



NEW BEDFORD FISHING HERITAGE CENTER

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Name of Narrator: Anthony Nguyen

Name of Interviewer: Genesis Galan

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Background Information:

- **Name of person interviewed:** Anthony Nguyen
- **Age:** 27
- **Gender:** Male
- **Occupation:** Assistant Manager Cost Accountant
- **Ethnicity:** Vietnamese, Filipino

Interviewer: Genesis Galan, Emma York

Translator: N/A

Observer(s):

Transcriber: Genesis Galan

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Abstract:

Anthony Nguyen is both Vietnamese and Filipino and works in a managerial accounting role. He has ties to the fishing industry through his current job and his father's occupation as a scalloper in the industry. Anthony is being interviewed by Genesis Galan on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at his workplace, NORPEL, a processing center for seafood and other meats used in pet food. In the interview, he discusses his early involvement in the fishing industry during high school and the difficulties he experienced as a result of his father's decisions. Anthony explains how these experiences influenced his decision to pursue higher education and eventually led him to his current position in accounting at the processing center.

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[00:00-5:00] Introduction. Anthony describes his initial exposure to the industry by working with his father, who was a scalloper. He provides an overview of how he shifted from considering a job in the industry to choosing a different career path. He explains that the intense labor demands of the industry led him to pursue a college education instead.

[5:00-10:00] Anthony shares some of the challenges that come with receiving a large sum of money, as scallopers often do, and he mentions his father's misuse of drugs. He also describes being forced by his father to help do some of his father's work on the boat, such as bagging scallops. Anthony explains that he was often babysat by another Vietnamese family. He shares that it is common for Vietnamese families in the New Bedford community to have a husband/father who works as a scalloper, and a wife/mother who works as a nail technician. He also shares that he was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, raised in Albany, New York, then came back to live in New Bedford. He describes his home environment while living with his father.

[10:00-15:00] Anthony gives his take on the relief he felt when his father was away for weeks and months at a time. He says this might be different for other children who may miss their parent while they're away and working in the fishing industry. Anthony clarifies his current connection to the fishing industry as an Assistant Manager Cost Accountant for NORPEL, a processing plant for pet food.

[15:00-20:00] Anthony explains the role of the finance department at NORPEL. He explains what he has learned about the fishing industry as a result of working in this role. He shares that he has learned of all the different fish species (for manufacturing cost purposes). Anthony expresses the challenge for those that are in the fishing industry to prepare and file taxes and identifies this as a potential opportunity for growth and support in the industry.

[20:00-25:00] Anthony elaborates on the misuse of the income provided to his father through scalloping and the fishing industry. He also shares of his commitment to himself and to family values by supporting himself and his sister financially.

[25:00-30:00] Anthony talks about his sister and how he supported his and her college endeavors. He says that he is very close to his younger sister. Anthony also talks about his half-brother who currently lives with his father.

[30:00-35:00] Anthony describes the geographic location of NORPEL. He says that it reminds him of the time spent working with his father. Anthony also describes the trends in the fishing market and clarifies that NORPEL sources their fish internationally.

[35:00-40:00] Anthony discusses the Nordic Explorer and its role in the history of NORPEL, which explains the geographic location of NORPEL in New Bedford. He

briefly explains NORPEL's name and provides an overview of the organizational structure and responsibilities of each department of NORPEL.

[40:00-45:00] Anthony talks about future plans that include staying at NORPEL, purchasing a home in New Bedford, and raising a family. He briefly talks about previous work as a public accountant and shares how he got the job at NORPEL.

[45:00-50:00] Anthony talks about bringing a friend to work at NORPEL. He also talks about the Vietnamese community and explains how negative reputations like that of his father spread throughout the community. He also shares of his giving back to the Vietnamese community through opening the door at NORPEL for others of his community to work/intern there. Anthony also discusses the different fish and seafood dishes that he grew up eating at home. He says that it is common for Vietnamese parties in the community to have scallops.

[50:00-End of Audio] Anthony identifies his favorite seafood restaurant. He clarifies that he thinks that scallops are a big part of Vietnamese culture for those living in the New Bedford community, specifically (as opposed to in Vietnam). He says that he grew up eating seafood, but that him and sister do not know how to make the dishes themselves. He says that he does enjoy going to seafood restaurants. Interview ends.

Full Transcript

[00:00]

Genesis Galan: And perfect. Alright, so today is Tuesday, April 2, nope. It is, tu--today. Do you want to start again? I did not change that part.

Emma York: You're good!

GG: That was for when we were supposed to do the interview previously.

Anthony Nguyen: Oh Okay. Yeah, yeah.

GG: All right. So today is Tuesday, April 16, 2024, and we are at NORPEL. My name is Genesis Galan, and I'm interviewing Anthony Nguyen. This interview is a part of the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center's, *Casting a Wider Net* project. The audio recording and transcript from this interview will become a part of the center's archive and the NOAA Voices archive and may be used to develop future programs, publications and exhibits. Anthony, do you give us permission to record this interview?

