

Oral History Interview

Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum

“The Culture of Tugs and Tugs in Culture”

Interviewee: John (Jack) Austin (J.A.)
DOB:
POB:

Interviewer: Michelle Zacks (M.Z.)

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M.Z.: Today is October 28, 2011. This is Michelle Zacks for the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. This is part of the oral history project on tugboat captains and people involved in the tugboat industry for the upcoming exhibit on tugboats. I'm in the home of Jack Austin in St. Michaels. This is a follow-up interview, continuing from where we left off about last month. Okay, Jack. Thank you for meeting with me again. One of the things that I wanted to talk about was just to clarify some of your career history and some of the dates. I listened to the tape after we had the interview, and I've looked at the transcript. I just wanted to make sure I understand correctly. You were in Vietnam in about 1972, right? Is that when you went in?

J.A.: Correct. Uh-huh.

M.Z.: And that was thirteen months?

J.A.: Uh-huh.

M.Z.: Then what I had written down was that you started as a deckhand in 1972. Did you mean that you were working as a deckhand in Vietnam, or did I get confused about those dates?

J.A.: Possibly. I did work as a deck, but actually I ended up being one of the operators of the tugs in Vietnam. A skipper, as such. I couldn't sign for it because that was an officer's position, but as far as the actual handling of the vessel and doing the work, that's what I was doing in Vietnam. Commercially, I would say late '73, '74 would be when I started commercially, out of the service.

M.Z.: Then you were a deckhand, you said, for about four years? Or is that not right?

J.A.: I was a deckhand, well, that's close, yes. Three to four years. I think I actually got my license in '75, my first license, working as a mate.

M.Z.: What is that license called?

J.A.: The original license that we were using and that I think everybody in the industry was, was called an Uninspected Towing Vessel, UTV, which was a tug registered of less than 200 gross tons. That's a very vague – how gross tonnage gets calculated is very convoluted. They don't put it on a scale. It has completely to do with the construction, water pipe access, engine rooms, void spaces. So truly, some of the biggest tugs that you'll see now are still under 200 gross tons. It's just a way of calculating, strictly for registration.

M.Z.: You got that license in 1975?

J.A.: I did.

M.Z.: You were still a deckhand at that point.

J.A.: At that point, yes.

M.Z.: In about, you would say, '77 maybe you became a mate?

J.A.: No, pretty much '75, the latter part of '75. I got a mate's job. Once I got my license, I had a position available to me.

M.Z.: What company was this with?

J.A.: Taylor and Anderson, T & A. Called Taylor and Anderson out of Philadelphia with the two families owned the company.

M.Z.: So it was a small company?

J.A.: Relatively small. I think they had about five boats or so.

M.Z.: What were you involved with at that point?

J.A.: The boat that I worked on for Taylor and Anderson was chartered to a company called Interstate Oil Transport, IOT, also out of Philadelphia. We were chartered to Interstate, moving petroleum barges.

M.Z.: Then, for how many years were you first mate before you became captain?

J.A.: Well let's see, most likely, two.

M.Z.: So probably in about –

J.A.: '77.

M.Z.: '77? I just wanted to make sure I had that chronology right. All of that was with Taylor and Anderson? You worked on this tug here, the *Delbar*. Was that with Compass Marine?

J.A.: No, we formed Compass Marine, you know, my memory's rough. I'm going to say around '76 or so.

M.Z.: You formed the company?

J.A.: No. I was one of three majors, three principals. When we formed it, it was a very small tug, and we did work very piecemeal. We didn't just jump right in. We had a little work to do, but it wasn't enough to support me or any of us at that point, because we all had primary jobs. Compass Marine evolved over a period of time.

M.Z.: You had how many tugs with that company?

J.A.: Compass Marine? I think at its height, they may have had about five tugs, six tugs.

M.Z.: What kind of stuff were you guys doing?

J.A.: Everything. They would do pretty much everything. Some oil bunker barges, oil barges, marine construction. Those were the, I would say the two majors would be marine construction, moving. We did not do the construction; we moved the barges for marine construction companies, and bunker barges.

M.Z.: I guess in that company, you must have gotten a lot of experience. I remember in the interview that we did previously; you were talking about how important it is to have a range of experiences. You were saying in New York Harbor, for example, if you work moving the garbage around and stuff, you get really familiar with maneuvering a tug.

J.A.: Correct. That's true.

M.Z.: Did your experience at Compass Marine serve that sort of function for you?

J.A.: It did, it did. Pretty much my function with Compass Marine was I was the boat guy. We had one of the partners was pretty much the finance man and the administrative. The other major partner was the engineering department. I myself was basically the boat person. After we got the jobs and the boats were running, then it was my job to get it done, to make it all come together to actually do the work. That's where, that was my forte, was getting it done, doing the work. True, we got into some learning curves, some situations. But we worked it out and got it done.

M.Z.: So you started with one tug and then you ended up having five or six?

J.A.: We did. We started from an old wooden hull tug that was quite a piece of equipment. (Laughter.)

M.Z.: What was her name?

J.A.: *Ruby M.* That was, actually it was the Dann brothers'. Mr. Dann, who was the father of the Dann brothers, had a business up in Chesapeake City, Maryland, up at the canal. If I'm not mistaken, I think that was his wife's name. I think that was the mother of the two brothers who now, they both are now involved in the industry. She had served their purpose for her. She just wasn't big enough or powerful enough to help them. But it was just right for us. We could beat and bang around and learn.

Then we ended up doing gravel. We did that, too, with Compass Marine. There was a small metal boat, and it was small. I think it was fifty foot, something like that. Not a lot of horsepower, strictly a day boat, just a day boat. Moving sand gravel, sand and gravel barges up and down the Delaware. That was an interesting training. We got ourselves in

a situation where I think we had more barges than we could actually handle, but we managed to not tear everything up. But we learned, we learned.

M.Z.: What were some of the incidents there? You didn't tear everything up but you tore some things up?

J.A.: No, not too bad. No, we –

M.Z.: Can you describe a little bit? Just sort of paint a picture of some of those incidents?

J.A.: One time, things were getting behind in the scheduling. There were too many empty barges down the river; light barges that need to go up to Morristown was where the quarry was where they would load the barges.

M.Z.: Where did you say?

J.A.: I think it's Morristown in – that would be Jersey. No, that might be PA. One side was Jersey of the river and the other side was Pennsylvania. Morristown or Morrisville. I can't remember. Anyway, it's just below Trenton. It's about four miles below Trenton on the PA side, on the Pennsylvania side. That's where the rock quarry was. We would take the barges up there, take the light ones up, bring the loaded ones down.

Somehow, too many light barges ended up downriver and they were running out. We just started collecting them. As we were going up the river, we would put them together, you know. We usually carried three or four up, maybe six at the most. We ended up going up with nine. We had them three across and three deep. We looked like we were on the Mississippi River. This little tugboat pulling these nine barges behind it.

M.Z.: Was this the *Ruby M*?

J.A.: No, this was *Elljean* (ph). The *Elljean* was the name of the boat. And we were going up the river and there was a ship coming up behind us which I wasn't aware of. The deckhand was steering at that time, and I was taking a little bit of a nap. I get up and I look around behind me, and I see this ship up there. I thought, well he doesn't look very good because he was kind of out of shape into the channel. And I realized that the deckhand had turned the volume on the radio down, so he couldn't hear the ship calling from behind him.

