers. They're, I think, better at dealing with people or more – not to be insensitive to you guys because you all have strengths too. [laughter]

SM: [inaudible]

KB: I know. See? It's probably more a personality thing. Some women, it might be really tough to do it. But for me, it worked out great.

SK: Use it to your advantage.

KB: Yes.

SK: That is awesome.

TV: In the gillnet ban at [19]95, did that really affect your business? What did you have to change? How did you [inaudible] through that?

KB: Yes. Well, first of all, what it affected, I think, locally, was the people were just really depressed after it happened. Because I don't think they realized, any of us realized it was going to be as horrible a vote as it was. Even though when they say whatever percentage it was, of the voters, less than 50 percent had even gone to vote. But still, whatever did go vote, whatever that percentage was, 65 percent voted to get rid of the nets. Yes, it definitely impacted our business. Our sales dropped to 50 percent the first year. After July 1st of [19]96 is when it went into effect. I remember getting a phone call in March of [19]96, before it had gone into effect, with a woman telling me how much better fishing was already. I'm thinking, "You don't know what you're talking." But, anyway, why we were fortunate with the net ban and why we're still here is we had offshore boats. So, even though our mullet catches and our inshore fish catches went way down, we had the ability to compensate some with the offshore fleet. So, we stayed in business. The sad thing was many of the little, small fish companies, like Fulford Fish companies, which we bought, we own that now and just use it for docking. But Snead Island Fish House over there and just a bunch of the little ones, they all closed. They all got like 100,000 for their property. They thought, "Woohoo, we're making big money." Years later, they, I think, wished they had held on to that property. You couldn't expect them to hold on, business-wise, because they couldn't make ends meet with taking the nets away. But it was definitely difficult.

SM: Was it [19]95 or [19]96 that you bought Starfish?

KB: Yes.

SM: So, it was kind of a rocky boat for you for that year?

KB: Well, it's funny...

SM: [inaudible]

KB: No. You know what was interesting, I had spent about two years fighting the net ban. I could go talk in front of the stadium, if you wanted me to, now. Because I went from event to event to event. I'd have a little table. I made some great friends. I'm really good friends with Doug Henderson who's a local judge, who is doing the same thing for his – he was running for judge.

SM: I will be seeing him on Tuesday on trial.

KB: Oh, really? Tell him I said, "Hi."

SM: Will do that.

KB: He emailed me yesterday. We go to breakfast sometimes. I'm still in touch with him. Gilbert Smith just came out. I'll go with those guys somewhere. But anyway, I remember after the net ban, while I'm being really bummed out and, two, I finally thought to myself – by this time, I'm late twenties, I'm thinking, in [19]95. I'd have to actually calculate. But anyway, I'm older. It's time, I think, to pay attention to business, because I really hadn't, at that point, yet worried about money. I just hadn't thought – I didn't have a lot, but I didn't need a lot. In [19]95, I bought my first cottage here, which Dad told me, "You're paying \$55,000 for that? They built it for 3,000." I'm like, "Yeah, I like them." I do love these old houses. I'd fix them up, and I rent them. The rent almost paid the mortgage, so I had to supplement it a little. But I rented one of my uncle's houses for 250 a month so I could do that. Then the other thing, I didn't tell my Dad I was buying Star because I knew he wouldn't want me to. Because he'd again think, "Fish business, scary, don't do it." But the funny thing about that is I go to two banks, and I get turned down because I tell them it's going to be a restaurant. I go to the third bank. It's in foreclosure as a fish market. I tell them it's going to be a fish market. They go, "Okay." I got an SBA loan. I thought, "How weird is that?" Because restaurants have a horrible, horrible, horrible track record. Banks do not like restaurants. If you ever go for money, do not [laughter] [inaudible] restaurant. But I thought, how weird, it's a failed seafood market. They would back that before – so, anyway, that was the story of that. But yes, [19]95, I had to pick myself up, brush myself off, and decide, start focusing on – because I always worried at that time. The family was really contentious, always the brothers. My dad was the oldest. I always thought, if anything happened to him, I knew for sure they would boot me out, especially back then when I wasn't as important to the place. I'm not saying I'm that important. But today, I do so much more that it'd be hard for them to replace me. I'd have to replace myself now. But anyway, I wanted that as a backup, Star and those houses that I ended up buying. Every few years, I'd buy a house. My Dad always was like, "You're just crazy." Until in the 2000s, he finally said something like, "I guess you were smart to buy." [laughter]