AN: I do.

GG: You do?

[all speakers laugh].

GG: Alright, so let's just get started with, when were you first exposed to the fishing industry?

AN: I would say... around 2015. I was a senior in high school. And my dad at the time was a scalloper. And so... he was getting pretty old. So, he would ask me to unload the, the ship when it returned. And I would just unload bags of scallops, like each bag was 50 pounds. And they would send me in--they called it the hellhole. And that's when like, that's where all the scallop bags are stored. And you just have to shovel a bunch of ice and scallop bags into this bucket. And then they kinda just reel it up. So, there was a lot of labor.

GG: How did your dad like how was he able to get you involved in that? Were you working? Were you kind of like volunteering almost. Involuntarily? [laughs]

AN: I think he would just ask his captain if he could have his son help do his part. And then they would compensate for that. Yeah and it paid pretty well.

GG: Oh, good. And so was your dad pretty close to the captain? Is that kind of how that worked? Or?

AN: I'm not entirely sure I kind of just like, showed up. Didn't really say much. But it was cool. Yeah, I even did like the ice bucket challenge when like that was a trend at the time. And like, we grabbed like a huge trash bucket. just dumped ice on me.

EY: From the hold? From, from the ship?

AN: On the ship, but like not in the hold. But, yeah. It was pretty cool.

GG: That's pretty cool. Um, I feel like by 2015, like, so you're in your senior year, you're older. Did you already have like any preconceived, like thoughts about the fishing industry? Did you know anything about it before then?

AN: No, I knew nothing about it. I should know. I just knew like, scallops at the time, were expensive, and the scallopers make a generous amount of money. And I was actually thinking about doing scalloping, because the money paid really well. Then, I started thinking about college and then I kind of shifted my career choice. And I ended up here at NORPEL, as a cost accountant.

GG: Sure, so walk me through that a little bit more. I'm kind of curious. So, you wanted to--you did want to explore that for a little bit. But what was your like ultimate, no, I'd rather not

AN: Well, you're out at sea, for weeks, months. And, it's a lot of labor. And with college, you kind of steer away from the labor you do most of the work in like offices or more managing, right and so I graduated from UMass Dartmouth with a bachelor's in accounting and a minor in management. And so... I've done multiple jobs to get to where I am now through networking. And after about three years, they promoted me to assistant manager cost accountant here. And I don't really do much labor here. So, I'm grateful for that. Because my back's already in bad condition from like working out. So, there's no way I could be on the boat.

GG: You did some intense labor, you brought the cookies to the table.

AN: Yeah!

[All speakers laugh].

GG: But that's pretty cool. So, when you first went in and declared your major like in accounting and management, did you go in with the impression that you would end up back in the fishing industry?

AN: No, not at all. It's cool that... I end up somewhat correlated to the fishing industry. Like I see that as a plus and um, I can't really... Like, kinda relate to my...

[5:00]

AN: dad, because I don't really talk to him anymore. Um, because actually, when you receive a great amount of money, it causes you to do dumb things. Right? So, I, I actually was forced to work on the boat. Because I didn't really have an option. I was under his roof at the time. And it was a toxic environment to live with him. Right? So, he's out... doing drugs, and a lot of other things. While I'm on the boat doing that for him, so that I was kind of forced into that. As far as like, the fishing industry. All I really know was just to scoop ice into a bucket and load scallop bags at the time. Yeah.

GG: Yeah, um! When you were looking around, were there other people that were your age, also on the ship doing kind of similar jobs?

AN: Um, maybe like five year difference. He was pretty young. Um, he was saying how he makes great money. He was smoking a cigarette, too. So, I was like, wow, that's pretty cool. I guess. Like, you know, at the time, I was oh, he's smoking a cigar. Like he must be pretty mature and older than me, you know at that time, but, and don't do cigarettes. It's not cool.

GG: Yeah. And I mean, I'm sorry to hear that about your dad. Would you say that that kind of--that experience kind of changed how you felt about the fishing industry at all?

AN: No, not really. Uh..... I feel like it would be immature of me to judge a whole industry based off my dad's actions. And the only like influence it had on me was just to be a better person. And to set a good example for my kids when the time comes... There's that times where like, even before that, where he's abandoned, my sister and I. And that's why, I was actually babysat by Kathleen and Jennifer and like their family, right? Because like their family, the dad also scalloped. But they the moms, they do, they tend to do nails, so a nail technician. And that was just kind of-I know it's a stereotype, but that's kind of what was, the best way to earn money when they're the husband's out fishing.

GG: Yeah, so would you say that it's pretty common for and remind me again, and more so for recording purposes, but your what is your ethnic background?

AN: I am 75% Vietnamese, 25% Filipino.

GG: Oh, cool.