As soon as I turned the volume up, I'm hearing the conversation between the ship and the bridge tender. The bridge tender had the ship up, and they couldn't get ahold of me, so I finally told, "Don't worry about me. I won't go through the draw, you can have the draw. I'll go in between the, I'm not going to go between the spans, but I'm going to go in between the pilings."

Well we got in there. We got most of them in, and we had one that was trailing on behind. It smacked the piling and evidently shook the bridge and they got all upset.

They thought the bridge was going to fall. It didn't fall. The actual outcome of it was that we didn't hurt the bridge at all, but we did put a little dent in the barge when we smacked the thing. We had to kind of go back and pick it up because it broke the lines free. The ship was very happy, because we got out of his way. I wasn't very happy. Things like that would happen.

M.Z.: At that stage in your career, would that be very upsetting to you?

J.A.: Sure, yeah. Well I thought we, you know, it's one of those deals where if you make it through, people look at you and go like, "Well of course you did. That's what you're supposed to do." If you don't make it, they're like, "What in the world you trying to do that for?" You know, it's one of those situations where if you win, it's so what. If you lose, it's a big deal. It was just one of those little incidents. We had more than we should have had.

M.Z.: Live and learn.

J.A.: Yeah. Live and learn, right. When we started out with the job, we contracted it to come down the river with two loaded barges. Then after we got involved with it, I was talking to my people, the principals. I said, "You know, we can do three barges. We can get three barges down there." Then we think well, you know, we're getting paid by bringing them down, so if you can do that, that's great because it's the same fuel for us and if you can get another one down, then sure, we can do that. So we did, started bringing three barges down for a while. Again, a few months later, you know, we can bring four down if we do it the right way. "How are you going to do that?" "Well, you know, we can do it."

To do it, we have to come down with the right tide and have to make the right move. I said, "Yeah. We can do four." Well, they thought that was, well, they didn't think it could be done. But yeah, we did it. Then we were in gravy. Then we were really making money then for a while. It was like we were doing four at a time. We doubled up on our contractual price so we figured we were – as I say, we were grossing twice as what we had planned on. That worked out very nicely. Again, but it was learning. Would we have done it to start with? No, no. As we did it and could see the pitfalls, we could also see what we could do, and could not do with the boat. Yeah, we realized yeah, okay.

M.Z.: And you were in charge then, right? (phone ringing) Do you want me to pause this?

J.A.: Sure.

[End of Part 1. Begin Part 2:]

M.Z.: That's fine. I'm just thinking that when those kind of things were happening with that company, you're in charge. There isn't somebody above you to turn to. Do you think we can do this? How should we handle this particular situation?

J.A.: Well it was. I didn't necessarily do it totally on my own. I would consult with the other two principals, but they would ask me and I would tell them, "Well yeah, we can do this and we can't do that, or we'll try." Most of the time, it worked out though. We didn't get too crazy, but most of the time, it worked out fine. But again, I didn't really question them too much. Maybe I should have, but I didn't question them too much on the finances, because that was not my forte. If they told me that's what it was going to cost to run a boat, then that's what it's going to cost to run the boat.

So they depended on me. If they had a job, they would discuss it with me. "This is the job. Can we get this done?" "Sure. Or no." Either way. And there were some nos. There were times where things would come up and we would just, basically you'd have to tell them no. No, not with the boat that we have. It's not worth the risk. There is – I mean, every business is a risk, and so – but it's calculated. If it's low risk and high profit, you go for it. High risk, low profit? Better stay away. But I did. I learned. I learned a lot about the industry, and I learned a lot about myself, and I learned a lot about other people.

M.Z.: What about those latter things? What kinds of things did you learn about yourself or other people?

J.A.: Without going in to a lot of detail, you learn that sometimes friends are not necessarily the best business people sometimes. As they say, you know, you don't want to do business with family. Well that's also I think with sometimes – I feel like sometimes the best deals and the best businesses are not necessarily done by friends. You know, it's those who have attributes to bring to an industry that are going to help. That's what you're looking for more so than friendship. Forget the friendship, you know. You want to know if somebody gets something done.

I think that, myself, I think it's also you learn about yourself. You know, making the right decision, when you make it, and when to say no. Hardest thing, I think, for the young people to do, is say no. No, no, not going to do that. Instead of getting pushed into a situation where they get in over their heads and by that time, it's too late. Then they're going to be in a problem. The hardest thing, I think, for people to do is say, "No, stop, this is not good."

M.Z.: Do you mean in terms of actual situations with the boat and handling the boat and for example, taking on too many barges? That sort of thing?

J.A.: Sure. Well, with that goes, I mean, again, we're not being philosophical, and your decisions in life, too. If you can't make a decision with your life, you're not going to make a decision with your business. But yes, you learn when to say yes and you learn when to say no. It's not wrong; it's not the wrong thing to do, to say no. I wish more people, like in the government right now would say no. But it's not the wrong thing to do, to say no.

I think as a young person, you feel like when you're dealing with – and when you're dealing with your customers, I think there's always that point that well the customer's always right. Not necessarily, not necessarily. They're looking to get something done, especially when you're dealing with tugs and barges or anything like that in the industry. They want to get something done. So if you're going to say that you're going to do it, they think you're the greatest thing.

If you get it done for them, that's great. If it doesn't, it ends up being your problem. Now they've got a problem too, but so do you. You know, the customer's not always right. And sometimes you have to be able to tell them that either no, you're not going to do it or no, they don't want to do it that way. A good customer will appreciate the fact that you'll bring something to light where yes, it'll get done, but not the way you want to do it.

If they'll listen to you, and if you can provide and get results, now you've got a good customer. Now you've got somebody who's going to come back to you most of the time. Other way around, you foul it up for them, like anything else; you're going to lose a customer. So you learn, you learn. Sometimes not fast enough, but you learn.

M.Z.: It sounds like this was a really good experience for you with that company, starting that company, working on that company.

J.A.: Oh, it most certainly was. Yeah.

M.Z.: And probably exciting, in a way.

J.A.: (Laughter.)

M.Z.: Nerve-wracking, maybe, is a better word.

J.A.: Yeah.

M.Z.: Just to be out there on your own, and trying to figure out how to run this business, you know?

J.A.: True.

M.Z.: How long did that company last? Or how long did you stay involved?

J.A.: I stayed involved with it most likely until the mid-eighties, something like that.

M.Z.: Oh okay. So it was formed in '76 and you got out of it in the mid-eighties?

J.A.: Yeah, the latter part of the eighties.

M.Z.: Where did you go from there?

J.A.: I worked with Compass Marine. A lot of times, I was part-time. Sometimes, it was full-time. I can't really remember back and forth. I worked for Berg Towing Company, for Chris Berg for a short period of time. I worked for Taylor and Anderson twice. I think I left there and then I went back. That was all the seventies and the early eighties. Let's see, I got married in '79. Early eighties went to work for Interstate.

Then from Interstate, again, things get a little confused, went back to work for Compass Marine, but I was not part-owner at that time, just employee. Then it was Taylor. Then it was no more Anderson. One of the Taylor sons bought the interest out, and it was Taylor. Taylor and Anderson became Taylor Marine became Turecamo Marine out of New York, and then became Moran.

