



NEW BEDFORD FISHING HERITAGE CENTER

Date of Interview: March 19, 2024

Narrator: Kevin Rose, President, New Bedford International Longshoremen's Union.

Interviewer: Paula Robinson Deare

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Background Information:

- **Name of person interviewed:** Kevin Rose
- **Age:** 60
- **Gender:** Male
- **Occupation:** President of the International Longshoreman's Association Local 1413
- **Ethnicity:** Cape Verdean

Interviewer: Paula Robinson Deare

Translator: N\A

Observer(s): Colleen Pina-Garron

Transcriber: Paula Robinson Deare

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Key Words: International Longshoremen's Union, negotiation for inclusion of local workers, Cape Verdean dock workers, unloading ships, deep water wind, wind turbines, job training, future jobs for dock workers.

Abstract: Cape Verdean men have struggled for generations to work in professions guaranteeing enough income to provide for their families. They have gained a foothold on New Bedford's docks unloading and loading foreign ships, particularly because workers on those ships often don't have passports or papers that allow them to debark from the ship within the United States. Thus, longshoremen up and down the United States seaboard provide those services. Many of these longshoremen are part of the International Longshoremen's Union, abbreviated as the ILA.

Kevin Rose, President of the International Longshoreman's Association Local 1413 is a third-generation crane operator who has had enough historic experience through his father and grandfather to know the work well. Each generation of men in Kevin's family has fought to provide themselves, their peers and neighbors with work unloading ships in New Bedford and Rhode Island. They have also made it their mission to increase opportunities for consistent work with longer hours, decent pay, professional respect and especially, safety.

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[00:00-05:00] Kevin describes the people he represents as very hard workers, committed, loyal, proud, and hungry since work has been scarce for the last few years. The wind turbine project, however, is changing that. Kevin describes the work of longshoremen, including crane and forklift operators. He explains that his job as union president is to “put people to work,” and describes pushing companies to hire locals.

[05:00-10:00] Kevin explains why it is important for new hires to be trained and how he negotiated a million-dollar training grant to do that. Kevin says that not everyone is capable of being a longshoreman, but if someone is willing to work hard and willing to be trained, he’s willing to help them find work.

[10:00-15:00] Kevin discusses the range of items that are loaded and unloaded by longshoremen, the number of people being trained currently, and the number he expects to have hired full-time in the near future as well as their pay per hour. Kevin explains why he needs trained workers to be able to convince companies to hire locals. Kevin says that one of the challenges for longshoreman in New Bedford is that the hurricane dikes constrain the size of vessel that can come in.

[15:00-20:00] Kevin discusses how the small size of the Port of New Bedford means New Bedford can’t handle containers but can handle “break buck” vessels and palletized cargo with its three terminals. He emphasizes the importance of training. Kevin talks about his grandfather and father’s generations paving the way for today’s longshoremen as well as the differences in their approaches.

[20:00-25:00] Kevin explains what the Transportation Workers’ Identification Credentials (i.e., TWIC Card) is and how to obtain it and the training required for specific jobs such as riggers, crane operator, laborer, etc.

[25:00-30:00] Kevin discusses differences between older and newer generations of longshoremen. He laments that some of the community sense has been lost, but says he is trying to reincarnate it. He emphasizes the benefit of being in the room where decisions are being made in ways that previous generations of longshoremen were not allowed to. Kevin defines what a “shape-up” was and explains why he no longer uses “shape up” notices to gather longshoremen for a job as well as his efforts to make it easier to join the union and to provide full-time positions for longshoremen.

[30:00-35:00] Kevin sees the future of the city/the ILA as bright and emphasizes that now longshoremen are paid enough to take their family on vacation. He says it is important to let the community know about the opportunities available in this industry and what it takes to do the job: training, seat-time; safety classes etc.

[35:00-40:00] Kevin discusses the future of the city/longshoremen’s role in it with a focus on offshore wind. He describes his desire to put some of the union dues towards

the creation of a union hall to bring back the community spirit and encourage the next generation of longshoremen.

[40:00-45:00] Kevin emphasizes the responsibility that comes with this kind of work, the variety of jobs available, self-respect on the job, and training.

[45:00-50:00] Kevin describes how the average age of an ILA member has drastically decreased from 67 to 25 years old, signaling a bright future. He talks about the value of encouraging more women to join the union/trades, and cautions that any problems i.e. drug abuse etc. someone has will be exacerbated when they get money, so it's important to hire wisely.

[47:09] End of Audio

Full Transcript

[00:03]

Paula: This is Paula Robinson-Deare interviewing Kevin Rose for the Casting a Wider Net project.

Paula: I've heard that people from the fishing community are described as fiercely independent and willing to do dangerous work to keep their freedom. How would you describe the people you represent?

Kevin: Oh, very hard workers, very committed, very loyal, very proud, very proud, and very hungry.