AN: Yeah. And there, there's a good handful of Vietnamese people in New Bedford, that scallop. I can say like 85-95% of the dad, the Vietnamese dads in this community, scallop.

GG: So, would you say that there's like a direct correlation between Vietnam and like New Bedford based on the fishing industry? Are people coming here with that intention to work in that industry? Or does it kind of happen as they're here? How do they get involved?

AN: Yeah, that's actually a great question. I don't know too much about my family's background and how they came here. But I... my family is mostly in New York, Albany, and that's actually where I was raised as a kid. But I was born in New Bedford. So, like, that's the part like I don't understand. You know? So, like, I was born in St. Luke's Hospital, but I was raised in New York. And then I came back here once my mom decided to take my sister and I back. And that's just like a whole different story there. And then, after a few years of living with my mom, she decides to leave us and then so we have no place to stay. So, we had to stay with our dad. And we didn't want to because we already knew like he was just bad trouble, right? So, we started living with my dad and then we just experienced... like, manipulation, toxicity. No affection. So, like, no hugs, nothing like that. Um..... Sorry, that didn't really answer your question. I was kind of getting off track there.

[10:00]

GG: No, it's helpful. And you said, you don't you're not very sure of like the background. Would you say that it was helpful to have people like peers your age, like Kathleen, who also had a father or family that was in the fishing industry?

AN: Yeah

GG: You find yourself relating to her?

AN: Yeah. I mean. Like, I could relate to them, but not really. Not so much because their dad was actually living with them at that time. And then also supporting them, helping them pay for college, like doing the right things that they should do with money when exposed to the scallop industry. But, yeah, like when they're like, oh, yeah, my dad's fishing. Like, those are like, two, three weeks. And I'm like, oh, yeah, like my dad's fishing too. And so, you kind of get a relief? Well, it's actually different for--per person. Like, Kathleen, I'm sure, actually I can't speak for her, but. Some--normally, when their dads fishing, like that child would miss their dad, right? But no, my sister and I would be relieved that he's gone. Like there's more freedom, right. And I think it's different per family, but I'm sure other kids can probably relate to that. Or miss their dads too.

GG: Yeah, I admire that you're able to say this is my experience. But I know this is not every experience--

AN: Yeah. Right

GG: in the fishing industry. So, you know, like, because this is your interview, and this will be more towards the end too. But I wanted to--I'm kind of I'm kinda curious. If someone--if what part of your story in relation to the fishing industry, would you want someone to relate to? Or like, what kind of message would you want someone to understand with, you know, what you decide to share today?

AN: Hmm...how I would like to share my experience with the fishing industry?

GG: Yeah, what would you want someone to be able to pull away from it? Or maybe like relate or find like that same like relief in hearing your story?

AN: Well, I just feel like I have to kind of backtrack to NORPEL because that was kind of my path with the fishing industry,

GG: Mhm,

AN: Since we buy and sell like processed seafood and meat for pet food. And I'm trying to find a way to correlate that instead of like, having like the scallop part be the connection. But I think that one is probably more relatable, to be honest.

GG: Yeah, I think that's helpful. And I know part of the project is exploring the different connections to the fishing industry, so like even this one is a very important one too. So—

AN: Yeah

GG: Yeah, tell me a little bit more about the role that you have now and the work that you do.

AN: Okay, so, at NORPEL, we usually just buy raw materials from vendors, and then we process it at our plants. We have one in Mass and one in PA. So, that requires a lot of warehouses, uh cold storages to hold frozen product. We also sell fresh product too. And we do business with, like Nestle, that's a big one, Champion, Fresh Pet. Like those are the big names that peop-most people will know for pet foods. As for my role, I'm the assistant manager, cost accountant. And I manage my--the accounting team. And kind of like delegate work. Make sure transactions are being done correctly and that, we do it in a timely manner.

GG: So, you said that there's one in Massachusetts and then one in PA—

AN: Yeah

GG: Well for the processing plants, but then--

AN: There's also cold storage. We have our own cold storage here in mass and multiple in mass, and Pennsylvania. And then we also do business with other cold storages, which is--are like all around the United States.

[15:00]

GG: I'm just kind of curious, so do you--like the work that you do in the finance world, does that kind of, does that work for all of those different places? Or does each one have their own department? Like their finances--are you like managing, like the big overview? Or is it--

AN: Well, like, yeah, that, that pertains to like a, like our product. Like, let's say, one in Idaho, the warehouse in Idaho, ships a product--one of our products out to a customer. And that gets sent over to headquarters, and then we'll like, we'll create an invoice. And then we'll make sure like the cost is properly allocated.

GG: Yeah. So, from this side, what have you learned about the fishing industry that you didn't really know before?

AN: Oh, there is--so when I first started, there was a ton of..... fish species that, didn't even know existed, right? And we, when we put it in a blend, one fish can be considered another fish, like herring, and mackerel. Essentially the same thing. And, you know, at the time, like, I'm like, looking up pictures of each fish, like, oh, this kinda looks like that one, I can understand that. So. So, I learned a lot about fish species. And also like, meats as well, because work with boar, venison, lamb. Beef heart, beef livers.

