



NEW BEDFORD FISHING HERITAGE CENTER

Date of Interview: February 3, 2017

Fortin, Sarah ~ Oral History Interview

Fred Calabretta

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Sarah Fortin interview, February 3, 2017

Background

Name of person interviewed: Sarah Fortin [SF]

Facts about this person:

Age 29
Sex Female
Occupation Gear manufacturer
Residence (Town where lives)
Ethnic background (if known)

Interviewer: Fred Calabretta [FC]

Transcriber: Millie Rahn [MR]

Interview location: Reidar's Trawl & Scallop Gear & Marine Supply, New Bedford

Date of interview: February 3, 2017

Key Words

Nets, chafing gears, codends, sweep, twine knowledge, knife belt, knives, twine, spikes, fids, splice rope, combo wires, thimbles, sleeves, presses, vices, grinders, impact guns, torches, wrenches, chains, Alfredo hook, net reels, shackles, Spectra, net bellies

Abstract

Sarah Fortin describes herself as “a Jane of all trades.” She’s now 29 and has been working at Reidar’s since she was in high school, first starting part time after school to learn specific skills, and then went full time and has been there ever since. She talks about being a woman in a largely male industry, her knowledge of nets and other tasks, what she’s learned on the job from her co-workers, especially Tor Bendiksen, and how gear has and hasn’t changed over time, describes the tools of her trade, the physical demands of the job, learning from physical mistakes, and the state of the fishing industry and its potential impact on her own job and that of companies like Reidar’s.

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[00:00] Intro; Sarah Fortin was born on October 28, 1987, at St. Luke's Hospital in New Bedford. Grew up in Fairhaven. Started working at Reidar's part time after school while in high school and went full time later, building nets and learning the trade. She describes herself as "a Jane of all trades." Not from a fishing family but when she was in her teens, her father worked there as a machinist and she looked for a job

[05:21] Describes a typical work day, schedule, working conditions, and her tasks working with nets and on other things as needed.

[10:08] Never been on a working fishing vessel. Talks about usually working by herself in the shop, described more about a typical day, and that not two days are alike.

[15:05] Names and talks about tools of her trade. Tells the derivation of the term "Alfredo hook," which is unique to Reidar's. Explains when/when not to wear gloves when working, and describes the many occupational hazards of working in wet, cold, snow in winter, and how she's learned from injuries she's had on the job.

[20:04] Talks about being a woman in largely a man's industry and how she's perceived by fishermen.

[25:03] Reflects on the state of the industry and its implication for her own work and the industry's future. Also talks about the physical demands of the job and who is/isn't suited to it.

[30:01] Thoughts on hardest and best parts of the job, and learning how her nets work from fishermen who come into the shop.

[34:31] End of Audio

[00:00]

Fred Calabretta: Today is February 3, 2017. This is an interview for the New Bedford Fishing Heritage Center, funded by an Archie Green Fellowship from the Library of Congress. As part of this project we are interviewing workers in the New Bedford/Fairhaven fishing industry to record their stories, document their skills and knowledge, and better understand their important role in the fishing industry. The recording and transcript will become part of the permanent collection at the Library of Congress. I'm Fred Calabretta. Today I'm speaking with Sarah...

Sara Fortin: Fortin.

FC: Sarah Fortin at Reidar's Trawl and Scallop Gear and Marine Supply in New Bedford. You give us your permission to record this for the project?

SF: Yes.

FC: So then just to start with your full name, first of all.

SF: Sarah Fortin.

FC: And your date of birth.

SF: October 28, 1987.

FC: Where were you born?

SF: New Bedford at St. Luke's.

FC: You grew up in New Bedford?

SF: Yes. Well, I grew up in Fairhaven, but near New Bedford, yes.

FC: Okay. Was your family involved in the fishing industry in any ways?

SF: I never had any fishermen in my family, but my dad used to do some work painting boats and stuff like that down by the docks. Then he actually worked for this company, he was a machinist, like a welder, and he worked on trawl doors and stuff. I was a 15-year-old kid that needed a job so I came here and then Tor just kind of just gradually taught me things and I never left.