SM: The offshore fleets, what did you catch to keep you going those first couple years after –

KB: Well, they were grouper boats and snapper boats, primarily, tuna, swordfish. We had had them before, but we just weren't reliant just on that. The point being, our sales had been like 6 to 7 million. After the net ban, it went down to 3.2 or something like that. Really, it was huge if you think of all your fixed costs. To, all of a sudden, lose half of your sales volume there, or revenues, it was a big, huge hit.

SK: Were you ever scared that you would lose [inaudible]?

KB: Yes. Yes, it was really scary. Because ever since I've been there, I've mostly done the money because I'm good with money. My uncles and dad was interesting because they never ever paid attention to money because they didn't spend a lot. The company has always been relatively strong. I think I had almost protector mode, I wouldn't tell them if it was – I mean, I would eventually, if it got really bad, but if things started getting tight, I'd –they just were like business as normal always. They never paid attention to it. I would get nauseous thinking, "We're getting low on cash or whatever." They were just very conservative. They all drove pickup trucks and were hard workers.

SM: So, you were always thinking of ways to invest and grow and...

KB: Well, what we've done differently since the net ban, of course they've gotten better with using cast nets. So, that's helped. We also started – we have such a large facility. We freeze a lot of stuff for other people and package for other companies. That supplemented it. We've also added a little tackle store which is another avenue of making it generating revenue. Yes, just things like that. But our primary focus is still buying fish, whether it be offshore or now, cast net boats or seines. They've come up with different gear now that they're allowed to use. Even though production isn't what it was, every year seems to get a little better.

SK: That is good.

SM: Do you have any plans for the future in terms of any other ideas or ways to expand the revenue that you can foresee?

KB: Well, my dad died in 2012, at the end, in November. My uncle died in August of 2012. It was very strange to have them gone today because my dad really ran the place. Then my Uncle Calvin was, even though he didn't really manage it, he was one of the ones that directed the flow of things. Anyway, I'll get to the point of what you're asking. My plans right now are truly organizing. Because both of them, as they got into their [19]70s and [19]80s – dad was 89 when he died, Calv was 82 – they've kind of become almost quarters. Even though, in a way, it's cool for the village, because Calvin had seventy boats in his yard, all sizes, up to maybe 40 feet was the biggest one. Canoes, I'm counting all the boats. He also had nets from the net ban. He had wood. To me, the problem is I'm very thrifty. I don't have any problems reusing stuff. In fact, I support that fully. But when you have so much stuff that you don't know what you have and the condition of it is deteriorating as years go by – we had code enforcement violations, and I would always have to represent Calvin at these. We also have a historic overlay here that says you're allowed to have nautical stuff in your yard, which I love. But I would have to go to the county and say, "It's not junk, it's nautical because of this." They'd go, "That flatbed trailer is nautical?" I go, "That's right because we carry nets with it." You could do that with almost anything if you want. You can make anything nautical. But the thing is that I've learned they both left so much stuff behind that it's a huge undertaking. So, the answer to your question is I am still in organizing mode. We're cleaning up those yards. We're still keeping the old historic boats because I want to eventually maybe make a walkway with some of the ones from the [19]20s and [19]30s, where people can appreciate that stuff. But there's stuff that's just rotted. I have a couple of guys that are amazing because they have the patience of what – because everybody walks up to them and say, "Karen said I could have that," and they're like, "No, she didn't." Because I would call them. But anyway, so right now, we're organizing. We're getting rid of stuff that my dad bought, that Calvin bought, selling, scrapping, trashing. But yes, I have plans to make things better, slowly but surely. I can only do so much at one time, and I'm on that path, I think.