EY: There some well-fed pets.

AN: Yeah,

GG: That's funny. Um, Emma, feel free to jump in if you do have any thoughts or questions. Um, so this, like, learning about the different fish and stuff like that? Have you kind of done that on your own? Like, because you're curious, or it--does it help you in your role--

AN: Exactly!

GG: Like in assessing--

AN: Exactly Yeah! It greatly assist in doing the work needed to do a work order, essentially, because we take raw material, we have to produce the finished good. Add the manufacturing cost to it. Then get the final cost of the product and then try to sell at a profit. And so, when we're, when we're doing a work order, and we need like the percentages of the blend for the species of raw material, it makes it easier to understand when you understa--know the... basically the species of the fish like which kind of fish.

GG: Yeah. Um...I lost my drift on the question that I was going to ask you.

AN: Sorry! See like, I'm not sure, what would be more impactful, to the audience. Because like, I'm not too sure if like, whoever's reading this article or exhibit will be able to relate, but maybe they'll see it fascinating, but I feel like more of like the scalloping part, there's tons of families that scallop and live in New Bedford and so, a lot of male guardians are out fishing, and like they can definitely experience maybe... the drugs and what not and like, how to kind of climb out of that hole. And like, do the right thing.

GG: Right. And, you know--

EY: Do you have ways you wish the industry was different or things you would change about the industry?

AN:Yeah, I'm not too sure, uh.....I know that... scallopers have.... this... bad image... of not paying their taxes. Maybe we can make that easier [laughs]. Um... Like a lot of them, don't even-- aren't too educated on filing taxes. And when you do--when you have such a large income, you have to pay more taxes. So maybe like, they get more assistance on that, and how to make that an easier process for them. I'm not too sure what kind of form they get from like their captain or something like that. Or maybe they're considered self-employed?

[20:00]

EY: And I just wanted to validate, before Genesis jumps in that, I know you have multiple aspects of your life that connect to the industry—

GG: Yeah. Right!

EY: And I hear you kind of saying like, I don't know if this NORPEL stuff is going to be interesting. NORPEL--

AN: Yeah. Right.

EY: Pelagic fish? What the heck is that!

AN: Yeah.

EY: And we could maybe get into that, cuz I definitely didn't know what that meant. But I do think there's value like, just to clarify the the *Casting a Wider Net* project is collecting the stories of Vietnamese people in the industry, Puerto Rican people, Cape Verdean people and Central American people. And even though it's true that a majority of the Vietnamese community works in scalloping, like, it's probably, I would imagine powerful for a kid, to see that there are other ways I can engage with this industry. There are other ways I can be in this community and, and making money and giving back.

AN: Mhm.

EY: So, I just do think there's power in your story and an unconventional path. As much as there's also power in you, you sharing what you know about the scalloping industry through family and friends' connections.

AN: Yeah, I guess like, what I've been saying, like, growing up, thus, the whole scalloping thing for my dad, could have been a great thing, but he turned into a horrific thing for the family. Like we could be living in a huge house, have no college debt. Like a good relationship, less traumatizing events, but... with all that money, kind of caused him to go down a dark path. And he kind of dragged us with him. And so, I'm going

to..... say that I climbed out of that hole without their support. I went to college, took my, you know, I do have college loans. But you know, I ended up here at NORPEL, still connected to the fish industry, and... I'm able to support myself financially. I'm also able to support my sister. And I live on my own. And, with the lack of support from parents. And, to me, like that's touching, to escape from that. And, and I still like, throughout that whole time. My family taught me that family comes first. Always. And I still feel that way. And I just carry that with me while moving... the ones that... don't want you to move up in life. That's, that's what was trying to reach at. Around there, so, if you guys want me to elaborate on anything,

GG: I think you just hit it on the dot.

AN: Okay.

GG: Yeah, absolutely. I think there will be plenty of people that are able to relate to the different parts of your experience. But you know, obviously, thank you for sharing that.

AN: Right. I don't want to see like the fishing industry as like, evil or corrupt or anything like that. It's just like, poor decision making with a large amount of money can really change people's lives.

GG: And why do you think that it has such an influence on people? What do you think are their like backgrounds before they get exposed to it? Like we--I know Emma kind of asked you like, what are some changes that could happen, but what do you think maybe makes people vulnerable to begin with to like that?

[25:00]

AN: And I think like they, join the industry, at a relatively young age, and you're out at sea, for a long, periodic times. And you're kinda like dull out there, you know, so, when they come back, they want to like, feel rejuvenated, and kind of just searched for that dopamine, you know, because like all that hard work, they just spent, weeks and months out at sea makes them want to kind of explore life. Maybe that's it. I don't know, I haven't been out at sea, but... it's hard to understand why my dad chose that path... when he has three kids. Uh... I don't know, it was just all that money can buy a lot of things. And I feel like... it has to do with some kind of like, sensation. And then once you do it once, you kind of get hooked on it. And then while you're doing that, you kind of start meeting the wrong people. Start hanging out with them. And then, they kind of just pull you in. And I'm not sure if they drug test on boats, to be honest, so, maybe some do.