M.Z.: I see, Turecamo, same as your boat right now?

J.A.: Correct.

M.Z.: That was the family's name?

J.A.: That was the family's name. That was the New York family name.

M.Z.: Then that became Moran. So that was still in the late eighties?

J.A.: Uh-huh.

M.Z.: Then it was just sort of from one company to another, you stayed with them?

J.A.: Correct, right.

M.Z.: You had said when we first talked that you had been with Moran itself since about 2002? Does that seem right?

J.A.: Yes.

M.Z.: One thing I was wondering, if we could talk about today, is just to get a sense of what a typical day is like for you. I was wondering maybe if you could describe what you just came off of, you know? After you and I talked, you were going back, just the next day or a few days after we talked. If you could maybe describe where you went, and what you did, and what a typical routine was for you.

J.A.: Typical?

M.Z.: No such thing as typical?

J.A.: That might be, yeah, I have to say, I'm not so sure we can use that, but anyway, a typical day. Well, a typical day is, you may know what your orders are, or you have to get your

orders where you're going to be going. The unit that I'm on now is a combined tug and barge. So, we're always with the same barge, so we know the barge. We're seldom away from the barge, as a matter of fact. We don't have to go pick the barge up. We know we have the barge with us all the time.

M.Z.: This is the ATB?

J.A.: This is the ATB. It's going to be petroleum, we know that. So we're waiting. We wait for orders, and once the orders come in, then you start the planning. Okay, what facility are we going to go to, to load? We have to find out when is that facility going to be available? If it's a situation where you can go in at any time, regardless of the conditions of tide or current, then that's good. If it has to be considered, then you have to start planning on when you're going to have windows to go in.

You have to start lining up your assist boats to help you, line handlers to handle the lines. How much is going to load? Then you start – at the same time, in the back of your head, you've got to realize you're going to talk to the engineer to make sure that the vessel's provided with as far as fuel, all the fuel water lubes rub. Some of this, you already know, but still it's – you're going to run through it, and you're going to have your check-off list. Yes, you have fuel. Yes, you have water. Yes, you have grub.

Okay, you have your orders. How much time is it going to take? Where are you going to be going? The route? Obviously, here we go again, weather, the main thing. What kind of weather are you going to encounter? What's the weather going to be when you get to your destination? Then you have pilotage, whether you're going to need pilotage or not. That's a whole other game, as such.

If you have recency within an area, you don't need pilotage. That's not necessarily true. Some states demand pilotage with Blackwell (ph). They want a pilotage, you take a pilot. If you're going foreign, regardless of what you're doing, if you're leaving the country, you have to take a pilot going out and then you have to take a pilot coming back in. If you hadn't been foreign and you're returning back to the U.S., you have to take a pilot coming in. Same thing also, if you have articles, which are signed papers, stating that you are going foreign, then you also have to take a pilot to leave the country. So that has to be arranged.

M.Z.: How much time do you have to figure all this out? I remember when we talked before and I said, "Oh, where are you going next?" You said, "Oh, I don't know. I won't know that until the day before."

J.A.: Right.

M.Z.: So you find out the day before and then you have to kind of go through this whole list?

J.A.: Sometimes it's a day before; sometimes it's not a day before. Most of the time, I'm going to say, for the most part, you'll have twenty-four hours to figure out as far as your

pilotage goes. Now you may get a call and they want you to pull the anchor up right now and head right into the berth. Well we're speaking, you know, thirty minutes or so. Well okay. If the berth's open and tide's not a problem, current's not a problem, and you can get an assist boat to help you and you can get lines set up. Again, it might take you a little while, but if you can do that, you can go. If not, well, it's when all the pieces fall together. Sometimes it's amazing, and you wouldn't think so, but sometimes that might take hours. But that's just the way it goes. That's the way the industry goes.

M.Z.: So you always know the boat. You're on the *Scott Turecamo*. You always know the barge now, because it's this ATB thing.

J.A.: Correct.

M.Z.: But you don't always know the port, right?

J.A.: Correct. Correct.

M.Z.: It just depends on where they offloaded. That's where you go?

J.A.: It really depends on ConocoPhillips, who was the charterer. We're providing service for their customers, through a liaison, through a coordinator for lack of better, with Moran. They'll be in contact with Conoco or vice versa. We'll get the orders from Conoco. They'll want the barge to go to point A, and pick up a load, and take it to point B.

For the most part, if we're in New York Harbor. I would say for the most part, we're going to take a load most likely in the harbor there, maybe alongside of a ship or maybe to one of the tank farms. Most of the time, it's going to come out of the harbor. Not all the time, now. We will go down to Philadelphia, Marcus Hook area, to get a load. We seldom go south. South meaning – I will say this – we seldom go below or south of the Chesapeake without having a load on. That's like anything else. You know, you're not getting paid if you don't have anything in there, so there's no sense in running light.

Once we get down there, coming back sometimes, we'll come back light. We'll go to Florida, or one of the east coast ports, and deliver a load, and turn right around, and come back, and pick up a load sometimes, and turn around and go back down to Florida. We can. That's not uncommon. Or to go over to the Mississippi and go up the Mississippi River and get a load and come back to Florida. That's not uncommon. Or to Texas and get a load.

The industry is very funny. I can't tell you why, but truly we have taken load of a certain product – I'm not saying anytime recently – but start out in New York Harbor, and you pick up product A. You'll take it and deliver it to someplace, Texas. And turn around and load the same product – the same type of product, it may not be the same product. But the same type of product, and take it back to New York. Now I won't even begin to tell you why. I don't know that part of the business. But it's happened more than once. It's just, that's the way the business is. I won't try to figure that out.

M.Z.: Does that ever bother you?

J.A.: Not really. I mean, it bothers me – no – well, I mean, if I'm looking at it on a consumer side of it, I'm realizing well you know someone's paying an awful lot on transportation charge around here. Somewhere, whether it's the true charge or not or whether it's a bartering service where one company will do something for somebody in one harbor, and they'll turn around, and have them pay the favor in another harbor, but geographically.

I'm sure that happens, but I would never know. That's not my – you know, I would never know. But yeah, sure, you're going to scratch your head trying to figure out, well why did you just take a load – or here's another one for you. Now there are actually units, barges bringing gasoline from Texas to Connecticut, or someplace on the east coast, and up to the northeast, on a regular run, on a regular run. Now you would think well they have to be able to acquire gasoline someplace on the east coast.

Again, I can't tell you how the industry works, that part, but it happens frequently. So obviously it's not a quirk. They can do it and make money. How? I don't know. But they can. But anyway, a typical day, as I've already stated, that's part of it. You still – crew, you still – most of the time, you're working with the same crew. Crew doesn't usually get to be too much of a problem. Once everybody's on board, for the most part, you know that they're going to be there for the entire shift. So that part –

M.Z.: You have generally the same crew every time?

J.A.: Generally the same crew.

M.Z.: How many crew are on these ATBs, then?

J.A.: Seven of us, seven, myself included.