FC: When was that? What year did you start?

SF: Geez. I was still in high school so that's what? I'm 29 now, so that's about 2003 maybe? 2002? 3?

FC: Did you start full time?

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SF: No, I was coming in after school and building some chafing gears and that's kind of, I don't know if you know what that is, but just little piece things that I could make a certain amount of money and I could just take my time and get them done. Then I got quick at it, so Tor decided to keep me and teach me some other stuff.

FC: I guess maybe just a little bit more about what you were doing especially when you first started and then you got into doing different stuff.

SF: When I first started, I was kind of doing, it was building chafing gears that go on codends on the bottom of the codends so that when it brushes up against the ocean floor it doesn't chafe out the expensive twine. And I just kind of started doing those. My dad used to bring them to the house and I learned how to do it at home and then I just ended up coming into the shop and doing them here. It was, you know, 15-, 16-year-old kid making 80 bucks in four hours, so that was gold. So I stuck around and kept doing that and as I got better at it, Tor decided to have me build like little survey trawls and stuff. He'd cut out all the pieces and start out all the seams for me and get everything lined up and then I'd just go on and do it and have him come cut it out when I did it wrong and have to re-do the whole thing. It was kind of a painful process, but over time he saw some kind of potential in me, I guess, and taught me all sorts of stuff. Now I can take a net plan and a bale of twine and turn it into a trawl. I ask him questions all the time, but for the most part I can do most of it by myself.

FC: When you first started, you were working with all synthetic twine? I mean, it's all what poly or something?

SF: Yes, a lot of it's I forget if it's polypropylene or ethylene, but it's some kind of plastic material. I work with nylon and that like polyethylene probably, propylene, whatever. Something like that.

FC: By then cotton twine and everything was gone?

SF: No, I've always worked with the plastic-y stuff. I didn't, I mean, sometimes you get an old net in that you got to fix things on, some older stuff in it, but for the most part we just used that plastic-y kind of twine, yes.

FC: I guess maybe just talking a little bit more about what you do, what your job is, and what you do today. You talked about it a little bit, but other kinds of projects and stuff you work on.

SF: I'm kind of I guess Jane of all trades. I do all sorts of stuff around. Like I'll make wires and the sweeps. I don't do that that often, that's usually the guys that do that, but I can build the sweeps and all the ground gear and then the net that goes with it and put all that together and working with the shackles and the chains and all that stuff.

[5:21] SF: [continued] We've done a few little projects here and there for different trials and things like that, people testing out different things with cameras and all sorts of stuff for the government or like an institution, institute, not institution, like a college or something. UMass

does a lot of stuff that we work with them and do a lot of little projects to test out different things.

FC: So you're working with not just the nets but also like the hardware like you said?

SF: Yes.

FC: And the shackles?

SF: Like just this morning I was helping a crew outside running another wire through their sweep and we're forklifts and pulling it and cutting handle locks and shackles with the torch and stuff. I can do all that stuff on my own. Yes, it's pretty cool.

FC: So a lot of different stuff?

SF: Yes. I'm kind of, whenever there's something that has to get done, Tor can usually call on me to do, unless it's welding. I can't do that. [laughs] It's a little too serious.

FC: What's your regular schedule? What days and hours do you work?

SF: Monday through Friday, 8 to 4:30. And here and there I'll come in on a Saturday if we got a lot of stuff to do or need an extra, a little bit of cash that week or something, I'll come in for Saturday mornings, but for the most it's a straight 40 hours.

FC: Do you ever get sort of like emergency work if somebody tears up a net on the bottom?

SF: Oh, yeah. I'll be in the middle of a brand-new net project on the floor and then Tor will get a call that somebody snagged up on something and they want to go fishing tomorrow or the next day or something, so we'll get a net, they'll bring in a net and we'll just have to drop everything that we're doing and get to that. It depends, you know. He balances out what's emergent and stuff like that. I don't really make that call. That's more him, but yes, I have to jump between things all the time for people coming in. Oh no, I broke my wire. Oh no, I lost half my stuff. I got a new everything. It'll be a net I just built two months ago and they lost the whole thing or shredded it all up. It's heartbreaking. [laughs]

FC: How does that work out, like if you've got a job all laid out on the shop floor and stuff and got to kind of put that aside and make room for something else?