GG: Yeah, that's, that's like all, very like interesting to consider. And I want to obviously, like, I'm glad that you're applauding yourself, but it is actually really big that you've pulled yourself out of that hole. I did want to hear a little bit about your sister too, what kind of path she ended up taking?

AN: Umm, so right now she also--she works in... design for UX and UI. And she has a few clients of her own. But. Most of her time's spent at the Southcoast-- she works for

the like Southcoast Hospital. Like she like, does health insurance. But she has always been by my side, for my entire life. Even when our parents abandoned us in New York, like I was still by her side. When we moved back to New Bedford, just me, her, my mom, and then when my mom left us, me and her and then my dad. And then, when I had enough to move out, I brought her along with me. And we've been really tight and have always been tight. She went to UMass Dartmouth. She was... three years behind me. She graduated, and then she went to like design school. Took out another tuition for that. And um, I believe she's-- probably met one of you guys. I'm not sure if you guys have seen her around school. If you ever played track or--

EY: Oh. I'll ask. [Laughs]. My track connection.

GG: I feel like I might have met her but I can't say like, solidly like yes, I did.

AN: Yeah, oh, okay. Yeah.

EY: Do you still live together?

AN: Yeah!

EY: Oh wow, here in the city?

AN: Yep. Yeah.

GG: So, you mentioned that there's three siblings?

AN: Yes! So, I do have a half-brother. And he currently lives with my dad--

GG: Okay,

AN: And I hear... terrible stories to this day, from my dad, that my brother tells me. And like I, I genuinely feel so bad for my half-brother. Like, I didn't need to say half-brother, like, he's actually my brother, you know.

GG: Mhm!

AN: But obviously, he's my half-brother because my dad went to Vietnam, and married a woman there while..... Yeah, so he went he went to Vietnam, [laughing] get with another woman there and then brought her back and then, had that child.

GG: So, is this sibling like involved in the fishing industry at all? Or how old is your brother?

AN: Thirteen.

GG: Thirteen. Okay, so he's younger. Yeah.

AN: Yeah. But, you know, he's involved but indirectly like the way I was affected, because, he, my dad is obviously still doing drugs, and... out cheating on his wife. Whatever it may be, it affects him because like if he needs to be picked up from school, but my dad has the car, he has to like walk home or something like that, or my sister and I will have to pick him up. It's just like, he doesn't care about the family. He cares about only himself. And I want to believe that he wasn't always like that.... Just think it's the drugs.

GG: Right.

AN: I'm not sure.

[30:00]

GG: Yeah, that's definitely unfortunate. And I think too like in your brother's position, he'll be able to, I'm sure he relates to you know, like, yeah, things that you say to so, for him, for other people, this story is impactful. So, it's important that you're sharing it. And then kind of like shifting gears, I think even like the location of NORPEL, right. So, like, if we could talk a little bit about that,

AN: Hm.

GG: But it's like right at the center of like, like, I feel like this is the hub of like fishing industry, of course, like the past and whaling industry. But do you feel like you're reminded of all of that, like, as you're driving in as well, like, outside of this like office [unknown]?

AN: Yeah! Because when I hel--, when I used to help my dad, excuse me, unload scallops, I would drive by it every day. So, like, yeah, I unloaded there. But it's a easy commute for me. It's only like eight minutes to work. Pretty nice. Near the dock, so. And we also have another building, it's at fish island. So, we sometimes see seals there, it's pretty cool. It smells gross. You know, the fish, the smells. You can't like it. You know? I do get reminded, but, I don't, it doesn't bother me. If anything, it's like fuel, you know, to just keep going. And I'll like, tell myself, you're doing a great job. You can--I can always achieve more.

GG: And in your role now, what are some of the changes that you're observing in the fishing industry?

AN: ... fish is getting cheaper, but the volume is increasing...that's a big one for 2024. Because we've noticed that our volume, dramatically increased, but the prices has had to go down. So

GG: Can you explain that a little bit more? Like? How? If you know! You know, like, yeah, why is it increasing? And maybe just explain a little bit more why it's getting cheaper on the other end?

EY: And when you say fish, not scallops?

AN: No! Yeah, yeah, not scallops! Right, right!

EY: We're not talking about the [unknown] scallops, but, Like what? Yeah, what types of fish? What parts of the industry?

AN: Oh, like white fish, tuna, salmon. Some pollock. But the most, high up, volume seafood, is mostly salmon, whitefish... Salmon and whitefish, yeah. I'm not entirely sure like, politically why, the fish got cheaper, but I know if I pulled someone from supply chain they would know. But the volume has increased like almost like 200%, with our orders.