M.Z.: So it's the captain and –

J.A.: Usually a captain. Two mates. You know, first mate, second mate. One engineer. Two tankerman ABs, or AB/tankermen. One AB dedicated just to the vessel itself, just to the tug. It's not involved with the barge. The two tankermen are the two that conduct the loading and discharging of the barge itself. Then your mates are considered PICs, which is person-in-charge. They're involved with the overall – they're the overseers. They're the ones that are taking the responsibility, that's what it is. Somebody else is actually doing the loading. They may not do physical loading, but they're overseeing it. They're the ones that are making sure nothing gets in the water.

M.Z.: You're in charge of the ship and handling that, but they're in charge of the loading and unloading? Or, is that not right?

J.A.: Well no, you're right. You're right. But on the legal side of it –

M.Z.: You're in charge of everything.

J.A.: Right.

M.Z.: You're responsible for everything.

J.A.: You have delegated that responsibility to them under your guidance, so yes. Overall, you are overall responsible for the entire unit, tug, barge, cargo. Again, you delegate the authority to others, members of the crew, to conduct business. That's part of it, too. I think we've mentioned this before, that sometimes dealing with personnel seems to be as challenging as anything else. You also have to take into consideration your crew. Who is the crew? Do you know the crew? Do you know their capabilities? Do you delegate full authority to a crew member? Or do you have him either assisted or watched or helped, or whatever because of either – most of the time, just inexperience until they gain the experience to be able to conduct it safely and get it done.

That's all part of the game, too. When are you going to be going into the berth? Who's going to be doing the job? Does whoever is going to be doing the job have the experience to do it? Do they have the talent to do it? Sometimes just because you have them on the crew doesn't necessarily mean that they're, you know, all right. I have a very capable crew. I don't worry about that that much, so –

M.Z.: Can you describe them to me? I mean, not necessarily their names, but kind of who they are, what age, what their experience is? How they, you know, are these young guys who came in from academies or –

J.A.: The first mate is as experienced as I am, possibly even more. A little bit older than I am. Chooses to – he likes his position. He is very capable and I don't worry. The feeling is within the industry that if you can sleep at night with somebody, then you've got someone you want to keep. That's true. I don't have a problem with that.

M.Z.: You mean, you can sleep and trust that they're doing what they need to do?

J.A.: Correct. The second mate is a young man out of one of the academies who's been on board now for awhile, six or seven years, and who's gaining experience. He's very bright and a quick learn, and he's doing a very good job for us. Now when we – we being myself and the first mate – started allowing the second mate to actually handle the vessel, we did so, you know, under our guidance. We made sure that he wasn't going to get himself in trouble.

As he goes along, he gains experience, and we start letting him, as we say, let him sweat a little bit. You know, start saying, "You got it." And not necessarily be in the wheelhouse where he can always realize that you're right there, and you're not going to let him get in trouble. "You've got it." You remove yourself, hard thing to do, very hard to do.

Now I'll admit that most of us, we remove ourselves out of his sight, but we're also sitting there watching. We're out on deck someplace where he can't see it, but we're watching very closely what's going on. Again, to make sure that nothing happens. But I don't know how other people learn, but I can assure you that most of the time, until you start doing it yourself, you have not learned it.

That's the way you've got to do it. If you scare yourself, well, you scared yourself. I hope you learn something in doing so. But if you're going to have someone standing up there all the time, you're not making the decision. You're just waiting for him to cough or flinch or whatever, letting you know that it's time to do something. Starting out, that's fine, but you can't – you'll never grow beyond that point.

Anyway, again, that's, you know, you're asking about the everyday. Typical day is, sometimes it's like okay, who's going to be doing the job? Can he get the job done? When do I walk away and say, "You got it. It's all yours. You make the decisions." That's a typical day. Sometimes a typical day is you realize, well you don't want to put somebody in this situation. So you do it yourself. You either do it yourself or you assist them. I prefer to assist them, let them get – again, get as much of the feeling, and do as much of the decision-making as he's capable of doing. That's the way he's going to grow.

M.Z.: How long has this younger guy been out of the academy?

J.A.: I think '04, maybe, '05.

M.Z.: So it's been a few years.

J.A.: Uh-huh.

M.Z.: And he's still learning? There's still just so much to learn from different experiences, different situations?

J.A.: I think he would be capable of moving now. It's just that the jobs are not that available. Again, one of the inherent conditions – if I want to say, not conditions, but problems, I do call them problems – with the ATBs is, you're only doing jobs with that barge. So truly, we can go the entire three weeks or a month, and you've only really done three jobs.

If you're sailing from New York, and you're going to go to the Mississippi, well that's going to be, let's see, four, five, six, seven days. So you sail. That's one maneuver. And a week later, you dock. That's maneuver two. Then you leave there and maybe sail back to New York. Well now, that's maneuver three. Another week back, that's maneuver four. So you can actually only dock and undock the barge less than eight times over a period of three weeks. Now you've split that up between three people in the wheelhouse that are going to have the option to possibly be working their watch at the arrival or the departure time.

You get my point, is your exposure, how much time you have to actually learn something, is diminished. It's not like again, as I said, when people were working on some of the barges in New York when they had the garbage barges or construction barges, you're doing barges every hour – you know, constantly, all day long. You may move a dozen barges in a twenty-four-hour period of time. Well so obviously, your chance of learning something is quicker. You have more exposure. So again, with the ATBs, it can be a slow process, strictly because of the opportunities.

M.Z.: This is kind of a phenomenon that's happening as the technology gets enhanced, and also as the industry gets consolidated. Things are getting simplified and streamlined, which is good for efficiency and cost-savings, I guess.

J.A.: Correct, but possibly a loss of knowledge, the opportunity to gain knowledge that you may well need. You know, through someone's career, you may not always be on an ATB. There are other parts of the industry which is not going to go away. Conventional towing's not going to dry up and leave. That's not going to happen. Changes are being made, there's no question about it, but there are some basic fundamentals that will always be necessary.

Sometimes it's hard to – like I say, the opportunity, sometimes, is not as prevalent on the ATBs as it is with other, with somebody on a conventional tug, conventional boat. But that's the industry. Now here we are. Everybody, you know, we are computer-oriented. I'm a step above illiteracy for a computer. I never have figured it out. Yes, I can turn them on and I can turn them off, but am I proficient with them? No, no, I'm not. I didn't grow up with them.

M.Z.: I'll bet your second mate is a whiz.

J.A.: Oh my God, he can – it's just amazing. He just amazes me. I'll sit there – well, and I depend on him quite a bit for that. Now I may have said this before, but it's kind of a two-way situation. Because I'm hopefully teaching him and passing on knowledge to him that he's going to use. Well you know what? He's doing the same thing with me with electronics. I'm gaining knowledge from him on some of the technology for electronics that I'm starting to use, which is not a bad trade.

M.Z.: Yeah, that's good. That's a positive part of all of these changes.

J.A.: True.

M.Z.: Let's continue with the rest of your crew then. We've got your first mate, now had he been, you said that he's an older guy?

J.A.: Only by – he's the same age, but let's not get, we won't –

M.Z.: Had he been a captain before and now he's working as mate?

J.A.: I'm not sure.

M.Z.: Because I've met other people who have made that decision just, as you say, they're comfortable not having so much responsibility, and I guess the pay, I don't know how it compares, but I guess it's not too bad. You know, too much of a difference.