Paula: What do you mean hungry?

Kevin: Well, it's been a long time since we've had any work. Before the wind turbines came here last June, we hadn't had work for three years. And even before that, we'd only have Moroccan fruit, which probably would have come in one ship - 24, 26 hours' work every other week for four months and then nothing. So this is huge for us, this wind turbine project.

Paula: So, before we go further, can you describe for me the type of work that longshoremen do and how you represent them?

Kevin: Yes, we load and unload vessels. For example, scrap metal, might be some salt, might be lumber, fish, or whatever it may be. We have the ILA members, the crane operators, right? There are the sign men, there are the forklift operators in the *hole*, what we call inside the ship. And we have forklift operators that work on the dock, they take it into the warehouse. Now, we also have laborers who do the work inside the hole, if anything, falls, they pick it up. Now, I must say, it was busy years ago with the old times. I mean, it was great, because I used to go down there (to the docks) as a kid. But right now, the longshoremen unload, load, and do yard work. Say the vessel leaves (something), they drop off a piece of equipment, and we move it around in the yard, that's our job. We do anything to do with the waterfront.

Paula: Okay, so there was once a fishermen's union?

Kevin: Yea, I know that's the "Lumper's" union, you're talking about, but we don't work with them at all.

Paula: So, how does the union advocate for the longshoremen?

Kevin: Well, I'll tell you, an example is when the wind turbines came here. I'd walk my dog down there (the docks), and I'd look through the fence (at non-union workers), and I was yelling at the people, (saying) quite frankly, we're all brothers, how come there's no local people? I noticed in the area that there was a lot of license plates from different states, so I literally would be yelling. They'd call the cops: "Got a guy yelling down here." I'm ILA boss, so - that's our job that they were doing, as far as I was concerned.

But they (companies) have what they call a project labor agreement, long story (short), they messed up, they didn't put the longshoremen in. So, I went down there yelling, I called the mayor, did all the good stuff, and they got sick of me. Finally, you know, I got the Irishman, my boss, to go make the (meeting) call, and we all sat down. They were only going to start with six longshoremen when the ships come in, that's it! It's crazy.

Paula: How big are these ships?

Kevin: Wow, you're talking huge (hold 100-300, twenty-foot containers), right? You see them, right? They hire six people out of this whole community that's been doing longshoremen work down here since 1936. Who happen to be 90% people of color - *just happen to be*. So, when you say you have this program to help hire minorities, but you ain't doing it, you're just not.

My job as the President of Union is to put people to work, that's my job, that's what I got elected for, right? So, then I go down there, and I don't see people of color, I don't see anybody from my community (working). There were people from my community standing alongside of me, (they've) come down there, looking through the fence, hungry, right? Jealous, whatever you want to call it. Calling me up, "*Kevin, man, what's going on man how come you ain't down there?*" I go down there, finally we do negotiate. I have right now, 26 people working down there - right now. Which they wanted to start off with six. I wanted more; I'm still trying to get more to this day. That's why I'm sending people to training. We were gonna try to send people to Europe for training, but I think that we might hold off, that may be a little too expensive. We might just have them (Euro trainers) come to New Bedford. But we will be sending people to Texas. Because with a lot of these jobs, you need heavy equipment training, you need riggers, just basic things that you need trainings in, that our people, our community, was never told, right?

[05:00]

I'm doing a grant right now for (training), a million-dollar grant that was - when I was negotiating with them -part of the deal. It was part of the negotiation that we did, you know; since you don't want us to work side-by-side with you, and you're not gonna train me how to run that piece of equipment. I need some money to train my people. Oh, here's a million dollars, right? So that's what I'm in the process of doing right now.

But I want to say this, not everyone can be a longshoreman. And I talked to you ladies about this earlier, and I'd love to hire everybody from the community. When I see somebody tugging at my heart, I would love to give them a job. But when they get on the job, and it's just not for them, they can't do it for whatever reason, right? So, all these programs that are teaching kids, or young adults they're not kids, how to fill out a bank account or check, right? How to do normal stuff that you take for granted, a lot of these kids have never known, right? To community activists, go do that for me, man. So that way when they come to me, I ain't gotta babysit. If you're not a (grown) man or a woman, I don't have time. I just don't, because they're watching (behaviors).

They have cones, to give you an example, you have to walk in (a certain way), there's very strict safety. The white guys, they ain't walking right - they're going and doing what they want to do, right? I'm like, yo, man, my guys, they cut through a bush, I get a call. *"Hey, your guys ain't doing this, your guys ain't doing that."* So, my big thing in the beginning was like, cause you know how people are - so, stop. Worry about us right now. Go to work, go by the rules. I don't care what they're doing. That's our problem, we get caught up in. Now you're arguing with the guy (boss), you're not gonna win, bro. So, you're gonna go home and tell your wife you lost your job because you wouldn't walk in some cones, for safety reasons? Because some other white dude gets to do it? No! So, I'm past that. You send me a man or a woman eager to work and eager to learn to train on heavy equipment that's going to change your life? I've got your back; we will take care of you.