SF: Either that or I can wind up what I got done. We got net reels downstairs so I can just wind it up just like on a boat and get it out of the way or I'll work outside. It all depends. We got a lot more area here now than we ever used to, so we've got more of an option to put it, I can use the storage room to lay something out. I got plenty of space outside in the parking lot and all that stuff.

FC: A lot of room to work with.

SF: Yes, a lot more, a lot more room now.

FC: Are you on your feet for most of this?

SF: I sit when I can, but that's not often because I'm kind of moving down the line all that time, you know? You build a net from the top and you work your way down, so I'm always backing up and moving around and sitting down just kind of slows me down.

FC: You don't have to work on your knees, though, really.

SF: Um, sometimes. It depends. If I'm working inside with my cleats and all the stuff I can pin my twine up nice and easy, I can generally stay on my feet or sit down if I'm staying in one spot to, like, sew something, but if I'm working outside, who knows? You got to work with what you got.

FC: Yes. So if you're working on your knees you use knee pads?

SF: Sometimes. It depends on how much time I got on my hands. Yes.

FC: The concrete floor can be rough on the knees.

SF: Yes, but I'm resilient.

FC: What about, like, do you get regular breaks during the day? Or always have lunch at the same time?

SF: Well, I usually take my lunch around noon, but it all depends on what I'm in the middle of doing or if I'm helping a customer or something. But yes, pretty much I got my lunch break and yeah, that's about it. We don't really do organized breaks for anything else. I can stop and go get some water or whatever anytime I want, but --

FC: Are you working alone most of the time?

SF: Now, yeah. We used to have another like strictly nets employee, but she left for another job opportunity, so for the past, I don't know, little less than a year, I've been mostly by myself. Tor helps when he can, but he's got all the business end stuff to do and phone calls and customers and things like that to handle, so for the most part I'm alone.

[10:08] SF: [continued] I pull help when I need strength, extra hands, or some like that, but I got another guy that can do some things and I'm teaching another one, so I get help when I can, but for the most part, I'm on my own.

FC: So you're at a point where you're showing other people what to do?

SF: Yeah. I've had to train a handful of people over the years because I've been here for so long that I kind of, I'm unique in twine knowledge because I know Tor's way so I can do everything

the nice new, brand new fancy way and the way he wants to do it as opposed to a fisherman comes in and he's got past knowledge. He knows how to do it quick on the boat when you're listing back and forth and stuff like that. I have a cleaner knowledge I guess you'd say because I'm taught right from Tor, who has been building the nets for years.

FC: Have you spent any time at all on boats or seen how the nets are handled or used on the boats?

SF: Actually I have not. I've helped load up nets and things like that on boats. I've been on, like, friends' boats to go and check out the boat, but I've never actually been on a fishing vessel while it's moving, because, I don't know, I've got plenty of work to do here, and to let me go for a whole fishing trip is, you know, when I'm the only person building nets, it's kind of hard for the shop to let that go.

FC: To take the time, yes.

SF: I'm sure at some point Tor's talked about potentially getting me involved in some projects, not anything decided yet, but just kind of like the general idea. And if, another employee that we used to have used to go out for short trips with a science something. I forget what it was. It might be like UMass or something, but she went on like projects and stuff. She wasn't gone for too long and she got the full experience out of it, so now that she's gone it's probably my turn if we get another opportunity for that. I'm looking forward to that. Just nice weather. I want to go in the summertime. [laughs]

FC: Yes, you don't want to do it in January.

SF: No.

FC: It sounds like you do spend a lot of your time where you're working alone pretty much. Like you said, you bring somebody in if you need an extra pair of hands, but do you mind working alone or do you like it?

