

**Zinky, Clara - 210719 0036**

JENIFER DOLDE: -- words of introduction and then we'll get started. All right. This is Jenifer Dolde. It's Monday, July 19th, 2021. I'm here at Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum with Clara. Do you want to give us your full name and your date of birth, please?

CLARA ZINKY: [00:00:18] Yeah, my name is Clara Zinky. And I was born January 17th, 1996.

DOLDE: Very good. Fabulous. Okay. Well, you know, let's just start with the basics. Tell me about where you grew up, and what your childhood was like, and maybe your connection to handcraft and potentially the water.

ZINKY: [00:00:42] Yeah, okay. I grew up in Wisconsin, first in sort of Milwaukee and surrounding areas, and then we moved to the country when I was like 10 or 11. And I grew up in Waldorf schools, so I was always working with my hands. That's sort of part of the curriculum of Waldorf schools is that you're just -- yeah, they integrate art into the curriculum as part of your learning process, so it's like when you're learning history, you're also writing in your own words what you're being told, and then you're drawing it, and then you're presenting it to your classmate, and that kind of thing that there's just this

integrated artistic process. And we had handwork classes is what we called them, so knitting and woodworking and kind of anything. So it was never really an option to not work with my hands, you know. In times like when I went to college and things were very much more intellectual, I found I needed to work with my hands just to sort of balance things out.

DOLDE: I'm not familiar with this school. What do you know about the founding of it? I mean, I can look it up, but --

ZINKY: [00:01:59] Yeah, no. It was founded in Germany in the 1920s by this man, Rudolf Steiner. It's got this whole philosophy. He founded a movement called anthroposophy. It's this pretty extensive network. In Germany, there's a lot of Waldorf schools, and there's a spattering few in the United States. But my mom was a Waldorf teacher, so --

DOLDE: At the particular school that you went to?

ZINKY: [00:02:30] Yeah, that was how we paid for tuition because she was not in any moneyed way, you know. Yeah.

DOLDE: How did she get connected with these schools?

ZINKY: [00:02:26] Long, complicated friend of a friend, like she was having kids pretty young and was just starting to think about how to educate them and had to fall out with [Catholicism?] and was trying to figure out what the best way to raise kids was, so, yeah.

DOLDE: Fascinating paradigm for learning. I'm kind of envious actually.

ZINKY: [00:03:11] Yeah, I feel pretty lucky because it also -  
- sort of the concept is to focus on the whole child. Every child has a teacher that they take from first to eighth grade, who has known them since they came out of kindergarten. And so there's this like really intentional kind of attention paid to you, which I think is what kids need, and I feel pretty lucky for that.

DOLDE: Well, which parts of that education did you gravitate most toward? Did you --

ZINKY: [00:03:48] The art, yeah. But, I mean, the one thing I would say about it is that it's so sort of focused in music and art that I never... And you don't get any grades. You get personal evaluations, whatever, so I never conceptualized myself as smart in any sort of way. I just sort of was learning I just wanted to learn. And so it was interesting to move. In high school, I went to public school for a year and move into a system where they graded you and find out because I want to learn, I can learn really easily, you know, and that's like such a strange switch to then be given this very linear grading system of like this is what intelligence means even if it's, like, I didn't learn anything in history, I just passed my grades

you know, that concept of what is learning versus like passing a test. Yeah, but definitely gravitated towards working with my hands and drawing.

DOLDE: You were still able to pursue that when you went public school? I mean, it was more challenging, I would think.

ZINKY: [00:05:02] I took art classes. I was really pretty unsatisfied and ended up going to a charter school that was self-directed, so I could pretty much do whatever I wanted, which was pretty helpful. It's kind of the way I like to learn. Follow the threads.

DOLDE: Absolutely. And you mentioned your mother's occupation. Your father, just around the home, what did he do? And was that kind of activity, something you did at home?

ZINKY: [00:05:28] Yeah, my dad and my grandpa were both carpenters, so carpentry was part of just my growing up. But my mom and my dad divorced when I was a kid, so I've mostly lived with my mom and two of my siblings. I have four siblings and two of them had moved out already. So, yeah, and so we would always just be drawing and making things and doing things around the house. So, yeah.