J.A.: No, there's not that much of a difference. And again, and another part of it is if those who wish to stay with the union. The captains are considered as management, so they're not part of the collective bargaining process.

M.Z.: Oh, I see.

J.A.: They can be members of the union, if they choose. But they're not involved in the negotiations, and again, they're not part of the collective bargaining. Chief engineer is relatively the same age. A little bit younger. He also has been in the industry for about as long as I have, actually. He's been thirty-five, forty years, very capable.

M.Z.: I think Martha was telling me about some of your crew members. Is he from North Carolina?

J.A.: Correct. He is. He is.

M.Z.: A lot of guys in the industry are from North Carolina, I understand.

J.A.: There are quite a few, that's correct. There are areas, in Virginia, the Deltaville area, Piankatank River, Deltaville. What do they call that down there? Mathews County, Mathews County, there seems to be a number of people that have worked on the tugs from Mathews County.

M.Z.: I'm actually trying to set up an interview with somebody down there from the Ward family. I don't know if you know them.

J.A.: No. I'm not aware of them.

M.Z.: Your chief engineer is from North Carolina, and you guys have worked together for quite some time?

J.A.: We have.

M.Z.: So you know you can really rely on him, and you're a team?

J.A.: Oh, yes. Oh, yeah. No, I depend on him quite a bit. I know that when he's around, I know that basically things are going to be checked after. He's very diligent, and he keeps track of everything.

M.Z.: There's seven of you altogether? Is that right?

J.A.: Correct. Right.

M.Z.: Then we still have the tankermen, I guess?

J.A.: Uh-huh. Two ABs. They're called AB/tankermen, which – joint. So they're –

M.Z.: AB is able-bodied?

J.A.: Able-bodied seamen/tankermen. And again, when we're loading, they're the ones that are going to be on the barge actually doing the physical loading of the barge. Then when we're sailing, then they shift back and they'll watch standing and AB duties.

M.Z.: Who are they? Do they come out of academies, or –

J.A.: No. One of them is from Louisiana, and he started down in that – on the Intracoastal Waterway. He actually is licensed. He has run boats before. He was running a – well they're all push boats, most of them, for the most part, down in that area. I think the jobs down there, again, got – what do I want to say? Well there weren't any. Dried up.

He ended up being a tankerman, coming up to New York and going to work up there. He's, again, I depend on him also. He's an extremely good tankerman, takes care of the barge. I know that I don't have to worry about him loading the barge. He's not going to spill. He knows exactly what he's doing.

Now the second tankerman who we have presently has only been with us for a couple of months. He lives in Miami by way of Honduras, he's a Honduran. He was very capable, and seems to be doing a very good job. So again, I don't worry too much about the crew.

M.Z.: Is that a new phenomenon? I think you were saying this before that primarily in the Chesapeake area, anyway, the industry was mostly white, and mostly, I guess, American-born white. Now a bigger mix of people is starting to enter the industry? Is that true?

J.A.: Sure. There are. Uh-huh.

M.Z.: And what about black and white. Are there more African-American people?

J.A.: Not that many. Most of them are from the islands, yeah, a lot from Honduras. That's the biggest part was, I would say that they're – and again, I'm sure they did it because they needed a job. I don't think there was that much going on in Honduras. So there were opportunities to go to work, so they have. For the most part, they're good workers. Yeah. And they're part of the crew, no doubt.

M.Z.: Do you have any sense of why there aren't so many African Americans in the industry?

J.A.: No, I don't. I have no idea.

M.Z.: I know when I was over in Galesville, I saw some pictures in that company that's involved with – you know, the Smith Brothers, that's involved with marine construction. It seemed like there were quite a few African Americans involved in the construction part of things. So not necessarily on the tugs, but you know, whatever, building the bridges or the pile driving and stuff like that. I'm just interested in why, how that develops, where you have a certain kind of culture or ethnic group in one part of the business, and another group in the other part.

J.A.: I don't know. Don't know.

M.Z.: So that's it for your crew? You have the guy from Louisiana?

J.A.: Oh no, we have the AB, then we have the AB who's dedicated, we call it the dedicated AB, for the tug. Again, he's the deckhand, as such, for the tug.

M.Z.: And what's his story? Is he a young guy, old guy?

J.A.: He is young. I'm going to say thirty. His father's an engineer. I think he went to school. He has college education, I don't know exactly – you know what? I think he might have been a junior in college, but for whatever reason, he went to work. It happens, you know. It happens. Why? I don't know. I don't ask those questions.

I don't think it was because he wasn't able to do the work as far as the academics. I'm sure he could. I think it was more likely finances, more than anything. Again, I think a lot of people looking around – but anyway, there's a lot of questions today on whether or not it's worth college education. You know, college education costs a lot of money. It really does.

M.Z.: It sure does.

J.A.: I'm sure we all know a number of people who have children or whatever, young people who have had great educations, great schools, great educations, and they're unemployed! Not only are they not employed in their discipline that they studied, they're not employed. I think some of these people who we see coming into the industry, however they gain entrance into the industry, whether it was through family or whether they did it on their own, I don't know, or through friends.

Whatever reason, they realize that well, here's a job. I can go to work and provide income. I can support myself. So maybe sometimes they're looking at it like well, I go to school and then I'm out of work for ten years? With no guarantee that I'm going to get a job? I've got to go to work, you know, I've got bills. We have to provide. I think that's – it truly is amazing some of the people that we see on tugboats, and why they're there. It's just –

M.Z.: You talked about that a little bit last time we talked. You know, just the range of backgrounds that people have. Ministers and lawyers and –

J.A.: Sure. Yeah. Oh yeah.

M.Z.: This is a whole new world for me, you know, prior to working on this project –

J.A.: I'm not so sure that that's unique and just because of the tugboat industry. It may happen in other – the one thing about the industry, is when you go on board the boat, now you're in a – it's a community, as I've said before. It's a very small community. You're talking about, you've got 100 foot of space that you're going to live in with these people for X-amount of time, which in itself takes effort.

Sometimes it takes effort. Sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes you have crews that are just fantastic, and it doesn't take any effort. Those are very lucky. Most of the time, you have to work at it. It takes effort. But anyway, my point is that in that, obviously, if you're going to be that close to people, you do know what they're doing, what they did, where they came from. It's very small.

M.Z.: You know, I've read some of the books that are out there about the old days in the tug industry, and what the galley was like, and what the sleeping conditions were like, and all of that. I imagine a lot of that has changed as the technology changes. But can you describe that sort of scene? You say it's a culture, it's a small space. You all have to get along. What's the family daily life atmosphere like? In the kitchen, for example, the galley.

J.A.: There's always tales and there's always horror stories. But you know, even when I first started, there were always some of the vessels that were just, they were immaculate. They were kept up, they were – it was like homes. Some homes are kept up nicely, some cars are kept up nicely, some trucks are kept up nicely. Others aren't. Whether it's from use or abuse, it's from both.

You would be surprised sometimes, some of these vessels are absolutely, you wouldn't even want to step on them. There's others that you would be amazed at how clean they are. They're just, you know, outside they may have a little dirt on them someplace or some grease when they've been working, or scraped paint. Inside, they're absolutely immaculate. They're clean, they're cleaned all the time, they're cleaned constantly, all day long sometimes. Sometimes they're not. It depends on the crew and it depends on the vessel. So you can go from A to Z.