I think right now, we started off before this, started off probably with 26 members, right now I'm at close to 50. And of them 50, before this, let me go back a second, the average age of the ILA before this wind turbine work was 67 years old. Which is terrible because, the reason behind that is because the older guys would never train nobody because they were scared that they would take their job, right? So now guess what, they go for whatever reason, death or retirement, now nobody knows what the hell is going on.

Not only the stuff you've been doing now, but the future stuff that's coming. The training I'm doing is for future things coming, so it's tough, it's real hard to try to, because you got people come up to you that really need to work, but if they're not going to work, then it's not, this is not for them. I wish it was, maybe go check yourself and get yourself checked out a little more and then come see me.

I think we're doing very, very positive things. It was a fight though, I'm going to tell you, it still is, every day, it's a fight. I'm trying to hire four more, to give you an example, or six more people to unhook. When you take a piece of the (crane shovel) this comes off. The crane operator, when he puts it on the ground, the ILA (member) usually unhooks it, but we don't have that. I'm in the process right now trying to get six more hired, but them six people got to go to rigger training, they've got to get TWIC's (Transportation Worker Identity Card), they've got to do all this stuff.

They don't want to train us, whatever the reason is, it's just something I have to overcome, and I will overcome, I am overcoming, because we have people who work. I'm so proud of the women and men.

Again, three women now joining the union, we never had (women since) 1936. I'm proud of that, and the three women that we have, man, the examples they're setting, I wish I hadn't, you know, I brought some in earlier, that's my personal opinion. No egos, it's a beautiful thing.

[10:00]

Paula: I'd like to go over what range of, or the kinds of things that get loaded and unloaded from the ships you talked about, the heavy metal, scrap metal, and things like that. What's the wide range, everything from scrap metal to?

Kevin: Everything from wind turbines, right? Scrap metal, fruit, frozen fish, lumber, this is all over the years what the ILA's been doing, yeah. So, anything that comes in, we used to do apples years ago, I don't know if you remember that, we used to do apples, we had a good program.

We had like three or four stevedores (longshoremen), when I say stevedores, there were different companies that would come in. Right now, remember I said we wasn't working for years, when I came in everybody, come on Kevin, you got to run, we need leadership. I said I'm only going to run if I get to run it my way.

You had zero stevedores; you know how many I got now? Three, within, I've been on the job two and a half years. My problem is putting my members to work who are qualified, who are loyal, who have self-respect for the job and respect themselves, who will be alright. Right now, my guys and girls, no injuries, we're the best, they always tell us, your guys are the best. I know because we've been doing it since 1936, you are the ones that try to push us out.

I'm that person in that room, like I told Bush, look at you man, open up any questions you got, ask this man. You're talking to the CEOs, you're talking to the CEO of Vineyard Wind, you're talking to the CEO of General Electric, who are trying to act like they have no idea about the ILA, right? Didn't do their homework, because if you was smart, you would hire many ILA, because you'd knock two birds with one stone, minorities and local, and union. And I gotta fight you? Okay, I'll fight you, sick or not sick. I'm coming baby.

Like I said, we're at this problem - once I get these 40, I got them in writing to say they're going to train 40 people, you see? The next, everything I'm doing now is for the next project that's coming. This Vineyard Wind is pretty much set, you know what I mean? I have to get everybody trained, for all them yard jobs, I'm looking through the fence, at the long-drive(?), you need licenses. I have to get everybody from this community that I'm screaming about trained. Now it's put up or shut up, right? So, by the next project, we'll have, instead of 26 people, we're looking at 60 people working. That's a lot for my community working. And I'm talking full time, \$39 an hour to start, just for laborers. The machine operators, \$53, \$54; anything after six is time-and-a-half. You're talking \$56 an hour the night crew will be making. Right now, my guys, there's three guys making that.

I think three, we only got three (trained) now, but we're going for 30, right? Them three guys I got, the only reason I got them in there is because the others didn't want to work with the ILA, or work side by side training my guys. So, I said hire them three guys, they'll train and do whatever they (bosses) want. That's only three though. That whole yard is going, there's got to be about 20, 30 people working, 40? God knows how many

people are working there now. Oh, yeah - that's usually ILA work. But I don't have people trained right now to run all that equipment. So, I've got to be careful, right? I could go *'I want them jobs, I want them jobs,'* but hey, I got GED people behind me, right? I need people to be trained, so it's a balancing act, little by little. We'll get it done though.

Paula: Have the types of work changed over the generations: longshoremen, steward, mariner, merchant, marine, the way the names have changed?