DOLDE: Did he teach you directly, you know, a girl?

ZINKY: [00:06:02] Not much.

DOLDE: Was that something that he didn't feel was appropriate or it just didn't happen?

ZINKY: [00:06:08] He tried to teach us some stuff. I remember changing a tire with him once when I was like 12 or something and him like... I learned my work ethic from my dad and my mom who were both very much like you need to do everything you can around the house. You have to help with chores. You have to like -- anything that you're doing, you're capable of doing. But my dad wasn't around a lot when I was in high school, so I actually didn't learn a lot of that. And what I found in high school, I had interest in things like shop class and things like trying to find a way to work with my hands and was really shut down a lot by my peers and was often -- I remember expressing that to a dear friend of mine, and she was like, you don't want to do that. You don't want to do that. It's full of a bunch of dudes. It's like, why would you do that? And sort of just totally shut it down in a way that was innocent at the time, they just assumed I would be miserable. But in the end, it put up a block of, okay, maybe I can't learn that, you know.

DOLDE: And was this at the charter school or was this at the --

ZINKY: [00:07:24] Yeah.

DOLDE: Okay. So even into your self-directed --

ZINKY: It was a public charter school, yeah, so there's still a lot of those dynamics.

DOLDE: Still better than the regular public school swimming pool, but, yeah.

ZINKY: [00:07:35] Yeah, yeah. So getting to a place where I understood that I wanted to work with my hands as a career has been actually quite a long process because I went to art school because that was what I was good at. And I understood that working with my hands felt really satisfying, but sort of isolating myself into this art world bubble in New York City is like miserable. I felt so useless, you know, which is sort of an essential part of my character is I want to be useful. So I would volunteer at the seaport there and kind of -- yeah.

DOLDE: So we'll get into that. Where did you go to art school?

ZINKY: [00:08:24] Cooper Union. Yeah, it's in East Village, New York City.

DOLDE: So fine art?

ZINKY: [00:08:30] Mm-hmm. Yeah.

DOLDE: What did you particularly focus on?

ZINKY: So I focused on sculpture and performance art. They don't make you declare a major at all. So while I was

there, I did some bronze casting and paper making and whatever I could get my hands on. But that school is very intellectually focused, so I often felt almost paralyzed by the amount of work I had to do intellectually to justify working with my hands, you know. There was this kind of big block in actually doing things. So, yeah.

DOLDE: What was your performance-based interest?

ZINKY: [00:09:25] Performance art, you know, it started with Fluxus in the '70s, I think.

DOLDE: Okay. So performance art, not performing, like theater, but performance art.

ZINKY: [00:09:35] Yeah. Yeah.

DOLDE: Very cool.

ZINKY: [00:09:37] Yeah, which I was very interested in what it means to interrupt the social moment and to play with time and space. That's very interesting to me of like we organize our time and space in a very particular way and how do you divert that or complicate it. It's an interesting thought, experiment.

DOLDE: Love it. There's certainly some physicality involved in that too, so there you go.

ZINKY: [00:10:05] Absolutely, yeah. Yeah.

DOLDE: Makes a lot of sense. Is that a four-year program at Cooper?

ZINKY: [00:10:13] Yeah, yeah.

DOLDE: Okay. All right.

ZINKY: [00:10:16] Yeah, so I was there for four years in the city and moving from rural Wisconsin, it was a pretty big shock.

DOLDE: Were you anywhere near the water in Wisconsin? Was boating part of your childhood is, I guess what I'm asking?

ZINKY: [00:10:32] Not at all. Not at all, no.

DOLDE: So what drew you to the seaport museum?

ZINKY: Honestly, it was a friend of mine worked on boats. He was like an apprentice mechanic on this little dinner yacht company in Manhattan. And he like visited South Street Seaport at some point and was like, Clara, you have to come. It's so fun. There's like a work barge and there are big, tall ships, like you got to come. You can volunteer. And so I came, and I just like fell in love with it and started coming every week and did that for a couple years.

DOLDE: What were you doing as a volunteer?

ZINKY: [00:11:16] Anything. I mean, carpentry a bit and like whatever, shoveling the decks, and small rigging projects, and just sort of like anything that they needed and had resources to teach me how to do, you know.