But even some of the old boats that – I say older boats – some of the boats that I both worked on, and were able to see even as a young person, I can see an amazing amount of difference. Galleys were sparkling. They were actually spotless. The cooks wore whites, just as if they were in a restaurant. They had hats on, whites on, aprons. Every day, they had fresh whites on. They were clean-shaven, fresh, clean, clothes were sparkling white. The galley was white. You know, on a tugboat.

M.Z.: Wow.

J.A.: Yeah. Cloth tables, the table had a cloth on it all the time when meals were served. You had the cloth on it and there it was. When he got done, he, being the cook, when the meal was over, things were cleaned up; galley deck was washed and cleaned. He turned right around, prepares the next meal. At the end of the next meal, galley gets cleaned.

M.Z.: This is in the days when you had a cook.

J.A.: A cook.

M.Z.: Who was the cook?

J.A.: That was the cook. That was his domain. He ruled it. Those that were good at it did a very good job. Then you had the can openers, which we called them. You know, they got a job. It's a cook. They open a can, throw it up on the table, and that's it. So, sure. Again, A to Z. But just because it's a workboat doesn't necessarily mean that it's not a comfortable place to live in. And that's true, you know.

M.Z.: What's it like now in the *Scott Turecamo*? What's your galley like? Is it spic-and-span?

J.A.: Oh, it's pretty much, well, it comes and goes. Right now, it's in pretty good shape. Now again, the industry is changing. We don't have cooks. It's up to everybody else. The whole crew has got to start supporting it. Sometimes that works, sometimes that doesn't work.

M.Z.: Is it every man for himself?

J.A.: Not necessarily. Well, it is except for one meal a day. We have the AB on board, or whoever it gets designated. Generally speaking, it's the tug's AB. He's responsible, generally, for one meal a day. It's up to the choice of the crew. Some people do it – or, I say people – some of the crews, some of the tugs want to have the midday meal, whatever you want to call it, lunch, dinner, whatever, as the big meal for the day.

Others want the evening meal to be the big meal of the day. Whichever one it is, he's responsible for one. Now you, the crew, are responsible, you're on your own from then. So if you're on your own for that, then it stands to reason, you're on your own to clean up after yourself. Well some crews do, some crews don't. Again, that's the individual crews, and the captains on board to put that into effect. So again, things have changed. The industry has changed.

M.Z.: It's amazing, the range of things that you, as captain, must be responsible for. On the one hand, you're handling this huge tug and huge barge. On the other hand, you're making sure somebody's washing the dishes.

J.A.: Yeah, yeah. It's, you know, as we say, sometimes we feel like we're back in kindergarten. You know, it's like, "Okay, kiddies, let's go. You know, clean up." Which will aggravate you to no point, you think, what in the hell are you doing? You know. Has it gotten down to this? Well the short answer is, yes.

M.Z.: What about sleeping arrangements on the tug you're on now?

J.A.: They're good. Everyone has their own stateroom. Heads, no problem with that, heads, showers, we have washer and dryer. So everything that you – most of the time, on a vessel such as the one that I'm on where you have a crew returning all the time, is you kind of set up your second home. You have a locker and that's pretty much yours. So you don't have to carry all this gear back and forth every time you change crews, you know. Haul everything over and everything back.

You usually have enough room to be able to put items. You can put some clothing, put heavy boots. Things that you're not going to use mostly at home, but you're going to want to use at work. You leave them on the boat. So when you come back, you don't have to carry all this gear every time back and forth across the airplanes, you know. And again, be lugging this gear. You can set it up.

So as I say, it's like a little home. You leave here and you go. But you have the facilities, and you have the equipment to take care of it. You can wash your clothes; you can dry your clothes. The galley has freezers, refrigerators, and it's completely equipped. We obviously have heads and showers, and so it's, again, it's a second home.

M.Z.: Boy, that kind of thing sounds like a big change from how it used to be.

J.A.: Well, it was always the same way.

M.Z.: Well I mean, but it used to be that you had to haul all of your stuff, right?

J.A.: You did.

M.Z.: I read stories about the duffel bags and the mad dash to the boat.

J.A.: Well, and that's when you weren't quite sure you were going back to the same boat. You were going to a boat, but you weren't sure which boat was a boat. That's true. You had to have your gear, like I say, ready to go and off you went.

M.Z.: I bet the *Ruby M* didn't have a washer and dryer on board.

J.A.: Ha! No, you did not have a washer, washer and dryer? No, no, it didn't have a washer and dryer. You don't want to know some of the conditions of the boats that were, I mean, even the heads at one time were sparse. We'll put it that way. They were sparse, showers with hoses. Take the hose and tie the hose up and put a sprinkler on it or a nozzle and make a spray head out of that.

Washing was done in the – if you washed your clothes, you got a bucket, and you washed them in a bucket, and threw them overboard, and let them drag around for a while, and bring them back in, and rinse out the salt water. Hang them up someplace, and let them dry in the engine room. Of course, then when they came out of the engine room, they all smelled like diesel.

And true, you won't notice it after you – when you're on board the boat after a while, you don't notice the smell until you leave the boat. Truly, I have walked into the house and said, "Martha, how are you?" "Fine." I've put my bag down, and she's actually picked my bag up and taken it, put it back outside. You know? And closed the door. "Leave it out there for a while. Let it air out." That's not the case now, but you know. There have been situations that have been boats that were old, not well taken care of. That's what you'll usually find.

You'll usually find the boats that people just walk on, do the job, and walk off. Right? They're the ones that tend to get run down because nobody wants to spend the time. They don't have the time to start with; they're not going to spend the time. If they're not getting paid, they're not going to be on board the boat.

Once it gets to the dock, they're gone. Somebody else comes on board. They work for twelve hours, twenty-four hours, they're gone. Those boats have a tendency not to be as well taken care of as the boats that you're living on constantly. You're going to live on the boat, so you'll find that those crews usually end up taking care of the boats.

M.Z.: It's a sense of ownership, I guess.

J.A.: Very much so. Yes. No one wants to say – I say no one – you would think that for someone to state that they have pride, owning a, being a part of it. There's a lot of pride, an awful lot of pride in those boats. It's not noticed so much, and it's discrete, but believe me. Some do. Now, some don't. You know, there's, well as I say, some homes are taken care of, some aren't, same thing.

M.Z.: It's good, interesting stuff. One more thing I wanted to ask you about, and I don't know how you feel about this and if you're not comfortable talking about it, that's perfectly fine. But Martha happened to mention to me that you guys had been to the Newseum recently in D.C.

While you were there, you saw a lot of photographs, but including photographs of September 11, and that you were shaken up by that. Then you were telling her about how you had been there at the time in New York, in the harbor, Battery Park. I was wondering if you were comfortable talking about that.

J.A.: Well, yeah, I was there. So were a lot of other people. I just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time. The second plane actually just basically flew right over top of my head. I was, I think we figured it out; we were maybe 1300 yards or something like

that from the tower, the south tower. We had just left the Brooklyn piers, and so we were coming between Governors Island and the Battery. Governors Island and the Battery is only, you know, a couple hundred yards.