Kevin: Yeah, Oh, yeah, definitely. The cargo's changed, right, very much so. Matter of fact, we're getting none of that cargo now, the old cargo that I explained to you earlier, right? This is the future. This port, Commerce Terminal behind the YA, that was built for wind turbines. Because somebody asked me, what are you going to do - when the wind turbines leave - with all that land? That land's going to be for unloading vessels and whatever anybody wants to bring in. The biggest problem we have in New Bedford is the dikes, they're not wide enough to bring in big ships. The ships that you see coming in now are narrow for the blades coming this way, right? All the components are narrow so they can fit through the dikes.

[15:00]

Anything big like "break buck," we call break buck, things that are palletized, that come in all palletized. We don't have the cranes to do the containers like you see in Boston and all that stuff. We're a small port, that's why the wind turbines are coming to us. They can't go to Boston because they (Boston) don't have the room. They can't go to Providence because they (Providence) don't have the room. That's why they're only doing wire (in Providence). Here, they're going after (space), they just went to New London, Connecticut, a small port like us, they haven't worked in a while, they (wind project) went in there. All the small ports are going to be getting this work because they have the room, and they don't have big cargo coming in.

We have three (marine terminals): we have the Commerce Terminal, we have State Pier, and people don't know, we also have Bridge Terminal. Just before you go over Fairhaven Bridge, on the left-hand side, all that on the inside Fairhaven, but it's still New Bedford side - that's our jurisdiction also. We need people to go actually to the wind turbine sites, they're asking me for people for that too.

I'm having a hard time filling them positions because, okay, I find people, but they got to get trained. You've got to get trained on the water. I just need people to understand that it's not easy, but it's not that as hard and if you love it, you'll do it, right? Get a TWIC, get a hoisting license, make a ton of money where you can walk to work. I don't know, I remember going to Boston, Providence just to make \$28 an hour, man. And here you are making \$40, right here where you can walk to work, come on, in our community?

So, there's a lot of things you can do. I'm building it, but guess what? By next year, or the next two years, ILA, (is who) you're going to have to talk to no matter who the

president is. No matter who's running the ILA, they're going to be respected, and you got to come see (them). Just like now, nobody's coming in now and telling you, they got to come see me. You're going to have (more) ILA laborers using our ILA labor right now. Three stevedores I brought in here, we had zero, I'm going for six.

So, I mean, the cargo varies, and then whatever anybody wants to bring, we'll unload it and load it. We're ready to go. The cargo that was coming in using Moroccan little tangerines, they come in a box. You ever see them from Morocco? Morocco recently, what, had a big earthquake. There goes their fruit season, right? Then you got frozen fish that was going to Africa and used cars, but you've got them crazy people killing each other at the docks - there goes that. It's not anything that we did or any New Bedford did. It's a combination of the docks being too small, right? Boston will get a call, "I got a break buck vessel that's coming in with oranges," right? They'll say, "go to New Bedford, they can do that. We only do container work and stuff like that. But that's very few and far in between, right? I have to go out there and hustle. I have to go out there and make some calls. I started a website. We have to be out there, to let you know that we're out there. Okay, so we got a small dike. We can do break buck. All the Mexicans and all these Guatemalans come. They got different fruits, they like different foods, right? The whole East Coast. I got that idea. That's what I'm working on now. You want to bring fruit or whatever they're bringing in to my port now. These are the things I'm working on. I'm not going to go try to get containers because they can't fit, we have to adjust ourselves and work with what we have.

Paula: How many people do you represent right now? You talked about three women.

Kevin: Wow, yeah, we're at, I don't want to be too bad (guessing), I think we're about 50 now. We're 50 and growing.

Paula: Do you know how many cultures are represented?

Kevin: Woah, yeah, ah, White, Hispanic, Cape Verdean; we have three women, all of them (of color), one is Haitian, two of them are Cape Verdean so, we're all diverse.

Paula: What was the union like for your grandfather and your father?

Kevin: They were working a lot more than we are now.

Paula: Did they have a different kind of battle to fight?

Kevin: Yeah, they were fighting. It wasn't modern, so everything was physical, right? Like there's a hook with a fist. Like now everything's palletized, right? So, they paved the way. They had to fight for the wages we get now, right? They fought for all the rights that we have, right? If it wasn't for them, we wouldn't be here as far as I'm concerned. But the stuff they did, the things that they did, it's not their fault. It's just the way the world is, things change, right? The cargo that came in before is not coming in now.

Now, to me, it's all about the wind turbines, right? You got the wind turbines at Commerce Terminal behind the YA, but you got Foss Terminal right next to it, that's going to be doing work from the wind turbines. So, they're going to be running this area for a long, long, long time. And I think it's very important that this community in this city, not only the Cape Verdean community, not only our community, the city of New Bedford should be on this.

Go take a drive down there, you'll see all the plates, they're all out of state: Utah, Florida, South Carolina, Texas. It's awful. We have to change that, right? Again, I have to be careful because I have to have people trained first. It's so important to get people trained.