DOLDE: So you worked with staff people or other --

ZINKY: [00:11:35] Yeah.

DOLDE: And they would instruct?

ZINKY: [00:11:36] Yeah, they have a really good volunteer program. They dedicate Saturday to volunteers entirely and have like just a couple staff members there to guide projects and come up with what needs to be done in and teaches everybody at once so that there's a very focused intentionality around it, which is nice. Yeah, so you can feel like you're actually contributing and helping out, which is nice. And then everyone goes out to the bar afterwards and good fun.

DOLDE: It sounds like a great time.

ZINKY: [00:12:12] Yeah.

ZINKY: Yeah absolutely. Did you have a specific interest in history academically or in your schooling?

ZINKY: No, I haven't. I've sort of kept track of history. I read a ton. And so it's not something that's ever out of my mind, you know. It's always important for me to understand context and where people are coming from, what the situation that I'm in sort of what they come from in terms of, like, all of the forces and dynamics that have built to that moment or whatever, but I never studied history in any particular way. Yeah.

DOLDE: Fair enough. So you're volunteering there, finishing up at Cooper Union. What was your next step or did you know what your next step would be?

ZINKY: [00:13:04] I needed to get out. That was my biggest sort of concern is just I started to have pretty intense anxiety. And I experienced some stuff there that like really gave me some trauma. Yeah, my goal was -- I was like, how do I get out of here because --

DOLDE: Out of the city?

ZINKY: [00:13:25] Out of the city, yeah. And after I graduated, I started working at the yacht company or the little -- yeah, I guess that's what you call it, that my friend was working at, Classic Harbor Line, as a bartender and just a deckhand. And one of my captains is dear friends with Joe [Connor?] because Joe actually worked at that company when Eliza was in New York. I don't know, but --

DOLDE: He talked about that [last night?].

ZINKY: [00:13:56] And so, one of my captains was like, hey, my buddy is down on the eastern shore of Maryland doing this boat project. He might need apprentices. Here's his email. And so, sort of on a whim of like I'm interested in pursuing building, I like boats, that's sort of where I'm at right now, and sort of this calculated, like, if this

works out, I mean, that's great. It'll get me out of the city. I don't know what it'll be, but it'll be something, so emailed him and [inaudible].

DOLDE: Now, did you come down and interview and all of that?

ZINKY: [00:14:30] Yeah, I think --

DOLDE: What was your impression of, I don't know, this region, first of all, when you first came down here?

ZINKY: [00:14:37] I mean, yeah, I honestly couldn't have pointed Maryland out on a map to you before, so it was pretty unknown and being here was just sort of like this -- it seemed I was here in the middle of the night. That's when we showed up. And it was windy. It was January or something. And I didn't know what to expect. And St. Michael's is very cute to an outsider. It's meant to be pretty, and so it was charming. It was pretty charming, but, yeah, it was definitely full of possibility and fresh and like, wow, there's cute little boats everywhere. This is great. But I also had a lot of trepidation from the beginning because I have rarely had a boss who is male. I have worked a lot with women in a lot of matriarchal systems, and so I knew sort of that there wouldn't be a big challenge in that for me. And none of my siblings are male, so I grew up with a single mom and a lot of estrogen. But yeah, so it was a of a mixture of just like I really

don't know what I'm getting into. I have no idea. There's just like this blank page in front of me.

DOLDE: At that point, Jen [Kuhn?] was the only other woman here?

ZINKY: [00:16:17] Mm-hmm. Yeah.

DOLDE: And you were one of the first apprentices hired specifically for *Dove*? Have we started the four-year program at that point? I don't remember.

ZINKY: [00:16:31] Yes.

DOLDE: Okay. And that was --

ZINKY: So I actually stayed at the apprentice house with them the night I was interviewing, so I sort of got a sense of what that program was. Yeah, and so I was the first apprentice hired for the *Dove* and started the day we laid the keel on June 1st, or whenever that was, May 31st or something.

DOLDE: All right. So really from the beginning?

ZINKY: [00:16:59] Yeah. Yeah.

DOLDE: Now, how much background did you get on, I don't know, first of all, the project at hand, but also -- well, did you -- how long did it take you to learn about the previous *Dove* and that -- I know that's something that probably you got questions from visitors, but did you know anything about it or did you learn as you went along?