GG: It's the first time I'm hearing this. I'm curious, what's causing like an influx of fish?

EY: Yeah. Is it, does NORPEL source their fish, like exclusively from the U.S.? Exclusively from New Bedford? Or is it from international waters as well? Well not international waters, but international countries?

AN: Yeah, we, we do business internationally.

EY: Okay.

AN: Yeah. We actually we do tons of imports from other countries. And then, that's a whole different process for receiving because there's a lot of import charges.

EY: Why are you stationed here--why--is it relevant for NORPEL to still be stationed here, in New Bedford, in the U.S., even though some of your supply is coming from other countries?

AN: Oh, well. Here like, in New Bedford, at the headquarters, none of the product comes here. This is just where like most of the office, where this is where all the paperwork and the logistics, like this is all behind the scenes to like, make sure all the paperwork is done, every transaction is recorded, and that... everything's done accurate. We have warehouses in different parts of the U.S., where we get documentation from that warehouse when that product is received or shipped. And everything's just done electronically. So that, explains why like, we're not in like, different parts of the U.S., because all the documentation just comes here, electronically.

[35:00]

EY: But I suppose you could be anywhere.

AN: Yeah

EY: Because it comes electronically,

AN: Yeah

EY: But you choose to be here...

AN: Right!

EY: Well, maybe not you! NORPEL chooses to be here. I was just curious if there was any reason.

AN: Well, I believe they started here in New Bedford, because... there's a painting on that wall. It's called the Nordic Explorer, that used to be our boat. And, we would get our own material. And that's how it started. Unfortunately, that ship does not operate anymore. It's just kind of there for show and tell. But,

EY: And it would come here?

AN: Yeah,

EY: Okay, got it. Yeah.

AN: You know, that bridge? Fairhaven bridge?

GG: Mhm

AN: Yeah, parked right over there.

EY: Do you still get any of your material or?

AN: I believe we outsource everything now. I think it's just cheaper that way.

EY: Yeah,

AN: Yeah.

GG: And Emma mentioned interest in the pelagic? Fish. Do you wanna talk a little bit more about that process?

EY: Yeah. What NORPEL stands for.

GG: Yeah.

AN: There's actually a banner right there.

GG: You're gonna read it out? [laughs].

AN: Yeah... I'm actually, is that the one?..... Is that our logo?

EY: The Northern Pelagic Group, LLC? NORPEL?

AN: Trust NORPEL?

[GG and EY laughs]

AN: What bread? Oh, yeah, that's our slogan right there.

[Everyone laughs]

AN: I'm sorry. I don't know it off the top of my head...what do you--

EY: Oh, that's fine! I was just asking you like, what does NORPEL stand for? For people who don't know.

AN: Oh, yeah, just like high quality proteins--

EY: Oh, no, no, no. I mean, literally, what does this acronym stand for?

AN: Oh, oh. Yeah. Northern Pelagic Group.

EY: Like, what does that mean?

AN: I'm sorry,

EY: Or why is that the name of NORPEL?

AN: Well, like, I don't even think it's pronounced pel-e-gic. Is it pel-ag-ic. I think it's pel-ag-ic. Pelagic just means like, a different variety of fish.

EY: Okay.

AN: Yeah, I'm not sure why Northern though. Maybe because we're—

GG: North America? Yeah

AN: North America. Yeah, I don't know. Yeah, I'm sorry. I'm just an accountant.

[Everyone laughs]

AN: Like the supply chain would definitely know! Like if I brought in Brendan, he like I can tell you all these amazing facts about NORPEL.

EY: We'll get Brandan to do the write up before we go!

[Everyone laughs]

AN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

GG: Yeah. Well, I mean, yeah, feel free to share a little bit more about like, the different departments here. And like how--I know you kind of touched on that a little bit earlier, but like, how they kind of work together.

AN: Okay, yeah, so, I'll start with accounting. That's easiest. So we do most of the transactions in our software called NetYield. And we do like invoicing, work orders, receiving, and vouchers. And that split up between like, AP, we have receiving, and accounts for receivable. Then we have the supply chain. They're the ones working on getting a freight truck to deliver the goods or getting customers, getting orders for the customers, releasing orders for the customers. They're the ones planning the logistics behind it, right? And then we have HR, obviously... CFO. We actually grew pretty fast, due to COVID. And during COVID, people were staying in their houses, and buy pets. And obviously you need pet food, to feed your pet, so that's when the dramatic increase of volume and business grew for NORPEL. And then, ever since then, we kind of built a relationship with our customers and our vendors, and have been doing great, ever since.

[40:00]

GG: Yeah, that's a great point. Like, you see like, you wouldn't think of that connection, like immediately, but I know I got a COVID puppy, like well my family did. But yeah, there-- everyone got COVID pets

AN: [laughs] yeah!