SF: It has its ups and downs, you know? It gets lonely sometimes, but I kind of, I don't know, I get to race myself and put my music on with my headphones and just zone in on what I'm doing and not have to worry about people asking me questions or having to chat with anybody else. I can just kind of focus. It's not that bad. I don't mind it.

FC: And you do listen to music?

SF: Oh yeah.

FC: What do you listen to?

SF: Everything.

FC: Yeah?

SF: [laughs] I grew up on classic rock, so I had the Eagles on downstairs when you came and grabbed me to start the interview, so I listen to all sorts of stuff. Usually something upbeat so that I can keep moving.

FC: Yes, you don't want to be listening to ballads or something, nod out down there. Yes. If you were going to describe a typical day, like say they're probably all different, but say you got here today. What did you do? What's sort of a normal day? A normal workflow type of thing?

SF: Well, generally first thing, I'll come in and it depends on what I left myself the night before. So, like for instance, today at the end of the day yesterday I was working on a net downstairs and I came in and Tor was on the phone or dealing with a customer or something, I couldn't talk to him about the day's plans yet so I just go out there and start working on what I was working on and I did that for a little bit. Then, either Tor will come out and give me, this is what we've got to get done today, go cut this. Or, go start this net, or whatever, or today I had a customer come in and I had to help them with their gear outside, so I ended up working pretty much till lunchtime with them, helping them out. It all depends. It varies from day to day, but generally sometime in the morning I get a little chat with Tor so we can talk about, you're going to be working on this for the day. I got to have this done before two. Got to put this order together to get shipped out and stuff like that. I get a general synopsis in the morning and just kind of go from there.

FC: Is it easier, though, like if you're working on a bigger job and then you know like exactly kind of what you're going to be doing for two or three days?

[15:05] SF: Yes, it's always nice to start like a big, like a nice net fresh, start from cutting the pieces and just do the whole thing, because it's nice knowing I'm coming in, I'm going to do this and this and this, and then I get to go home. You know? It's nice to know, but it doesn't always go that way.

FC: Yeah.

SF: I'll come in expecting to do the net I've been working on and I'll get a curveball.

FC: Yeah, like a lot of jobs, I guess. [laughs] What are some of the tools and the gear and stuff you use? I mean, you mentioned it a little bit, but it's dependent on what you're working on, but-

SF: As far as nets go?

FC: Yeah.

SF: I got my handy-dandy knife belt [laughs] and then I use the plastic needles to lace the twine on to pass it through and all that stuff. Sometimes I got spikes that I use and fids and things to splice ropes and combo wires and stuff like that. Then when you get into the wires I got all sorts of things. I got the thimbles and the sleeves and the presses and the vices and grinders and I can't

even think of the words for all... Most of them I just call thingamajigs, because I can't remember [laughs], but impact guns and torches and wrenches and all sorts of stuff.

FC: That's like, it's totally different stuff, I mean, working with a wire. If you go from like working on a net to working with a wire.

SF: It's nice to switch it up.

FC: Really? Yeah?

SF: It's nice to do something different every once in a while. Because we got the guys on the wire side that usually handle like chains and wire orders, but sometimes they go on deliveries or they're working on a project or something, and I got to jump in. So, sometimes it's nice to have a little break in the monotony because if you're doing the same net project and I get to stay and do the same project all day, it gets a little tedious sometimes when you're just sitting in the same spot going up, down, and up and down and up and down and up and down.

FC: You talked about fids and other stuff that you use. Is it all pretty much off the shelf stuff or is any of it like stuff that you've modified or messed with a little bit so it works for you?

SF: For the most part, I use pretty standard stuff. I've had to get creative here and there with little projects and things where I got to stuff something in the end somewhere, it's too small, but for the most part, most of my stuff's-- Oh, we have the Alfredo hook. That's my favorite little thing. We got little holes on sides of the net reels and you pick up the twine and hook it up and we just, I take a welding rod and make an S out of it and hook it up. That's my little nifty tool that I use every single day. Fishermen will come in and be like, oh, this is neat. I'm going to do this. And then they make them on the boat and stuff, so that's pretty cool.

