Interview 7

Theme 1. Early fishing

* Growing up cutting and packing wood, hauling ice and water made him strong so he could fish
* Mom taught him how to fish—they would paddle out, pulling 50’ net
* Sisters would help him take logs out of his net
* His grandpa taught him how to tell the weather—if windy, come in.
* Boats low and fill with water quickly
  + As time went on his dad built bigger boats
  + He kept smaller boat because younger and could swim to shore easier if capsized

Theme 2. Finding out how to be safe

* 20’boat, 2 1/5 feet high
* 5:27 “I found out that you got to be ocean wise to go out there when it’s rough because when you hit a wave, you’re most likely gonna flip over.”
* 12:52 “There’s a lot of ways to find out how you could be safe out there.”
* Learned how to maneuver in big waves
  + Go down wave slow and turn wheel to go alongside wave and slowly get down to bottom
* To get to shore in big waves—come in with wave as it’s coming in
* When returning home in rough weather,
  + Go far out where waves are swells until ready to come in to shore, then zig zag in with waves
  + Find a breaker and travel right behind it all the way in, then speed up when it gets shallow, surfing wave
  + 15:56 “People used to wonder how I manage.”
* Learned to adapt to rougher weather as climate changed
  + Come in as fast as possible
  + Pull net in, fish and all to get in quicker and increase stability (fish can’t move)
* If current is flowing and little waves start, turn around and go home
* Observed white squall (looks like white fog and that’s a north wind coming) 20 miles down coast
* Used strategies he learned to make it in safely
* Getting caught in huge waves, had to go slow, working way out deep
  + Coming in, partner had to bail water with bucket because boat couldn’t drain fast enough,
  + Boat sunk when they made it in, but able to drain it in low tide

Theme 3. Lessons

* Watch weather. If it’s rough don’t go
  + There’ll be logs and may break your motor
* If you lose your engine power, try to come in with the waves
  + Carry a bucket tied to a 50’ line and tie to bow to keep boat into waves so you can come in with waves slowly
* 49:51 “Learn to stay positive and everything will fall into place.”
* Put your net over and around sides of fish to increase stability
* Get enough sleep
  + 32:14 “I made sure of that. Because you don’t want to go out there tired. If you go out there tired, your mind is not all there. And you do stupid things. Once you start doing stupid things that’s the end of it. End of your life.”
* Make sure to drink water and eat
  + 31:33 “Eating just clears your mind, makes you feel at ease, makes you sleep.”
  + When tired, stopped, cooked a little meal, took a 10 to 15-minute nap, drank coffee
* Seasick crew member gave a cup of seawater to drink. Learned trick from grandparents and worked
* Don’t fill your boat too full because waves will flip you
* When rough, get to net, tie rope to net long enough to get to shore, anchor on land, then pull net in fish and all. Leave anchor on land to come back for (less weight)
* Don’t set neer shore unless you know it’s going to stay calm

Theme 4. Observing

* Elders taught
  + 20:48 “They’d tell me what to look for. Tell me what to try to observe. Always look at the water, they said.”
* Learned from experience and watching weather, observing what’s going on
* Learning to watch for signs of bad weather approaching
  + Noticed a phenomenon of 10’ cyclone in the water meaning atmospheric pressure was changing and bad weather was coming
* Been studying Mother Nature all his life
  + Changes in weather
  + Learning to tell if fish is good or bad. Bad if organs stick to blood line. Permafrost thawing is causing this
* 32:47 “You don’t play with Mother Nature. You live with it.”
  + Clear your mind, then tune yourself in to your surroundings
* Learned from great grandpa: listening, looking, observing 34:55 “And that’s a rare gift.”
* Taught oldest grandson and now youngest 39:09 “how to distinguish what’s good and what’s bad as to fishing.” Farm fish not safe to eat—observe fish insides
* Didn’t ask for knowledge—learned by observing what was going on around him

Theme 5. Changes

* Climate change brought rougher weather
* 4:01 “And back then we had small boats, really low, because we never had no rough water. It was always calm.” [during summer]
* White people fishing depleted the fish and caused need for permit system
  + First, only residents had permits, but after death, state took them back
  + White people bought permits from natives in winter who wanted money to drink and sold permits cheap
  + They didn’t follow rules (i.e., fisherman sets net directly over his net)
* Permafrost and farmed fish are bad—organs stuck to blood lines, don’t bite hook when they should.
* Fishing in the past was easy
  + 60:04 You stop and anchor your boat and you could see. The water used to be clear. [before so rough and windy] You find out what they’re [fish] doing.”
  + 62:06 “Look at this weather. Always windy. It’s always windy today. When the kings really start hitting, our winds will shift to the west and southwest and be rough all the time.”

Other:

* Started aging, got a crew member to help
* Started bringing life jackets in the 80s—required
  + But felt safe without life jacket—knew how to operate boat
* Pray for safety once in a while when out there alone
* Never had to ask for help
  + Broke down once, but fixed it—water in fuel
  + Learned mechanics
  + Got water filter to prevent water in fuel
* Long term physical—arthritis, bones rubbing against each other, back give out from working hard
* Prepare—don’t worry about bad things happening or you’ll manifest it
  + 42:40 “Do what you’re supposed to, everything will go right.”