GG: And then you wouldn't even think, like on the other end, somehow the fishing industry, or like new businesses during that time, are like connected to that, like the pets and the supply and like, you know, all of that. So that's pretty cool that you made that connection.

AN: Yeah, because I'm sure, like pet food companies, they want to put like, real quality ingredients in their product. Because, I want my cat eating what's healthy for her. You know? And I'm sure other pet owners would want the same for their pet if they love them. Right.

GG: Right! As we're, you know, approaching like kind of the end of the interview, what are some things that you want to share? Like anything else that you're like not thinking-- that you haven't, that you haven't shared, if you want to talk a little bit more about, you know, your father's experience, or maybe anything like, you know, his role, how he got exposed, or anything like that, but this is really your story. So kind of like the focus on you, too.

AN:I can't think of anything off the top of my head. I'm sorry, but if you have questions, I--

EY: I'm curious, so, you're a young professional,

AN: Yeah,

[GG and EY laughs]

EY: because we're all the same age! What do you see for yourself in the future? I guess this could be personally or professionally, but I was thinking professionally.

AN: Okay, yeah.

EY: Do you see yourself staying at NORPEL?

AN: Yeah!

EY: Do you see yourself staying in this industry?

AN: Yeah, I for sure see myself staying with NORPEL. They treat me well. And I proved to NORPEL that, I can take initiative. I can step up when, you know, things get ugly. I'll work overtime. You know, I've traveled to PA multiple times in our, our private plane that we bought. And... like, I'm willing to do that all for NORPEL and NORPEL understands and sees that, so they treat me very well. And, I been pretty much promoted twice within three years, which is kind of unheard of, is what I was being told, when I was being promoted. So... I see great potential with NORPEL, and I plan to stay here for a very long time. And, the housing market is pretty bad right now, so just waiting until, it's the right time. I would love to buy a house, have a family.

EY: Here?

AN: In New Bedford. Yeah.

GG: Yeah. And actually, I don't know that we touched on this, but how did you end up in NORPEL, specifically? Did you just interview like, did you apply here and that was it? Did you know someone here?

AN: Yeah! So ,yeah! Through networking, I had a friend here, and I was doing taxes before this, so like public accounting. And, like, during, like tax season, it was pretty depressing, because you're working like 70+ [to] 80 hours, you know, every week, and it was just it was pretty depressing, but it just wasn't for me, but I respect other public accountants out there, especially if they go for their CPA, because that's not an easy exam. And, I asked my friend here if there was any, if there was any openings, just let me know. Please. And then he's like, I actually got you an interview. I'm like okay. And I - it's so funny. I was actually late to the interview. And when I, when I apologize, my boss, she's like, for what? I'm like, oh okay. So that's like, that's already, you know, I got the vibe, like, everything's laid back here. As long as you like, do your work. That's just how I see it.

GG: We'll make sure to cut that part out of the interview [laughs].

AN: Yeah, okay.

[Everyone laughs]

EY: I'm curious. So obviously, like we've talked about how your relationship to the industry is multifaceted, do you bring that to work? Like, is that, is that something that your coworkers are aware of? Or does it impact your work here? Like I asked like six questions,

AN: Like my childhood?

GG:: Have you shared your experiences with your co-workers?

EY: I guess that you have a connection through your community and through your family to the fishing industry.

[45:00]

AN: Yeah. So, I actually hired a friend, and... he probably knows the most about me. Because he's my friend. And his name's Danny. Same last name as me too. And, when I was living with my dad, he--we actually got to move in my friend's house, to, like rent. And, I am truly grateful for that, and highly appreciative. So like, he knows a lot about my background, and how terrible my dad is. Because like, they won't even pay my friend's parents for renting there. Which is terrible. And it's just a bad look on me, and the whole family. Cos' the Vietnamese community, when like, you're not a great person, it gets spread pretty quick. Word spreads, but he knows the most, not really much, not anyone else, I don't think, like too deep into it. Yeah.

EY: In terms of--well, I guess, was the friends who helped you get a job at NORPEL, also from the Vietnamese community?

AN: He is Vietnamese, but he wasn't, directly part of our Vietnamese community. Yeah, I guess you can say that, yeah.

EY: I was just curious

AN: Yeah, yeah,

EY: If there's like, spirit of supporting each other and if yeah, if you think there'll be other opportunities for young Vietnamese people in New Bedford to join NORPEL or--

AN: Yeah,

EY: Become part of the industry in other ways.

AN: Yeah, I don't see why not.

EY: Like you were pulled in.

AN: Oh, the way I was pulled in.

EY: Not pulled in, but the way you were—

AN: Yeah

EY: The way a friend helped open a—

AN: Right, right

EY: Door for you to be able to show what you're capable of doing.

AN: So, that can for sure happen. For sure. Cos' I, at one point, I hired two of my friends, and they're both Vietnamese. One's still here. The other one is just--decided to go a different route. But he, that person did intern here, and he loved it here. So that was me, giving back to the Vietnamese community.