FC: You started something.

SF: It's called an Alfredo hook because we had a guy, this fishermen guy that used to work for us that was like [mimics] Hey, [mumbles], and he put it together and gave it to me and hence the name. But, yeah, a little random story. [laughs]

FC: Yeah. What about do you wear gloves? I notice your fingers are taped up a little bit.

SF: I wear gloves when I can because, like, when I'm doing wire and chain and stuff like that, I'll wear gloves because you get caught on the little burrs and stuff like that all the time, but with twine, I choose speed and dexterity over gloves because I got to, like, hold things and then bring the twine around and pull a knot over my fingertips and I'll lose the tips of the gloves all the time, so I can't do gloves. I need to feel what I'm doing.

FC: You just get a better feel.

SF: The cracks, I mean, the tape and all that right now, that's kind of winterized because I was working out in the cold and the snow the other day and my hands got wet and then in the winter my skin dries out and I get little cracks on my knuckles and stuff so that's kind of --

FC: I know what you mean.

SF: A lot of this is preventative, too, so that I don't, you know, reopen anything or whatever.

FC: Yes, working with the wire must be pretty rough on the hands.

SF: No, I've, here you got to pick something up and I don't have my gloves on or whatever and I've gotten some good little cuts on my hands from handling the wire.

FC: Are there any other parts of the work that are a little tricky like that or you get banged up a little bit?

[20:04] SF: Yeah, I mean, I'm kind of a clumsy person to begin with, so I'm always walking into stuff, but I got good with a hammer now I don't bash my thumbs anymore. But, you know, you got to tighten shackles on some gear that's on the floor and you got to hold the spike this way and pull this, this way and sometimes things don't line up right and the wrench will slip off and I'll whack myself on something. Stuff like that. And I'll slice my hands every now and then when I'm cutting twine too fast, but that I've kind of gotten past that over the years.

FC: That's good.

SF: So, not so bad with that anymore. But everybody's got those stories. I stabbed myself in the leg once and sliced my hand open another time and tripped up on twine and almost, you know, broke my knee another time, so I got some decent injuries that have taught me some lessons, so I'm careful now.

FC: Careful.

SF: So, I've been all right.

FC: How has like the stuff that you work with, the tools and you talked a little bit about the type of twine and stuff, but since you first started, what's different now?

SF: Well, the tools pretty much, what I use at least has pretty much stayed the same. I mean, we've got a bigger press to use for bigger wires and things like that, but for the most part, all that's the same. My needles are pretty much the same. Gotten some better knives throughout the years, and twine has changed a bit. I mean, a lot of the stuff I was working with years ago was cheaper. Now we've got, they've put more research into it and figured out how to make it tighter knit so that it doesn't chafe out and stuff like that. And different materials they've tried and trial and error. They've come up with some good stuff. I got Spectra and really durable rope and stuff like that, that I use sometimes. So, we got some high-quality stuff now. Definitely some stuff that's a bit better than what it used to be. Just time and what fishermen say about stuff.

FC: Do you hear much back from fishermen? Or like, do you have a chance to hear from a guy? Like, if you worked on a net and do you ever run into fishermen and have them say, ah, yeah, boy that net worked out great or something?

SF: Oh, yeah.

FC: Yeah?

SF: Guys, they come in. They'll come in one week and be here for two or three days doing a project and then they'll come in after that trip that they made when they left, they'll come back and [mimics] Oh, I got to get some more shackles and balls of twine to stock the boat. So they come in and say hi all the time and they're chatting about how their nets are working and all that stuff, so I get some feedback.

FC: What about the whole thing about like not being a guy? Was it tougher getting into the work? I mean, did you feel you had to prove yourself because you're a woman? Did you get into any of that?