SM: What has been the biggest change that you have noticed in Cortez? Is it the development? Is it something else? Something that you have noticed that stands out over the years. Because we hear a lot of stories from some of the people who have been here for a long time, the close-knit community, and they tell us a lot of stories and how close things were. What has been the

big change for you that you have noticed?

KB: Well, I think one of the probably saddest things I see happening here is that, one, a lot of the old time people are gone, my dad, uncles, cousins. People are dying. Often, with them, goes a lot of the history. But I think one of the worst things, even more so than that, because that's just inevitable that we all move on, is that Cortez has almost become trendy or popular. With that, you have people that see that. They want to grasp onto why it's unique. But yet when they do that, their influence changes it. So, you see it in places like Everglade City. Have you guys been to Cedar Key ever?

SK: I have.

TV: I have.

KB: Yes. It's cool, but it's such a tourist place now. To me, they've lost what made them a fishing village, sort of. I mean, they still do a lot with the farm-raised clams. But I see that happening here. It's almost like people, they want to latch on to the uniqueness that's here. But when they do that, it – what is it, gentrification, I think is the word, where, by bringing in those outside influences, it changes what makes this very different, very unique. So, that worries me because, I mean, there's actually a feud in the village right now. I don't know if anyone addressed that but yes. I'm on one side of it. There's someone else on the other. It's sad because it had to do with the nonprofit that was here. I don't know if you know anything about that. But why it was appalling to me is, FISH, which is the organization that we were getting the county to buy this building. We bought the 95 acres, the preserve over there that we're slowly working on making a park. But people came in and got votes from the bar down there. We didn't know they were doing this. They got absentee ballots from the bar, at the kitchen. They had people – I didn't know they were doing this. They booted out three of the old-time board members who are Richard Culberth, Jerry Culberth, and Maxine Myford. Those people were core people who had built the festival. Of course, they were offended. So, now you've got that side of the village versus this side. It seems silly to say, "Well, they're not even Cortezians," but they're not. I know that sounds weird because there's discrimination for. But yet it's almost like a power play. I said to them, I go, "How can you do that to a 75-year-old person that has invested twenty years of their life in this event? Now you yanked it away from them." I'm mean. I'm like, "You should be ashamed of yourself." It's really caused really horrible, hard feelings. There is a division in the village right now. It's like the original hardcore villagers versus these new people that have been there. They might not be new. They may have been here twenty years, but they're not fishing people.

TV: Do you think some of that, people coming here and trying to live in Cortez, you think it has something to do some of the gillnet banners, some of the government regulations trying to...

KB: Well, I think, one, they just think it's such a cool place because there's not many places like this. So, what it seems to attract is a lot of bohemian styles, like artists like it here, people who aren't your normal –some people can't stand this, having boats and trucks and nets all over. Some people think it's horrible. They desire that, what is it, derestricted community? See, I don't like de restricted communities because I think they're boring. To me, they're alike. They're

all the same. I like that this is unique. I don't know if the gillnet ban so much. A lot of people did move, some of the old poor families. The McDonald's sold their house. John McDonald, I don't know if you all met him, but the whole place was sold. The Fulford's sold their fish house to us after the net ban. That's just because Calvin wanted a place to put his boats, but all of it definitely has an impact.

SM: I mean, how many people are you expecting to have for the festival next week?