ZINKY: [00:17:21] I didn't know a ton about it. Joe sent me some stuff before I actually started. And I read a ton of -- he recommended I read Chapelle, so that was like, okay, I don't know really any boatbuilding at all. So I would take Chapelle everywhere with me and take notes and try and decipher that lingo and be, like, I have no idea what the difference between this is or that. Like, what is a futtock? I can't discern what it is from this highly technical language, so having to draw that out was a fun process.

DOLDE: I'm sorry, but just as an aside, you read a lot. But do you learn well from a book or is that --

ZINKY: [00:18:06] Yeah.

DOLDE: Okay. So you do?

ZINKY: [00:18:07] I do, yeah. And I had some meticulous notes from Chapelle, so I kind of knew -- I was able to discern what the lingo was.

DOLDE: It was making sense? Yeah, okay.

ZINKY: [00:18:15] Yeah.

DOLDE: It doesn't make sense to me. That's why I am asking. Oh, I am an intellectual learner. But now when it comes to things physically, like translating a physical skill by reading a book, doesn't work for me at all.

ZINKY: [00:18:26] Right. Okay. Yeah, I can see, yeah.

DOLDE: Ideas? Yes. Good. So you were --

ZINKY: [00:18:30] Because you have to construct a 3D model out of nothing. And you're like, I don't -- yeah, that's a hard -- yeah, so I definitely had to take it slowly, but it was a fun process to just sort of do that. But I didn't really learn about the 1970s *Dove* 'til being here and kind of trying to ask questions and see the context of why are we building this, and all of that, and some of the symposiums I think are kind of what clued me in on that. Yeah.

DOLDE: So here from the beginning of the keel laying, tell me about some of the aspects of the build that you worked on that were the most, I don't know -- they're all an introduction, right. Everything was relatively, I assume, new to you, but walk me through some of what you did and how it felt to learn.

ZINKY: [00:19:26] Yeah, to be honest, it was really, really hard. It was one of the hardest things I've done and just to be completely green and to be totally thrown into something. And honestly, I didn't get a lot of instruction in the beginning. And I have pretty bad anxiety, which is exacerbated by the fact that I have PTSD from sexual assault and so being in a male-dominated area where everybody, every single male in my life at that point had

complete authority over me and was telling me what to do was really, really tricky. And so, a lot of in the beginning, especially a lot of that was sort of this fight with panic for months and months and months. And yeah, I was able sort of by the middle of the first year to finally come to a place where I was kind of aware of what I was building. It was sort of like, oh, this is -- I know exactly what this part is, and how it works, and where it goes. And that is kind of what helped me get through the two years is that I love the work, that I love building. It's so satisfying, you know. And the other part of learning is sort of like I've said before that I had a mental block is sort of learned helplessness when it comes to building that had been instilled in me by male peers of like you can't learn that. It's not for you.

DOLDE: Was this in art school or even younger?

ZINKY: [00:21:28] A bit in art school, but high school.

DOLDE: So what kinds of things would they tell you that you couldn't do? I mean, you mentioned your female friend, you know, saying something, but --

ZINKY: [00:21:34] Yeah, and that was a big thing in high school was it's just sort of like people assuming I didn't want to know things. Even if I had asked the question, they would talk down to me when I was trying to learn

anything, like how to change a tire, how to -- whatever it was, you know, and groups of men stopping talking about technical things when you approach or just this sort of dispersed assumption that you can't learn this or you don't want to learn this. And in college, it was a shop culture that was pretty divisive. So if you didn't have a coolness or like an ability to just like be one of the dudes, you kind of weren't welcome in the shop. And it wasn't overtly like you're a woman, you can't be here. It was more just this like unwelcome wall that like you have to talk across. And so that was a huge part of being here is every time I'm using a saw telling my myself again and again, I can do this. It's fine. I know how to do this. Someone told me how. And if I had a question having to overcome that, like it's okay to have a question. It doesn't mean you don't know what you're doing. But in the beginning, there was a lot of people taking tools out of my hands and doing the job for me. If I had come up with a very specific question, here's the step that I'm having doubts about, will you tell me how to do this? And then suddenly find my job totally taken over and the question like sort of answered, but then -- just feeling so --

DOLDE: Yeah, not taken out of your hands to demonstrate it, but taken out of your hands and not instructing and then handing it back [inaudible] perceived it.