SF: I mean, there's been a bit of a struggle here and there with some of the old-timers like because they don't, they're just not used to seeing a woman that knows as much as I do about the twine and stuff, and it's kind of hard for a 60-, 70-year-old man who's been working with men on a boat his whole life sometimes to accept that there's a 20-something-year-old girl that knows more than him. I mean, there's been a little struggle there, but for the most part, everybody's nice, you know? They understand that I know what I'm talking about. I haven't really struggled with the whole respect thing. I mean, it's there. I mean, a lot of times I'll get that little, like, damn, you're really going for a girl. Like, look at you. You know? Stuff like that, but it's all positive. I haven't really gotten anything negative from-- I'm just the girl at Reidar's. Pretty much everybody knows who I am because there's not that many women in the industry.

FC: And you feel like, I mean, they can see you, you know what you're doing, and you do good work.

SF: Yeah.

FC: And you feel like mostly they respect that.

SF: Yeah. They'll come in and compliment my stuff all the time or let me know that what I built for them is working out. They'll thank me all the time and helping them with stuff outside and their gear and all that. They're good.

FC: Yeah?

SF: Yeah. I made some solid friends. I have a little handful of fishermen friends that I have that I've had probably for about a decade or so that I've made from working here, so yeah, I get on with them pretty well.

FC: Let's see.

[25:03] FC: [continued] Like, say someone you knew was looking for work, is this something that, and they said hey, I like what you're doing. Maybe I'll get into that or something. Would you encourage them to do it?

SF: In terms of working here or becoming a fisherman?

FC: No, just working in the business or building nets somewhere else?

SF: I mean, it all depends because you got to have, you got to be able to do the hard labor. Like, I have a few friends that have needed work throughout my life or whatever that have said, hey, is your place hiring? I kind of got to be a little choosy about it because, like, I can tell who's going to be able to hack it and who's not. Like, you got to be able to be on your feet all day and work all day and show up and, you know, stuff like that. Like, I mean, I haven't, I had a few friends apply over the years. It didn't end up happening because they either had another job or we found whoever we needed or whatever, but, no, if I had a friend that was able-bodied enough and needed a job, I'd probably bring them by. We've had other employees throw their friends a line about coming to work here a few times and we've had a few guys come in and out of here that references from other employees that have worked out pretty well.

FC: Yeah? The whole fishing industry has been struggling so much lately.

SF: Yeah.

FC: I mean, do you worry about that? I mean, does that sort of affect your work?

SF: I mean, I've stayed busy through it all because I mean, we have loyal customers that continue to come back to us for business and stuff, so we haven't, it doesn't seem, at least to me, I don't know the whole business end of everything. They don't share that with me, but it seems like we've been consistent, busy, throughout all the trials and tribulations of the industry. But, I mean, it's something that's in the back of my mind, obviously, like with all the stuff that's been going down in regulations and cutbacks on everything and the guys not being able to make enough money to pay. Obviously, that's going to trickle down to me eventually and that's a concern, but I try not to worry about it. It's not really anything I can control. I'm here for as long as I can be here and as long as Tor can keep me working.

FC: What's the hardest part of the work? Or what's the toughest part or what don't you like so much, you know?

SF: The hard part is probably staying on point, like staying energized and on my game 40 hours. I mean, it's physically demanding being on your feet all day and lifting and pulling and tugging and doing all that kind of stuff. It's tiring, so it's, sometimes some days it's hard to get through the day just because I'm just tired, you know? My body's tired or my hands are hurting and they're tired. You know? That's tough, but as far as tasks go? Working with baby mesh is, little

tiny like one-, two-inch, that's hard on my hands. That's tough. It's hard on my eyes, it's hard on my hands, it's tedious, but it's cool. It's pretty. It looks really cool once it's done and it's something to be proud of, so silver lining and all. But, it's probably just the physical demand of the job. It's just you got to get a good night's sleep. You got to eat well. You got to, you know, I've learned you can't go out drinking on week nights and stuff like that. [laughs] You know, I learned that lesson the hard way. But, yeah, just staying productive and staying energized five days a week, you know, four weeks a month.

FC: You mentioned your eyes. Do you get like eye strain? Do your eyes get tired if you're working on like a really close-detailed job or something?