KB: I don't know because of the feud. I won't help them with the festival anymore. I kicked them off our property [laughter]. I'm telling you it was brutal. Because my family, we supported that festival for years and years. We never charged them a dime for the power, for the use of our forklifts, our crew. Then when that happened with the election, I think four years ago, I went back to the board. I said, "The bylaws say that those people had to turn their memberships in, a week before the vote." The board said, "Well, we're just going to let it go." I said, "Well, you know what then? You can take the festival, and you can take it somewhere else," which is really horrible because I shouldn't do that to the organization. But I was really upset with the board because it was wrong. I mean, I'm still on the board. But I consider myself a watchdog. I just watch to make sure they don't do anything that I consider really horrible. [laughter] So, you can see the feud runs deep. It's a bad –

SM: Has there always been some sort of feud or conflict throughout Cortez's history?

KB: Yes, I've heard stories that are interesting back when – they, one time, stuck a stick of dynamite under somebody's bed, which is really horrible, and they blew it off, because that could kill somebody. But that was about fishing. What it was, historically, when you would set your net somewhere, all the fishermen knew that those were your fish. You were watching them. Well, back in that time, if you ever disrespected whoever was doing that, it got nasty. It's kind of funny because you know the places where they chop your hand off if you steal so you don't steal there? Well, back then, they were more respectful of each other, maybe partly out of fear or whatever it was. The shenanigans that go on today didn't happen. Of course, much smaller population, so a lot of less people that mix it all up. So, yes, there's a history of feuds here, families, jealousies, families between different family members. A lot of my grandmother's sisters were jealous of her because Aaron, even though I wouldn't say they were rich, they had the biggest house in the village. They would have the gathering place on Sunday. They always have food. So, her sisters, a lot of times, had issues with her, even though she was pretty generous with them. But you know how jealous the Fulford's are. I determined that when I look at the families, Bell Fulford, the Fulford's are the crazy ones. That's where I think that crazy line comes in, the Fulford ride, yes. The Bells are more fun-loving. They were the nicer ones. The Fulford, ooh, crazy. Have you met Mary Fulford?

SM: Yes.

KB: Oh, okay. She'd kill me. Don't let her see this. [laughter] She's nice. She's just got that extreme Fulford blood. [laughter]

SM: Absolutely.

KB: Don't put that in [inaudible].

SM: So, what makes Cortez interesting is a lot of these different families and characters and obviously the history. Would you agree with that?

KB: Oh, my gosh, yes. I think the people are a lot of what makes the village unique. Again, I don't know if it's just how they grew up. Because again, I didn't grow up right here, but yet I feel like I have some of the same tendencies that maybe it's just hearing it from my dad and watching my mom and how they dealt with each other or watching the family, how they dealt, but definitely unique people.

SM: What is your fondest memory of Cortez that you can recall? I know there is probably a lot of memories, but what is something that really sticks out to you? Whether good, whether bad, something you think of from time to time. Or maybe it is a person.

KB: Well, I'm trying to think between the good and the bad because there's been – the good things are – it is really tight-knit. I can remember thinking to myself – my Aunt Ella lived in this turquoise – it was the old Fulford homeplace down the road, on the main road there. I lived behind her. She would always wave. After a while, you're like, because everybody waves. To get to the village sometime might take you 15 or 20 minutes because you have to stop and talk to everyone. But then after she died, then you think, "Wow." You miss that, that little – even if it's just a wave or acknowledgement or whatever. I think probably the worst thing would go back to the families. Like I had this one aunt who, she worked for my dad. She was actually a cousin. She worked for my cousin, or she was my dad's cousin. She was just mean-spirited. She quit. Although she said she got fired. But Dad said she quit because he told her, "Don't do sales tax anymore." Anyway, it's really, again, I think the personality, just strong, strong personalities and grudges. It's just the makeup of a little community, I suppose.

SM: What else guys?

KB: I talked longer than Lightning, didn't I? [laughter]

SM: Yes, you did. Are you surprised?

KB: Oh, I talk all the time. I'm a talker. No, but Lightning, I don't know. Did you ask him similar questions or whatever? John Campbell.

SM: No, because he is fishing. So, we did not get into the business.

KB: Did you do the same? Did you do him?