We were not very far away from the World Trade Center, is what I'm trying to say. The first plane, I didn't see the first plane go in. The crew did. I was aware that something was going on. Then when the second plane came across, basically right across our heads, I mean, as we turned and we watched it go right into the tower, why, then we knew what was going on.

I don't think that many people's first thought was that we were under attack. When the second plane went in, there wasn't any question that this was deliberate. Seeing that was unnerving. And then the realization. Then you start thinking, well the World Trade Center's got a lot of people in it. You know? Da-da-da-da-da.

One of the things that got me was that I thought, you know that World Trade Center's a major tourist attraction. I'm sure that school kids are there all the time. They certainly are in the spring. I think it was very – now, it's not, nothing was fortunate about that – it was just fate that it happened in the fall when school was just getting started, and there weren't any tours, I think, taking place.

I think if it had taken place in the spring, you would have had casualties of a lot of very – everybody was innocent, but you understand what I'm saying? There might have been an awful lot of kids in those buildings, and of course they all would have been at the top to see what's going on. You know, for the observation. So that part crossed my mind.

Then being involved with getting people off the island. The boat that I was on at that time had enough draft that we could get people off of Manhattan, but I couldn't get the people off on the Jersey shore. Just because the area that we were using didn't have enough draft. I couldn't get in to the dock. So we had to get them off. What we were doing is taking them off of Manhattan, and taking them out midstream and transferring them to another boat, and then that boat would take them on.

We did that for whatever it was, a number of hours. Then had to stop because I realized well, you know, pretty soon, somebody's going to get hurt just going from one boat to another. At that point, the vast majority of the exodus, and that's exactly what it was, the Brooklyn Bridge and the Manhattan Bridge was just solid people. Obviously, all going one way. They had just picked up and gone. Nothing else. Left. We've got to get the hell off of Manhattan, and they were going to Brooklyn, just a solid wall of people going across the bridges to Brooklyn to get away from Manhattan.

Then those that were being taken off by the different – and there were a number of different boats, a lot of tugs. The guys on the tugs did a great job. And then the ferries turned around, and they – anybody that was available. You never saw such an armada coming up that harbor, everybody. They were coming from Brielle, they were coming from anywhere.

M.Z.: They were coming from where?

J.A.: Brielle, New Jersey. Just south. They were coming from anywheres that could get there, the fishing vessels, the head vessels, all that. Just so they could – if they could carry people, they were coming for just that purpose.

M.Z.: Was that a coordinated thing? Or people just spontaneously –

J.A.: Spontaneous. Yeah. The Coast Guard, at one point, put out a call that there was a need for transportation of personnel off the island. And with that, everybody just (makes sound of boat motor). That was it. Well of course, by that time, too, the Coast Guard had also shut the harbor down.

If you weren't involved with 9/11, if you weren't involved up in Manhattan getting people off the island, you weren't moving. You know? If you weren't either providing help there or supplies or helping the firemen, you weren't moving. Nothing was moving. Ships were not going anywhere. Nobody came in, nobody went out, tugs, barges, nothing. Nobody. Everything was shut down.

I thought, you know, New York is a big damn place. It's obviously complex. I thought the job that they did as a city, as a community, getting things under control, if you want to call that control, and I do. What they did in the time that they did it in, as quickly as they did it, I thought was commendable. It truly was. It's just like, that don't happen. Well they do, but just, thank God they don't happen all the time. So anyway, yeah, that wasn't a fun time.

M.Z.: What boat were you on then? This was before the *Scott Turecamo*?

J.A.: Yeah. I was working for Bouchard, and I was on the *Captain Fred Bouchard*.

M.Z.: That was the name of the vessel?

J.A.: Yeah, that was the name of the tug.

M.Z.: *Fred Bouchard*?

J.A.: Well, *Captain Fred*.

M.Z.: *Captain Fred*? That was for Moran?

J.A.: No, no. That was Bouchard. That was another. I forgot to tell you that I worked for Bouchard for quite a while. I know it's incredible, but anyway, in this interim, I worked for Bouchard, too.

M.Z.: So the company was –

J.A.: It was also called Bouchard Transportation.

M.Z.: Oh, I see. The tug was called *Captain Fred*.

J.A.: Right, right.

M.Z.: Okay. And was that also oil, or –

J.A.: Yes, it was.

M.Z.: Uh-huh.

J.A.: Yeah, they're a very good-sized company, again, out of New York. That's their whole deal, is petroleum.

M.Z.: I've seen on YouTube a video, a short documentary that somebody has put together on that evacuation with all the vessels showing up. I can't even begin to imagine what it must have been actually like to be there. Did you see the towers fall?

J.A.: Yup. I mean, you know, I say I saw them. The barge we had that we were sailing out of Brooklyn, we had to take down to Staten Island. So the time we got down to Staten Island, which is not that far, it's only three miles. But still, it takes you awhile to do this. We're not very fast.

An hour later, and I can't remember the time frame now, but yup. The towers fell, and by then we've already got a major exodus going on. But at that time, I've still got this 400-some foot time bomb of fuel, you know, next to me. I can't very well go up there. I've got to get rid of this barge first. Which I did, and then we went up to Manhattan.

M.Z.: What did you do? Where did you bring the barge?

J.A.: Staten Island, left it at Staten Island, one of the shipyards at Staten Island. That was the destination. That was kind of funny too. When we got down to Staten Island, we're getting ready to put the barge alongside the dock. The tankerman's waving me away. He gets on the radio and says, "They're welding." Which they were.

Sparks are flying and we've got a – this is a gas barge; this is not an oil barge, now. This thing just discharged about a million-some gallons of gas. So we've got all these fumes floating around, and they're sitting over these torches. They're welding and sparks are flying and they're not paying any attention to us. We're trying to get their attention.

The point being that that time, those guys, the workers in the shipyard, had no idea what was going on. They weren't really aware of what had taken place in Manhattan. Within about fifteen minutes after we got their attention and told them what was going on, by the time someone finally, they stopped the welding. We put the barge alongside of the dock.

By the time we got the barge secured to the dock, twenty minutes, right? The shipyard's vacant. It was like a Sunday morning. They're gone. Everyone's gone. It's just – and that was pretty much the whole place. The whole city was just, it was like someone turned the switch. We went from – it was a Tuesday, if I'm not mistaken – but anyway, we went from a midmorning, midday, midweek, to Sunday morning. Bingo! It was just eerie. It really was.

The planes, too, that was one of the most noticeable things. Planes are all the time – it's New York, right? So you've got Newark two or three miles from us. Kennedy is not that far. LaGuardia is on the other side of the city. There's always helicopters, which we thought when we first heard, when they first told me that the plane ran into the tower, and that was my deckhands coming back. They said, "A plane just ran into the World Trade Center." I thought they were talking about a Cessna or a helicopter. You know, somebody doing tours.

The thought of a major jet being that close in that area? I just thought, no, no. That's what I thought it was until I found out differently. That was a real puzzle, thinking what in the world is a jetliner doing coming down the Hudson River that close? Obviously, something's wrong. Well, you know, a few minutes later, the second one goes in. Well now we know what's wrong. We didn't know who – we quickly learned – but we realized that it was deliberate. That it was an act and not just an accident.