[20:03]

Paula: How long is the training?

Kevin: Not long at all, not at all, right? It's not something to be scared of, right? A TWIC card, for example. A TWIC card is the Transportation Workers Identification Credentials, it's called. You cannot go on any dock in the country unless you have this ID, right? So, when I do a grant, I'm including that. So, if one or if somebody who's coming wants to become ILA member or work on the waterfront, part of my grant is that I need that \$125 because it costs \$125 and it lasts five years. It's good for five years, so I need \$125 to give them so they can get on the dock. You've got to get them on a dock! You've got all these other people getting grants for OSHA certifications. But that don't mean nothing if you can't get access to the dock. Now, so you got TWIC card. Now, who are you with? Are you with the ILA? The cranes, that's Mammoet Cranes, are you with them? So, what I'm doing is saying, okay, you want to work the waterfront? Give me a call, go get a TWIC card. That shows me you're interested. Once you get there, because that's a \$125 investment, right? Once you get that, I'm going to reimburse you for that \$125. Now I'm going to tell you, what do you want to do? Do you want to be a crane operator? Do you want to be a machine operator? Or do you just want to be a laborer? What do you want to do? And then that's how we train.

The rigger's training was six hours in the classroom, and they got out and now they're riggers, nobody ever told you that. They tell you, train in there, you need this. So, now everybody's like scared - Oh, man. Six hours you sat in the rigger's training, now you're a rigger. They don't tell you that. That's why we need to be in the room. When you're in the room, you get to pick up on these things. You know what I'm saying? That's the biggest thing.

Paula: What are some of the most unusual battles that you, your father, and your grandfather have had to fight over the years?

Kevin: Other longshoremen, yes. No togetherness, you know, it worked, you know, guys stick together. I'm talking about, listen, when they were all working, they all had other jobs. They were correctional officers, firemen, great. This was just extra little money for Christmas or whatever, right? So, they were set in that way.

I remember working down at Runner Crane. You just got the beautiful scenery in New Bedford. I'm high up, I'm running the crane. I'm saying, man, we can make, money, we can do a lot here. And I'm watching everybody work. I don't see nobody of color working at none of these projects. Nobody local. A light bulb goes off, right? You got to do something about that, right? And that's what I'm doing. We're in the beginning of the process, and it's going to get bigger. And to me, we have the best workers, smartest workers, and the proudest people. Now, let's concentrate on the ones who want to work.

Paula: Now, what are the broad victories over the past hundred years of ocean work, you've had, because you've been three generations, you know, when you were younger, what are some of the biggest gains? Is it equality or safety?

[25:00]

Kevin: Safety definitely is part of it because, you know, in the days when my father and grandfather worked back then, they didn't really look at safety as priority one. But the broadest victory, it's just us being in the room. We was never in the room, right? Yeah, okay, ship comes in, they might call ILA. They might respect, like, because there's some people who respect unions, right? I'm going to respect the union. But there's some people who say, no, I ain't dealing with no union. I'm going to bring my ship in, and that's it, right? So the gains is that now, you know, they got to deal with ILA. In other words, every ship, any vessel that's coming in this city, they're going to have to deal with ILA. That's a great gain that we got, and I would say also it is the gain of the community, actually. Because in them days, everybody who worked the ship, you go to the union, you'd be hanging out, you go to the band club. It's the community sense, you know? So I think that's the biggest gain. But then again, that's the biggest loss because we lost it all, right? So now that's what we're trying to bring back is the sense of the community, right? That's what I'm trying to do, but the community ain't the same. That's the fact that it was hard for me in the beginning to say, like, where's our people? Where are they, right? Well, they're around, but it's just harder to find them.

Paula: Well, I have two questions with that, what is a "shape up" and how did it work before the union?

Kevin: Okay, so, I would get a call from a company that's bringing in fruit, whatever they're bringing in, right? We're going to have three main gangs, they call them, fifteen men in gangs, right. They'd all be 15 men in a gang. So, they call me - Kevin, I have a ship coming in, I need three gangs. So that's 10, 20, 30, that's 45 guys and girls who go to work, not a lot of girls obviously come once in a while, but they call. Then I would do a shape up. We have a telephone number that you would call, it's like an answering machine. I would put on it, there's a shape up tomorrow morning, New Bedford State Pier, seven o'clock shape up for 7:30 stop. So, everybody comes at seven, just standing around. Back in the day, it used to be the (company) president doing hiring. I stopped that, it was just two cousins and just too much. Plus, the president is not there, he's not