SK: Yes.

KB: Okay. I didn't know if it was different groups doing different ones.

SM: We had some different groups earlier, but they're out taking pictures.

KB: Well, he'll talk. But you have to probably know him, maybe really well to get him to talk.

SK: He was pretty talkative.

KB: Oh, good.

TV: [inaudible]

SM: [inaudible] and told some stories...

KB: We were talking about how he and I are now the old-timers, because all the old-timers are moving on. So, I'm like, "Okay."

[laughter]

SM: These young students here fixing to graduate high school, what advice would you give them? You are successful business owner. You worked hard your whole life to get where you are at. Do you have any particular advice that you would give them?

KB: The only thing I would say, and it sounds silly because you hear people say the whole thing about – what are you pointing at?

SM: I am pointing at a group of my students walking down the road.

KB: Are they throwing footballs at each other?

SM: No, they are all wearing cameras.

KB: All right. They look all professional. Well, I would the adage of staying true to yourself, because I think the best thing I ever did was, when I knew it to myself that I didn't want like a corporate lifestyle, because you have got to like what you do. To me, you've just got to have a passion because then it's not like work. It's such a huge part of your life. Even if it's only forty hours a week, which I probably work, I don't know, eighty, average, I don't know what it would be, but I don't consider it work. That's the difference between – I can remember I was married. I think he had a midlife crisis or something. I don't really know what happened. He never really fully explained it. But he started saying to me, "We should sell this and travel." I thought, "The restaurant, Star," and II go, "What?" It was mine anyway. I had bought it before we were married. But I said, "I'll never sell that place." I think, because to him, it was maybe more of a job. It runs deeper than that. It's probably because it was me in control of it or whatever. But the thing is, if you don't like what you do or the people you're around, what a horrible existence. I don't care if it's sweeping tables or whatever people do for a job. You really have to just love what you do, teaching or whatever you do. Then there was one other thing. Oh, this is, I think, interesting that happened this week. I get a phone call from somebody. We always get weird calls, people trying to sell stocks. He's like, "We're interested in buying your business." I said,

"Oh, yeah?" I go, "Why?" Because it's a tough business to get into. Then I think I said, "Well, it's not for sale." He said, "Well, yes, but we're going to do this and this." I said, "Well, have you ever even been here?" He said, "No, but I've got this team of investors." I said, "Well, look, it's not for sale." I said, "We're happy doing what we do." He goes, "Well, you don't even want to know how much?" I said, "No." It baffled him. But I said it's not for sale. Because, one, if that place ever does go, to me, the whole village will go, as far as my view. That's just my view. But I can't imagine doing anything else different. I get that from my uncles and my dad who said they had offers all the time because it's prime real estate on Sarasota Bay, deepwater access. But what would we do? Whether it's go down and talk to the guys, the fishermen, or whatever, that's just what we do. It's not for sale.

SM: Do you fish today? Do you yourself go out fishing?

KB: Yes, I fish by walking in that cooler. I pick out something. I say to someone, "Go clean this for me." [laughter] I have gone fishing. Oh, let me just tell you this because this is very interesting. You know they lifted the net ban for like two weeks in November. I was lucky enough to go gillnetting because I've never done it. I've been purse netting. I've been shrimping, I've been longlining. I've done almost all of them. I've been haul seining. Well, I've done most of them. Anyway, Junior Guthrie, I call him Mike Junior, take me gillnetting, would you? He goes, "Oh, I don't know." Because they didn't really trust that they wouldn't get arrested. They thought they might – I go, "Come on, it's on the FWC website." I want someone to take me gillnetting. So, we went. It's hilarious because you know people have this image that it desecrates the stocks. We rode around, literally. Of course, he's drinking. I'm thinking, "This is not going to end well," because he's drinking as we're going two hours into it. I don't know how many beers he had had. But we finally set the net off of the kitchen here, out here, and you know how many we caught? Big, beautiful mouth of seventeen head. It's just funny because you had a big old long piece of gillnet, but it's not the tool that people think that it just wipes out fish. But I just felt lucky that I got a chance to go because it's such a cleaner fishery. You get only the real big fish. Anyway, we're hoping one day to get that whole thing correct because it was really a travesty. But anyway, that was...