Again, I think the city did a good job. I really do. Obviously, the firemen and all those people that were involved with – what they did? You know, we've all seen it before. I would not have wanted to be in that position. How about the people jumping out of – you know, that was the thing that got me. You know, it was, people had to jump out, that was their choice. What a choice! So anyway. Yeah.

M.Z.: Boy, that's just amazing. For you and your crew, seeing that unfold and realizing or, having a growing sense of what was going on – did you guys just kind of jump into rescue mode?

J.A.: Pretty much. Yeah, we realized, okay. The barge is secured, we've left the barge. Okay, now, it's just us. I'll tell you something that you don't want to have to discuss it, but the company I was working for at that time, Bouchard, now I don't know for whatever reason, but they didn't want anybody to be involved with that. They didn't want their tugs to go up there.

Their instructions were for none of their vessels to move, which is hence why, shortly afterwards, as soon as I got home which was another five days or four days, I called them up, and we parted company, and I quit. Boy, how can I have any parts to that deal? I mean, here you are, the entire community, the entire, everybody, land, sea, air, people from New Jersey. Everyone's going to help. We get a call stating that no; we're not to move the vessel. So you know. We're already against wishes to start with.

M.Z.: You were captain. So you made the decision, like, we're doing this anyway.

J.A.: Oh yeah. It wasn't a hard decision to make. The biggest thing was that as we watched it unfold, everyone's realizing, and we're not the only ones. Everyone did. We're realizing, you're watching history's changing here very quickly, very rapidly; it's been forced on us. Things have changed, which it did.

Within twenty-four hours – that's what got me – within twenty-four hours, all of a sudden, everyone's an expert. Everyone's, you know, we're an expert in terrorists, we're an expert doing the sabotage, we're an expert in the – and then the security situation starts coming. How many companies all of a sudden, overnight, they're expert in security? Oh boy. Which, I think everyone realizes, a lot of that was knee-jerk. But it wasn't knee-jerk about the change. Our life changed that day, right there. That's true. We watched it change.

M.Z.: For the purpose of this interview and this exhibit, I'm wondering was there anything about your tug experience in particular that really sort of came to the surface there? I know you must have training in firefighting and that sort of thing. Were there particular, I don't know, rescue-related skills that kind of came to the forefront?

J.A.: No, no. Really, that was –

M.Z.: More general, just being a mariner, or –

J.A.: Just general, just getting people, helping people off. Everybody wanted off. Those were coming to the boats. They wanted off. There wasn't a question about that. Now it was funny where some were just kind of, well, it was a beautiful day, and they were coming. Nothing, that's it. They were themselves, the clothes they had on their back, and they wanted off.

Then you had others who were coming and they had bags packed. Some people had their pets, birds and dogs and cats. Some people were physically not capable of climbing up on top of some of these boats. I mean, they had to be truly helped. But they wanted off. So if they wanted off, you were going to do the best you could to make sure that they got off. That part of it was challenging, no question about that.

But yeah, it was, when you saw the people coming down, they wanted one thing. They wanted off. They weren't asking you questions. They just, you know, and we weren't the only boat, you have to understand. We have a whole seawall there full of boats. You know, there were any number of vessels there.

M.Z.: It must have been amazing to see everybody cooperating like that.

J.A.: It truly was. It truly was. Yeah, everyone just got, you know, focused, purpose in mind. Get them off; get it done, da-da-da-da.

M.Z.: It's not like you had an air traffic controller, kind of –

J.A.: Not at all, not at all.

M.Z.: – directing the movement in and out. So you all had to be, you had to use your skills there quite a bit, right?

J.A.: And cooperation, you know? If one boat, because of its size or capabilities, could get someplace quicker or better than somebody else could, then that's what – go. You know, and you waited until you could get in there and help. Now the pilot, though, if I'm not mistaken, the New Jersey pilots light came up. I say New Jersey – New York. The harbor bar pilots came up, and that became the command center. That took a while, you know, to get them up there. So, but it was, yeah.

M.Z.: Well, thank you. I appreciate you sharing your experiences there. It's pretty, a unique perspective on that historic day.

J.A.: I would have gladly have missed that one.

M.Z.: Yes. I'm sure. I guess we've been talking for a little over an hour, so maybe it's time to wrap up. Unless, is there anything in particular you would like to add about your own personal story or in general about the tug industry that you think we haven't addressed and that we ought to be thinking about?

J.A.: Not really, without getting on a soapbox.

M.Z.: What soapbox? I'm curious now.

J.A.: (Laughter.) I think that, you know, it's a very vital industry. I think it also plays a – it's a major player in what goes on with our economy. But it's out of sight and out of mind. I may have said this before. It really is a study in perception and how people are, well, I won't say realize, but, you know, in European countries, especially the Scandinavian countries, if you're involved in the maritime industry there, that's quite a standing.

It seems like if you're involved with the maritime industry in the United States, you're about one step above a thug. It's really a shame. The general public, I think, view seamen as kind of a ne'er-do-well. What a shame. My God, this entire country was built on maritime trade. And still is, a little bit. I mean, we are a consumer, even though we're definitely in a sad situation right now, but we're a consumer-driven society.

Those goods, unfortunately, they're not made here in the United States, but the ones that are coming across, they're not coming across in planes. They're coming on ship bottoms. So is a lot of our energy and a lot of our petroleum, raw materials, building materials. I mean, coal and steel, iron ore, fertilizer, bulk. Everything's coming on ship bottoms. So not only just the ships themselves, but the tugs that provide the service to the ships and

get them to and from the docks or to shuffle the smaller loads back and forth to different areas. You know, they're major players.

You know, if you didn't have tugboats, everyone said okay, no tugboats are going to move for a week's time, I tell you what, there'd be some crying people. It would have a major effect. It works out of sight, out of mind. I think the perception is that well, they're just bums. No, that's not the case. I think we're major players, and we're honestly providing a service, and it's a very necessary service. You've got to have it.

M.Z.: Where do you think that comes from, that perception?

J.A.: Well it gets glorified, doesn't it? You know, the seaman stumbling down the street and whatever. Some of it has come by honestly, I'm sure. It's a rough and tumble part of it. Sometimes it can be. You know, seamen always were, well, waterfronts have always been the more colorful parts of most cities. Of course you've got that, you didn't want your daughters necessarily roaming around the streets and the waterfronts. Again, it's a job. You know? It's a job. It's a necessary job. It's a necessary service.

I think it's coming around some, because I think the days of the maritime Wild West are over with, so it's coming around. But it's just, I can understand how it happens, but sometimes I think it irks me a little bit to think that, you know, you're – it's a job. You're doing it and to me, it's an honorable job. It's an honorable profession, very much so. Again, where would this country be without the maritime trade?

M.Z.: That's a really important point you're making, I think, and it's important for our Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum to think about that.

J.A.: (Laughter.) Yeah.

M.Z.: That's very good, very interesting. Thank you so much for sharing all of this. Is there anything else before I turn off the tape?

J.A.: No. I think if there's anything comes about, I'm sure that between now and April –

M.Z.: You know where to find me, and I know where to find you.

J.A.: Correct.

M.Z.: Thank you very much.

J.A.: You're quite welcome.

[End of interview.]