working with them to see who the real workers are. It was mostly ego, the old president thing, it was just terrible. But anyways, that's how they picked: A-Card, you go by seniority, A-Card, B-Card, C-Card. Then if they ran out all the union guys, which most of the time they did, it's when they call the dollar day men and dollar day people. They come to work for the union. They want to get the union rate, they get a little less, but they work. If they made it, I believe it was 500 hours in the calendar year, September to October 1st, if they made 500, then they join a union. If not, they got to start all over again. We changed that also, making it easier for people to join the union. We're trying to bring things back up to the way they are supposed to be - everybody works. Now we don't do shape-ups, the companies are asking for the same people. Because if I do a shape-up on Monday, the ship might take three days. You only show up for one day, then I got to hire somebody, call for people to come down. Where's this guy? The pain, it's just different. The big companies, they don't want that. They want the same people all the time. They trained you, it cost them money. I'm just the dispatcher, dispatching the labor. Whatever the rules the company has, you mess with it. Now you call your shop steward, he's your lawyer and all that and I'm the one bringing the work in for you, here you go. They call me, they need 40 guys, these are the foremen, I usually pick the foremen for the company. I pick the foremen and then we go to the company and they approve or they disapprove. Most of the time they approve, right. There are foremen, you make foremen, then you add hatch bosses. So, a lot of people are working, but that was 26, 27 hours every other week from October to February. I'm talking in the last 12 years. I'm not talking about my father and grandfather's years; they were working a lot more than we are now.

Paula: What percentage of the community's income do you think came from the docks?

Kevin: Back in my grandfather's day, I'd say they all had other jobs. So, it helped, it was like that Christmas money, that was the extra. It was a little bit of extra money. It wasn't, there wasn't full-time work. It wasn't like it's because the ship will come in. You work the ship for three days, four days. Next ship might not come for one or two weeks, right? So, you had to go get another job.

Now, I don't want that, I want full-time gigs. That's why most of my members now are full-time, 40 hours, that's the goal. Some people only work when the ships come in. But then I got yard people who work 40 hours in nighttime, but our next project, we're going to grow that, it's just different times. It's nobody's fault. Should have the old times looked a little more to the future? Definitely. But who am I to judge them for that? I'm just happy what they did for us to get the wages and the benefits that we have and the safety conditions to work in that we're working now.

[30:00]

Paula: What are the future possibilities for longshoremen and oceans?

Kevin: Man, it makes me smile, the future is so bright, it's life-changing for the city of New Bedford. Especially, I'm talking about the Cape Verdean community because obviously that's who I care about. You know, I care about everybody, but this will change people's lives! It's changed people's lives so far since June (2024). It's changed my life. We have a member who is an example: living with a girl, you know how it is – tough. She's calling the cops, if beefing, right. But he had nowhere to go, he's kind of forced to stay there. He calls me up. Kevin, man, I can't tell you how happy I am, I've got my own place, I've got my peace of mind. And another member, man, just bought a new car, not new, a little Buick - 2013.

These are the things. Hey, man, my brother calls me, I got the money when he calls, I need a couple of dollars, I got it, right? That's what I'm talking about. See, because when people have problems, oh, man, this bill, man, that bill's coming. You know how it is, at least you got the money to pay. You start crying when you ain't got the money.

My job is to make this community as strong as I can to be part of what these boys are doing down here from out of state, taking these jobs. Hey, I'm not going to fault them because they got a feed their families too, right? They're going to go eat. But we have to be brave enough to tell people we want them jobs. Not just because we're black from an oppressed community, no! Because I'm qualified and I can do that job or I'm ready to go learn that job, and I know what we have.

I mean, the future is so bright. And as long as I'm around, I have an election this year, by the way. So hopefully I get reelected. And I say that jokingly because I was president before for three years and they voted me out. You can't do something in three years, right? You need three more. That's our problem. Leave the guy in there. You're not going to guide a girl in there. Leave them in there. Let them do their work. We're going to kill it. I hope everybody hears this, especially the Cape Verdean community.

You want a job, not just for the money, you're going to make great money, where you're going to be around your people, laugh, joke and have a good time. You're going to be able to walk to work and you're going to be able to make a salary where Disney World, is where you might take your family. You're not going to be on a corner hanging out, or at that bar late night doing whatever, right? You're going to go to bed, because you're going to be tired.

So, the future is so bright, but it's up to us, not only me, to let our community know about these opportunities and not only let them know what it takes to get it, but not just, you know, I'm a Negro, my parents died and poor me, it's not going to cut it. You want to work, I'm the first to help you, but I'm not going to tolerate anything else.

Paula: Does the rising ocean and changing coastline affect the kind of work and training that's being done by the Union?