ZINKY: [00:23:40] Yeah. Yeah. And so, some of the stuff that I really loved doing, I don't know, I only was able to really get to that place when I was given full confidence but also enough presence to know that I had someone to turn to if I had any doubts, that fine balance of like, hey, I'm here if you need anything, I'm going to check in on you, which Jeff is very good at, but also that I trust you to do the work. Yeah.

DOLDE: So I will just share, Jeff described your approach to using the enormous ship saw as fearless. Was that kind of the most close mentor relationship that you developed?

ZINKY: [00:24:48] Yeah, yeah, he was... Yeah, I'm so grateful for Jeff. I couldn't have done that without him, but he didn't show up until like a couple months in. So definitely in the beginning, it was like I just felt like I was drowning every single day kind of. But I have a lot of determination, so it was sort of like I will not let this stop me, you know.

DOLDE: Now, Jen Kuhn kind of does a lot of the administration of the apprentice program, so you were working -- but you

were hired specifically for *Dove*. So you're working some with her, but really not?

ZINKY: [00:25:30] I never worked with her, no.

DOLDE: Okay. Wow.

ZINKY: [00:25:34] I never worked with her, and I rarely saw her. And when I finally was able to sort of come and talk to her about that stuff, I did find some support there. But in the beginning, there wasn't a lot. And she was just busy, you know. She's got her own things going on, so I don't at all blame her.

DOLDE: No. No. So those first few months were very challenging it sounds like?

ZINKY: [00:26:03] Yeah, I mean, the whole thing. And I didn't recognize what I was going through was PTSD until sort of later and was able to look at a list of symptoms and be like, oh, my God, okay, yeah, that was all -- check, check, check. But I also sort of think that there wasn't... I've been thinking a lot about how male-dominated systems have changed or not in sort of talking to Jen about her time and can kind of see that those things are not as overtly sexist, that the system is still built for certain people, certain brains, and just found that if you have any sort of -- this idea of inclusion has to be committed to because what it means is that you're hiring

people with a diversity of experiences and a diversity of treatment outside of work. And if you don't -- like being in the shipyard, it was sort of expected that you could handle things, anything, because everyone else was, that this is part of the job. You signed up for this. And without this sort of knowledge that I have so many more obstacles to overcome every single day at work than anyone else in the shop because of a history of treatment and because the system at work was sort of built for neurotypical people to just, you know, like -- people without really a lot -- I mean, obviously, everyone has life things, but that there is this like ability to just do the job and that's fine. And so, I'm just --

DOLDE: Put things out of your mind and --

ZINKY: [00:28:05] Yeah.

DOLDE: -- yeah.

ZINKY: [00:28:06] And I was told, like take the chowder, just take it, which --

DOLDE: I don't know that term.

ZINKY: [00:28:13] I didn't know either, but --

DOLDE: [laughter] I'll look that one up.

ZINKY: [00:28:16] Yeah, and just recognizing that because things had become more subtle because that system is not overt as it was probably in the '70s, nobody's telling me

you don't belong here to my face, that there is still this sense that like -- one in five women by the time they get out of college have experienced rape or attempted rape, that's a huge amount of -- that's 20 percent of the people coming into your job interviews are going to have experienced that. And it's worse if they're people of color, you know. And so just recognizing that people with trauma have different psychological needs in order to do the labor that you're requiring. And I did try and bring that up. I did try and have that conversation quite a few times and was really sort of dismissed and told it's part of the job. It's hard. It's winter. It'll get better when the sun comes out. That kind of thing, which, yeah, that was pretty degrading after a while.

DOLDE: Sure. Yeah. This is probably a hard question, maybe not even one that you can answer, but just let me say, do you think that this kind of work culture is something that would be specific to a traditional occupation like boatbuilding or do you expect you would have and maybe you have found it to a certain extent elsewhere? Maybe you can't answer that.