EY: I totally forgot to ask one more question. I'm so sorry. We have been generally asking about like, if you eat seafood when you work in this industry

AN: Mhm.

EY: And if you ate seafood growing up?

AN: Oh, yeah!

EY: If there any dishes that come to mind?

AN: Yeah.

EY: So, I was just curious.

AN: So when my father, he would go fishing, and he would bring back... sometimes, like, monk fish or—

EY: Scary looking!

AN: Yeah. We eat red fish. A lot. Like a--with a soup base. And that was probably my favorite dish. Most of the time we were just eating like mackerel though. And... that's weird, we didn't really eat that many scallops, even though he would bring back bags of scallop, like fresh scallops. He would just usually sell it. But I think that's how I got into scallops because I'm like, he brought it back, I'm like, I've never had this. And, I was told like, this stuff's expensive. And I'm like, okay, I gotta try it. You know? So then I got into it that way. I love oysters. The best.

GG: I love scallops! Especially wrapped in bacon.

EY: Oh, I'm an oyster person. For sure. Do you still eat seafood? Do you cook it yourself?

GG: Do you have favorite spots?

AN: I still eat seafood. When you go to the these Vietnamese parties, I feel like most of the time there's always gonna be scallop like which is kind of a plus, right? There'll be like bacon wrapped scallops or grilled scallops. Just whatever. It's like, it's awesome. Favorite seafood.. restaurant around here, hm....

[50:00]

EY: This is on record, so.

GG: Right, I know! I'm like, which one is it?

[Everyone laughs]

AN: Honestly, I like the Whale's Tail.

EY: Okay

AN: Yeah,

EY: It's pretty good.

GG: What do you like to get from there? I'm gonna have to try it out when they open, although I won't be here.

AN: Um, their fried shrimp's pretty good. Yeah. Actually, I don't even know what my favorite seafood restaurant would be!

EY: More time to explore, while you wait to become a homeowner

[Everyone laughs]

AN: Yeah, Yeah, that's a good question, I don't even know. I mean--

EY: Are scallops a part of traditional, like Vietnamese cuisine, or it's more like, here.

AN: Yeah, I think it's more here.

EY: It's more here. Whereas like the red fish—

AN: Yeah, because I was in Vietnam, there was like no scallops,

EY: but there was like red fish and-- or no?

AN: Uhh. I don't even know. Yeah. But, d--I don't know.

GG: Yeah, that's fine. Well, let's, Emma asked, do you cook seafood? That's what we want to know.

EY: [laughs] he's been avoiding that part of the question!

GG:: Right? I want to go back to that for a second.

AN: Oh! My sister--so, alright, actually... my sister does most of the cooking.

GG: Okay.

AN: And I don't think she cooks, seafood really, but we like, love seafood. Like when we go to like, a seafood restaurant or like, I don't know if you've ever been to Boiling Point, Shaking Crab?

GG: I think I've heard of that one.

AN: Oh, okay. Like, we love seafood

GG: Mhm!

AN: It's just like, we don't know how to cook seafood, but like my, like when we used to live with my dad, he would cook seafood all the time. It was always, mostly seafood.

GG: I feel like you're gonna go home and tell your sister, hey, why don't you ever—

AN: Yeah, I absolutely am! [laughs].

GG: I knew, I had the feeling!

EY: Actually, I was gonna say they were--it stopped now, but the Fishing Heritage Center was doing like collabs with a bunch of different restaurants--

AN: Mhm

EY: In the community where it would be seafood cooking classes with underutilized species.

AN: Oh, really?

EY: So there was one that I went to at Yozakura, in the south end, which is now in Acushnet, that was like a sushi class, and they were using underutilized species and all sorts of different-- so! I'll let you know if those classes come--

AN: Okay

EY: back now, if I remember.

AN: Well, thank you.

EY: And you and your sister can sign up.

AN: I do think Turks is amazing, if you've ever been there,

GG: Yeah, I was waiting for you to say Turks. I haven't gotten here yet. But through this project, I've learned about Turks and I want to go

AN: Oh, yeah,

GG: Yeah.

AN: Marvelous food. Marvelous. Marvelous.

GG: I uh, I cater with On The Go, sometimes, and they do scallops and like bacon wrapped scallops specifically, and they're, they're amazing. But, but yeah, I mean, is there anything else that you would want to share? That you feel like you might have missed throughout the interview?

AN: No.

GG: No?

AN: No.

GG: Do you feel—

AN: I mean, if you if you have any more questions, I'm more than happy to help. Yeah,

GG: Yeah, do you? Well, yeah, I guess we can ask some of those questions afterwards, but um, yeah. Emma, anything?

EY: I think I'm good. Thank you, thank you for—

AN: Okay! Yeah! Yeah

EY: I'm gonna make sure I correctly stop it.