Kevin: Oh yes, definitely, everything's changing. Like I said, it's all about this heavy lifting stuff. It's getting people qualified to learn how to run the equipment to lift that stuff, right? They've got what we call S.P.M.T. (*Self-Propelled Modular Transporter*),

looks like a caterpillar with all kind of perfect example, all kind of wheels on it. You stand there with a remote, that's the new forklift (holds 44 tons). Nobody, you need a hoisting license to run that, right? But I got to send people. So, what we're doing is we're going to send people to Texas to go learn down there, right? It's like a CDL license (*commercial driver's licenses*). You go take the CDL. It's not like training, right? Your real training is once you get that CDL, when you come on the job, seat time, that's when you, and then we'll have somebody working with you. But I'm sending you to get your CDL, so to speak. Then when you come back, now you got to get seat time. Now just because you get a license don't mean you don't know how to drive equipment. That means that you took the necessary safety classes to know how to run that piece of equipment. And then when you come on the job, it's up to us and the company to train you. Like I said, our people are smart, I know they can do the work. They just haven't had the opportunity or the knowledge about how to go about getting a license and so that's what I'm here for.

[35:00]

Paula: So how do you see over the next 20 years, the work changing?

Kevin: Like I just said, it's going to be all about the wind turbines, period. Anything to support that, whether it be provisions, the people that are working on it, actually putting up the wind turbines, you're bringing all their supplies and bringing all this. We loaded that into containers, we do that also. That's the new work I just picked up. We're doing that, right? The wire, where all the wind turbines are going up, there's wires that come to the land. We're bidding on or one of the stevedore companies is bidding on that. To give you an example, if they get that gig, the ship comes in on a Monday. It'll probably take six days to unload, 24 hours a day. Two shifts, seven in the morning to six at night. The night shift will work, seven to seven, and seven to seven, right? The wire moves slow, right? Fifteen-man gangs on each shift, so that's 30 people. The day crew will make the \$39 an hour. The night crew will make time and a half, which is \$54. So, six days you work, right? If you're working seven hours, that's 12 hours a day, right? You do the math. Five days, that's what, 60 hours? It's about three grand you're taking home for a week's work. That ship leaves, it's not coming back for about a week or two, gives you time to rest a little bit. Or we have other vessels at other terminals, you want to pick up them, they got a vessel over here unloading blades. Go over there and hustle, make some more money. That's what it's all about. Not just working at that one terminal. Yeah, you got that work there, but I'm bringing money over here. So, when the ship ain't coming in, come on over here, they just discharge all the components. That ship leaves, so they're doing work in the yard, which we're going to have the ILA, all them, what I talked about, 30 people. Then there happens to be a provision ship over here that they're bringing provisions. I need eight guys, they go over there, they're riggers, if they want, if the seniority calls for it, or what I like to do is spread it out, right? Them riggers worked, there's eight guys over here, they didn't get to work, give them that, right? Technically I get them, you know, seniority is supposed to be there, but I'm trying to do what the company wants. They want the same people. They want to have a

say on who's coming to work because in the olden days, like I said, to shape up your picking guys, they went to work. The company had no say. You know how you go to job, you fill out an application, they decide if they're going to hire you or not. No, no, no. They call me, whoever we hire, they go to work. That's who works. You can't do that no more, right? Suppose I came up to you and told you, you own the business. You got to hire one of my guys for eight hours and he's going to be home. You just got to pay him for eight hours. What would you tell me?

Paula: I can't afford it.

Kevin: Right, or you're crazy - but our members are getting that. Do you know why? Because of Boston, Providence, Connecticut, along with every other port up and down the East Coast, right? That's what's going to make us blow up? Because when we was doing Moroccan food, nobody even cared, right? New Bedford's making ILA dues because we have to kick-up one-percent of every check goes to New York; and four percent comes to our local. So, we wasn't kicking anything, hardly anything, like I said - just a little bit. Now, since June, we've had say - about \$19,000 in our account; right now, we're at \$60,000. I'm in the process of trying to build a union hall with that money. This is just the beginning, this is what I'm saying. So, all this money coming in, we have a union hall in the community. I'm sitting there, little kids come by, and say *maybe I want to be a Longshoreman*. We do stories and that sort of thing. Maybe I'm fantasizing, but I think it can be done - it's going to be done! How do you say it - *let it be written, let it be said?* Let it be written - let it be done.

Paula: So, just two more questions. What industries are networked into the longshoremen's union resiliency?

Kevin: Like what sort of companies that are coming in - all sorts, right? So, like we talked about earlier, containers; you might have a container full of fruit from Mexico or something - it doesn't matter. Our New Bedford is break-bulk palletized stuff - so, we just did a pylon ship probably about eight months ago. And when I say, you know, the telephone poles? They look like telephone poles, but they're in the water; you ever see a dock and they look like telephone poles, we just had them, that was out of the blue. That's going to start picking up, but it has nothing to do with the wind turbines. The wind turbines, at Commerce Terminal, they've got it locked up. No other ships can go there but the wind turbine stuff. Foss Terminal, on the other hand, might bring in and Bedford State Pier, like we just did. I ran the crane, with these big blocks of pylons. It was only like nine hours work, but its nine hours work, right? At that pier, what I'm saying, now I got three (piers), I'm working on number four, so once we go to Pope Island, now you got a choice of four (piers to work); so, which will make it full time (work).

