Interview 1

Theme 1. Learning young from family

* Subsistence/traditional harvest as motivator and learning
  + 5:55 “So I’ve been fishing since I was basically five, six years old. But I’ve been in the ocean since I was a baby because that’s where my mom and dad would always take us out for camping or go pick berries.”
* Fishing lifestyle
  + 6:34 “Like I said, middle of the winter, it’s nice to have a piece of dried fish or have a steak, bake a salmon.”
* Learning how to drive boat at 6 or 7
* Comfort at young age and learning with family
* Learned as deckhand with family
  + 5:46 “Well my mom owned a permit, my brother owned a permit, and all my uncles owned permits, so somebody always needed a deckhand.”
* Dad teaching the dos and don’ts
  + 41:12 “Like [at] Denbigh, you don’t go right next to the coastline when it’s rough.”
* Teaching his two-year-old nephew about water and dangers
* Young people don’t have the experience and are not being taught by elders because less fish
  + 68:41 “If you ain’t got no fish to catch, you can’t teach nothing.”

Theme 2. Remoteness on water

* Remote in event of danger
  + 14:51 “I mean, you’re the only boat out there. You don’t see anybody else…Other days you might see the whole fleet out there.”
* Safer with crew
  + 17:19 “You can’t do it by yourself. You fall over well, there ain’t nobody to save you.”
* Keeping an eye out for other boats who may need help
* Cell phones for communication
  + 49:52 “But that will reach out 26 miles.”
* Would call best buddy for help, not stress out family
* Coast guard flight is 6 hours out of Kodiak
* Need to rely on self and crew
  + 50:31 “Sometimes you just got to learn to don’t rely on nobody and just learn to rely on yourself because you’re the only one that’s out there.”

Theme 3. Feeling safe on the water

* Don’t overload boat
* Strategies for handling big waves in a small boat
* Driving the boat and not wanting anyone else to drive (too dangerous)
* Having a working motor
* Carry extra gear on boat: line, tarp, ore, life ring, PFDs
* Preparation: no water in gas
  + 46:37 “You don’t want to be dead in the water out in the ocean.”
* Float plan
  + 47:07 “I always let somebody know, family, where we’re at, how long it’s going to take us to get there and come back.”
* Safety classes available, importance of first aid (your choice to go to them or not)
  + Kodiak, Anchorage, and Seward
* Feels safe on the water (from growing up on water young, safety training, and experience)
* 24:03 “I grew up on the ocean…I’m not scared of water”
* Does not wear a PFD, except float coat when not too hot
* Tells passengers to wear PFD,, but he doesn’t wear unless very bad conditions
  + 38:27 “Well I feel safer if I don’t have to worry about it…If I gotta wear it, I’m getting into situations that I shouldn’t be in.”

Theme 4. One mistake can lead to death

* One mistake can lead to death
  + 25:51 “All it takes is one goof up and anybody could be done. I’ve seen it happen in our [river] mouth many of times.”
* Familiarity with people drowning
  + 34:49 “I lost quite a bit of friends to the ocean, but that’s just the way life is”
* Overloaded herring boats capsizing—avoidable
  + 32:43 “Well, I’ve seen where people loaded their herring boats too much and literally take one wave and the boat sinks.”
  + 33:32 “They got a little greedy.”
* Moving water is dangerous
  + There’s no pool that kids can swim in, only dangerous water with current
* Had to jump off a boat while crabbing so he didn’t get crushed (no PFD)
  + 12:33 [scared the captain who never fished again] “He just was never the same.”
* Son drowns and he reflects that he should have made him more comfortable with water
* Diver on purse seiner drowns trying to loosen a net stuck on the rocks
* Experience doesn’t always help because accidents still happen
  + 70:23 “I guess I’ve been lucky because like I said, I had a good teacher, mom and dad, and I’m still here.”

Theme 5. Respect/awareness of ocean

* Respect for ocean
  + 71:04 You respect it. Learn to get off when it’s time.”
* Salmon set net more dangerous than his other fisheries
  + 16:21 But salmon fishing is a whole ‘nother story. Because if it’s rough out well, do you really want to go out? Is your life worth $100 a fish?”
* Rougher weather in fall (during salmon set netting)
  + 43:03 “Fall time is usually storm after a storm coming in”
* Following known rules of weather conditions (i.e., what to do in north wind versus south)
* Being aware of weather (i.e., which way a storm will come from)
* Being aware of where you are (i.e., especially if fog comes)
  + 31:18 “You got to know where you’re going”
* Navigating with the sun and wind direction
  + 31:28 “The best one for me is what my uncle told me. The sun always rises in the east and sets in the west. Can’t go wrong there…And that’s basically what saved me a few times.”
* Rough weather
  + 12:22 “Boy, they can get rough at times. I’ve been out in Norton Sound where I’ve seen 25, 30 foot waves.”

Theme 6. Physical effects of commercial fishing

* Hands cramping
* Hands get locked from picking fish
* Can’t grab anymore
* Joints ache: elbow and knee joints
  + 42:23 “You’re always rocking, so it’s really tough on the body…trying to keep up right”
* Subsistence is good, but commercial is too hard on body
  + 58:20 “And then pull in the nets, use every one of your muscles and when it gets dropped out, just trying to hold onto the nets, you literally stretch your joints. I would recommend don’t do it.”

Theme 7. Less fish because of trawlers

* Less fish now than in the past
  + 60:06 Well now we have no fish. 20 years ago we had a little bit of fish. 40 years ago we had abundance of fish.”
* Frustration and concern over trawlers, starting in the 90s
* Lost permit because mother and brother did not make enough points
* Feeling helpless and angry about greed and money over what’s right
  + 21:13 “All the communities live by rivers that produce salmon. And if we can’t even catch a salmon because somebody else is killing them and throwing them overboard, what’s the point of even catching fish?”