Interview 6

Theme 1. Family fishing

* Grandparents on both sides taught to fish
  + Subsistence
  + Going up river as a family 14:10 “Our grandparents would be camping up there the whole summer.”
  + Taught when to go out and paying attention to wind (don’t go out if blowing more than 15 knots out of north)
  + 15:00 “Pretty much everything I learned about safety, about going out, was from them and my dad.”
* Started commercial around 14 for summer money
* Deckhands for father mostly
* Occasionally goes out with cousins or other permit holders who need temp. help
* Difficult fishing with dad—high expectations
* Cousins and friends chill
* Is planning on teaching son, now 11
  + Compares his son to himself as a child—he didn’t have a choice but to go out when it was rough
  + Wants to teach son work ethic

Theme 2. Prep

* No safety training offered
* Would need to order any safety equipment beyond PFD. Can get EPIRB from fish plant
* Asks around where to fish
  + Strategize with dad’s family—make a plan together
* Don’t wear PFDs because too hot and uncomfortable, but would wear inflatable if had one
* May wear Stormline bibs in colder season
* Mom makes sandwiches and preps food in case they get stuck
  + 99% of time, don’t need extra food, water, snacks
* Tries to get knowledge from experienced fishermen
  + Having coffee, chat on streets or fish plant

Theme 3. Health challenges

* Longest trip was 18 hours
  + Had to wait for tide to come into river mouth and deliver fish
  + Stayed with boat and watched others’ boats overnight
  + Had to go back out next day without sleep
* Looks back on missing fishing periods after partying night before—dad threatened to replace him
* Getting back to land is a relief
* Eat and relax, no energy to play out, go on rides
* Mostly 2, 48-hour openers/week—sometimes three or only 1.
* 1 opener is hard financially
  + When not enough fish, keep believing that next period will be better
  + Emotional long-term stress
  + Financial stress—going to make enough money next year?
  + Loan causes stress
* Doesn’t get enough sleep during season—3am-7am typical
  + Going out the night before sometimes
  + Too bright during summer
  + Doesn’t feel rested
  + Splashes water on face, drinks energy drinks, and stretches
  + Catches up on sleep in winter
* Long-term effect physically
  + Arthritis in hands
  + Wear and tear in arms and hands
  + Get strong if doing it right—good physical shape
* Strategies to be healthy—eat breakfast, lunch, dinner, don’t party too much

Theme 4. Dangers

* Was pulling net in by hand when large wave hits, almost pulling him out of boat with it
  + Weather was bad and only a couple boats out—they still forgot PFDs
    - Should have had them on
  + Started pulling net and boat turns broadside to waves 26:36 “My dad’s like, ‘Well if anything happens, it’s too late now.”
  + Hand caught in net and only a couple feet before he would have been out of the boat.
  + 5-7’ swells, so if he went over, most likely wouldn’t have been recovered
  + 24:43 “Those kind of things like make you ‘all right, you know, maybe I do have to suffer in a lifejacket. [laughs] But yeah, once I’m getting to a point where my dad’s age, that’s when I’ll have a life jacket on every day, but now it’s just like too hot, don’t need it.”
  + Looks back in how much danger he was in
    - 24:16 “I didn’t really think like, I almost died, I could’ve almost died. Holy cow, I almost fell in. In my head I was thinking I would have been able to get myself out, but come to think of it, that was a whole lot more dangerous than I thought about it at the time.”
  + If needed help, would call 911 or VHF if out of cell signal—word of mouth or social media would get help as fast as possible safely
* Greatest dangers
  + Checking net in rough weather
  + Falling overboard
  + Lack of awareness
* Compares dangers in Bristol Bay versus Unalakleet—Bay boats better in bigger weather, but small Unalakleet boats can get in and out of river mouth in different tides
* Increased awareness needed and extra hands when it’s rough

Other:

* Went to get wood with dad when anchor gets caught on bottom and boat swamps, then capsizes
  + Calls cousin with water logged cell phone before it dies
  + 30’ swim to land, then 50-60’ swim back to get jacket with cell phone
  + Bears and no gun (only planning on being out 1 hour)
  + 30 miles from town due to mudslide, but SAR meets them after 15-20 miles of walking
* Set nets for pinks, coho, reds, and dogs
* Try to fish away from town for more space from boats
* Enjoys fishing in fleet—competitiveness, but also helping each other find fish
* More fish in the past