SF: Sometimes. I'll get cross-eyed when I'm cutting the little meshes, the little, it's the little stuff that gets me. Like, I'll be cutting out, you know, bellies or whatever, sections of the net, and I'll lose track when I'm cutting. I got to cut like a taper so that it jogs in a little bit as you go down. Sometimes my eyes get kind of blurred up, but blink hard a few times, look away for a minute, take a breather, and get back to it. It's not that bad. Nothing permanent, but yeah, it gets me cross-eyed and blurred a little bit every now and then.

FC: What's the best part of the work? What do you like most about it?

[30:01] SF: I like working with the guys, with fishermen, when they come in. I really like working with crews and seeing how they look at things, because I know how to do everything brand new. I know how to make everything perfect and pretty and line up where it's supposed to go all the time. It's nice to see their little quick fixes and their, because they have so much knowledge that I don't. They know how a net's going to fish. They understand, like today we were doing something outside and debating whether you had to take up links to make things line up right. They know no, that's going to fish out. I'm going to drag that and it's going to be fine. That's new to me, you know? I don't know that stuff. So I get different knowledge and feedback from them that helps me when I'm fixing an old net by myself and things don't line up right. I kind of can finagle it from knowledge that they've given me and stuff. I don't know. I like working with fishermen. That's fun. It's usually fun because they're silly and you get to have a good time with them and get some stuff done. They're always very appreciative. It makes me feel better. It makes me feel good at the end of the day when they're like [mimics] Aw, yeah, we get to go out a day early. Thank you. Like, good work. Thanks a lot. You know? A little ego boost. It's nice. [laughs]

FC: It's nice for anyone when people appreciate what you do, you know? It sounds like you're a good listener, too. I mean, it's like you're interested in what they have to say.

SF: Yeah, I mean, that's kind of how I've been working here the whole time. I just listen and do it how I'm told to do it and get it done and you know; I'll take any advice I can get. If you know something better than I do, teach me. Why not? It's something else to know. Another question I might not have to go and track down Tor in the office to ask him the next time, you know?

FC: Is there anything else that you'd like to put on the record here that we haven't talked about? Anything about your work?

SF: [Pauses to think] I know we covered a lot of bases and I'm kind of trying hard to think now. I'm not really sure.

FC: That's okay. One thing I was wondering. It's a specific thing, but so at the end of the day like if you're working on a project, do you get to, is there enough space that you can kind of leave it where it is and come back to it?

SF: Yeah.

FC: So you don't have to --

SF: Now there is. Like, we just moved to this facility probably what? Four, three or four years ago, or something like that? We used to work on Fairhaven's waterfront, down in the center of town, and we had a significantly smaller shop where we built sweeps and nets in the same area, so we had to compromise for space all the time. Now, there's enough area for the most part that I can leave stuff out, just laid out right where I was so I can just walk in in, in the morning, pick up the needle and keep going.

FC: That saves time.

SF: Yeah, definitely. Definitely saves time. So, that's-- Yeah, that's pretty good. And sometimes we've got to bring the trucks in when it's going to snow and stuff like that, so I got to clear stuff out of the way, but for the most part, now like, we used to have to stop 20 minutes early to clear everything out of the way, pull all the forklifts in the building. We had such a tight space that we'd have to stop working before the day was over. Now we can work pretty much, you know, right up to five minutes before we're supposed to leave and then run around, unplug things, turn off tanks, and it's done. And then come right in and get right on it.

FC: It sounds like a lot of it's pretty hard work. I mean, you must be pretty wiped out when you finish at the end of the day?

SF: Eh, some days. Some days it's easier than other, you know? Some days I get to stand in the same spot or even sit for a change and work on something and it's not that bad, and then the next day, I'll have a crew outside and we're physically pulling things this-a-way and that-a-way and cutting things and all sorts of stuff like that, so it's day to day, but yeah, there's some days that it's pretty exhausting.

FC: Yeah. That's really interesting. So, you think we're set?

SF: Yeah.

FC: Okay.

[34:31] End of audio