SM: Give us a forecast on that.

KB: Hopefully before I die, but that you need to change the...

SM: Yes. Do you foresee that happening?

KB: I kind of do, almost, because truly – I hope it doesn't backfire. But the gear we're using now, the seine nets, it really does catch everything. It's really horrible. It catches all the juvenile fish. It's ridiculous because you're impacting negatively the stocks. When the gillnets, what they should have done is rather than ban them, if they really thought they were that horrible, they should have either let the people who had the current licenses have them and pass them onto their families or some means to not make everybody have to wipe out. Yes. Because now people don't know how to mend net like they used to. They don't know how to set the – apparently, Junior doesn't know how to sea mullet. [laughter] because we caught seventeen head. Mote has offered to help, which is a step in the right direction because if you have a

scientific group that's respected that will help, they said even if it's a – what's the word? Is it artisanal? Who knows that word? Where it's a local, very limited gillnet fishery, they would like to see that happen here because of the history and all that's here. So, I think it might happen. I might be 100 years old or however old I make it to, but I think it might happen.

TV: What steps will probably be made [inaudible]?

KB: Well, I'm supposed to get with Mote. They were going to do some studies, which is funny because the studies have all been done. But they were going to put some gillnets out in the bay with some people and actually do a scientific difference between seine nets and gill nets and then move forward with the legislature. Because one of the problems with the net ban is it's in the Constitution, and that's nowhere to manage your fisheries. Fisheries, stock levels move up and down. I was on the Gulf Council for six years, so I have all that mumbo jumbo in my head. But they're fluid. They change. So, you shouldn't have a static rule in your constitution that is impossible to change except, again, with the vote by the populace. It's just ridiculous. So, that needs to be remedied. But I'm still organizing. [inaudible] right now. [laughter]

SM: Did they have legitimate studies as the one they are proposing?

KB: They do, but they're usually sponsored by commercial fishermen, are the ones doing them. So, they, of course, think they're biased to how they're – exactly. So, if you can get an institution like Mote or someone to do it, it's coming from an unbiased group, and that would have more standing with the government, with whoever, the state. So, hopefully, yes, little steps, baby steps.

SM: Well, is there anything else you would like to tell us? Anything that we have gotten or forgotten to ask you or something?

KB: Yes. I think it's really cool that you do this though, because what an interesting – what a neat take on – what do you do with this when you do it? Are you going to do something down there again at the end?

SM: Yes, we are going to...

KB: But you won't do the same one that you already did.

SM: You mean the monologue?

KB: Yes.

SM: No, it will be different. If you do not mind, we are going to use your space for the art gallery here.

KB: Oh, of course. Yes, it was nice.

SM: The gallery, that is what they are doing right now. [inaudible]

KB: Yes, that was beautiful. I hope we can get more attention to it this time because I think we didn't – I don't think we didn't have as many people as would have appreciated.

SM: [inaudible] been done before. So, I think it was like, oh, really, there's an art gallery over there type thing. [inaudible]

KB: Yes. It's neat though because you all see it. It's very industrial. It's a big warehouse.

SM: Yes. [inaudible] from last year. [inaudible].

KB: Yes. It was neat. I liked it.

SM: Yes, I like to use your space.

KB: Oh, of course.

SM: Yes. We definitely want to do that presentation for you.

KB: Yes. Perfect. Good.

SM: Is there anything else?

KB: No, you don't want to ask me that. I could bring him along for hours. [laughter]

SM: Okay. All right. Well, thank you for your time.

KB: You're welcome. Sure.

SK: Thank you so much.

KB: Sure. No problem.

[end of transcript]