[40:00]

Because if you work a ship, hard work, right? Ship leaves, you might want that week off. The ship comes in and you want to work it? Nah, I don't feel like it; it's not going to be

like, oh man. Now, I would like you to be there - don't get me wrong, but this is where I'm trying to go. This is what Boston; New London, Connecticut; all the ILA's up this East Coast get. So, what I'm doing is, okay, wind turbines; now we're kicking up. Now we're bringing all kinds of money, right, now we're there!

But there's a responsibility that comes with that. Respect yourself, respect others, do a good job; don't care what other people are doing; put your hands in your pocket, go to work. I mean, the future is so bright.

The main thing I think everybody should get out of this is, get training. Talk to anybody who can help you get training. You might not want to go into the ILA. You might want to be an electrician, right? They've got electrician work down there. They've got different (jobs) welding, wood working, we're picking up that too. There's different crane opps. you can go to - Mammoet Crane Company, engineering school, there's all kinds of opportunities.

Paula: So do you think that the installation and the depreciation of the windmills will affect the kinds of jobs with the ILA or expand it?

Kevin: No, I think it's great for us. I know a lot of people ain't too happy for whatever reasons about the wind turbines. You're coming in – you are fishermen, we don't go into fishing business. Two of our members, you can talk to them, I think Auggie passed. Gary Rodgers is still alive. They went out on a fishing boat, was tortured because they didn't feed them, and it was just terrible.

My point being, I don't go into the fishing business - why are you coming into my business? He's a fisherman and I'm telling you, you got to use the ILA to unload all provisions you're bringing to the job site; you're supposed to be using the ILA! He's saying, no, I ain't going to use the ILA and I'm not going to be intimidated.

With you coming to this city, making money, right - you ain't intimidating me? By you ignoring the ILA, what are you doing to me? Because I go over there, as soon as I put my car there, they're like, Kevin, you got to go, cause I'm intimidating people - because I look at the waterfront – it's all mine. That ring by, you know all the dredging they're doing north of the Fairhaven Bridge, so if I can't get in, we lose the union guys there. By next year, they're going to be bringing vessels, they're coming - everybody's getting in on this, right? So, when they bring the vessels, they're going to tell us - no. That's why I'm fighting that fight now. I'm going to do what I got to try to do for people. My agenda is putting people to work to make money.

When the light bulb went off on my head, it was because Connecticut had a ship come in, it was a wind turbine ship. They went on strike, but the ship left - so it was kind of useless. So I said to myself, all the press is here, everybody's here, nobody knew what I was going to do. Nobody knew, not even my family members. So, I saw hmmm, they took off one piece, the next day we went on strike. Because you try to leave, you forgot something - number one. Number two, now we shut the whole job down for the longest strike, I think it was 14 days or whatever on the East Coast that had ever been done,

Kevin Rose did. We negotiated what we have now - I did that, that's a fact, and if anybody wants to dispute that, they can sit down. We've done this on our own.

[45:00]

Paula: It's how many of them are second, first, second, third generation?

Kevin: Oh my God. There's at least half of them are second generation, at least. Now you also had a lot of people who were retired firemen or firemen police officers, because their schedule at the fire department permitted them to go work, right? But, again, my average age, like I told you before, in my membership was 67. My average age right now is 25. That's the first goal I wanted, because I want young people so I don't have to worry for a while, right? They're going to work, the young, yes, sir. I can't tell you how refreshing it is. Yes, sir - it's a beautiful thing.

I can't tell you enough how many members are coming up to telling me how their lives have changed for the better. Now, is it all perfect? No. You might have some guys who got all kinds of money, going to do wrong things with that money, right? But they'll deal with the consequences, not me, I gave him a shot. I want more women, that's what I need. And I know that sounds funny coming from Kevin Rose, but I've learned a lot over the last four years. Yeah, I've learned a lot that I should have been looking at, and I think other people should look at. You have people right in front of you that you're overlooking, who are probably more talented than you. And I had this argument with somebody. This girl, Spanish girl, was talking Spanish. And this guy's like, ahhhh. So, I said, she's smarter than you. She knows two languages, you know one. That makes her smarter than you. Now, they aggravate me too, but I need more (women). I need more.

Paula: Thank you so much.

Kevin: Not a problem at all. I'm so glad to see what you guys are doing and anything I can help. And I will be reaching out to you as far as if you know anybody from the community, they come down and see me.

If you have troubles, don't come down here, because this is going to magnify it. And putting money, this kind of money in people's pocket who have problems, no. I want to take everybody, I really, really do.

I had a girl – perfect, put her down here -she's a good-looking girl. She's flirting with the guys, having the guys do the job for her. And this is while I'm standing there! Because imagine if I'm not there. I can't, I just can't have that. Do your job and just go home.

[47:09] End of Audio