ZINKY: [00:29:51] I expect to find it in any male-dominated industry. And the reason I say that with confidence is because I did do some research to try and really justify my

feelings because I felt they were unjustified. I just doubted them because that's what was happening and found a study that looked at -- it was asking the question of why are there not more women in male-dominated industries? Why has that not expanded since sort of this woman's movement? And they came to find that women in male cultures have crazy amounts of mental health challenges, and that the three things that they generally tend to do because of that is either totally withdraw from their peers, or try and assimilate totally, like become super masculine, or quit. And those were sort of the three survival mechanisms that are available and reading that was really sort of affirming in a kind of like heart sinking way of like, okay, great, the three kind of options. So understanding that that is industry wide and that women in male-dominated industries tend to experience a lot more sexual harassment and assault than in... It is not a safe space and that is because of a cultural history and that's because of the cultural reality that is still really present. And so, yeah, I expect to find it elsewhere to answer your question. And I think that at the museum and why I started to try and talk to Joe and Christian and Jen was because it's a small culture. It's a really small boatyard. We have an opportunity to actually [intentionalize?] that culture and make

sustainable labor conditions, which they're not right now. And I will say that with honesty. Everybody there is exhausted and tired. Yeah, I just think --

DOLDE: Do women belong in a boatyard?

ZINKY: [00:32:14] Yes, absolutely. I love that work. It's so satisfying. And, yeah, anyone who loves to work should work because there's so many conditions in labor that are set up to -- it's so hard. There's so many obstacles actually working with your body 10 hours a day. And so if you love that, there absolutely should not be a reason you can't do it, you know? Yeah.

DOLDE: Would you recommend to a friend that they do what you did? And what would you say to them if they --

ZINKY: [00:32:55] No. No. I mean, I would say find a woman to teach you, find someone who can kind of understand the history that you're in. And I think that would probably be specific to the history of the person I'm talking to, but also like... No. I don't recommend that women do that to themselves, necessarily.

DOLDE: So you would advise they have a woman teach them. They might not always have that choice. What would the other advice be?

A [00:33:34] Have support, have external support as strong as you can because moving to a place with nobody is one of the

hardest things, especially in a situation like this where it is a total cultural shift, total culture shock. Yeah.

DOLDE: I don't know that it's a direct translation, but the women who worked in the *Dove* project in the 1970s, at least a couple of them, they lived in this -- it wasn't a commune, but a communal style housing, probably not totally dissimilar from the apprentice housing, but also probably not the same, you know, where they all lived on a farm together and they kind of shared resources. They shared food. They grow a garden together. I think it's been maybe to a certain extent idealized. And so far, I've not heard any complaints about treatment or expectations about what a woman would do or would not. Everybody seemed to fall into what they were comfortable with. And they all came in totally unskilled. Mr. Jim being, you know, 80 years old in the 1970s obviously had some older ideas about being uncomfortable with watching a woman doing really heavy lifting and things like that. The joke was he would say, I don't like seeing her do that, but, you know, she's stronger than I am. And so, then it would just happen. So it seemed to work then. But none of these women went on to be boat builders, unlike some of the men. You've talked a lot about this already, but what do you think it's going to take to change this industry, if it can change at all?

ZINKY: [00:35:41] I really think to examine that word inclusivity is really important because I think about the way that labor unions came into being to defend a physical right. You have the right to breaks. You have the right to fair treatment. You have the right to fair wage. But that's where those rights stopped. And I think that to really understand diversity and inclusion, you have to look at psychological rights or what are the needs of people in a situation like this that are beyond the physical. And there are doctors who have come up with the five psychological needs of a human being. And I think in the matriarchal systems that I've been a part of, which are very intentionally like woman at the center holding space for labor and work, and those have centered around psychological needs, or at least made a lot of space for them. And I think, yeah, if there's to be a shift in the way that we hold space for labor... And I think a lot of the times when I would talk about this with certain people that there would be this like, yeah, but we just have to get the job done. We just have to get it done. We have a deadline. We have to do it. But there are things that can be built into your daily structure that provide some of those psychological needs, you know, such as checking in, making sure you know how everyone's doing, just having an

eye on the inner ability to work as opposed to just the outer ability. And I think that it does require there to be more diversity in management, but also that intentional community building like intentional meeting every day, this is a priority, prioritizing those things, not letting those small acts of community care get swept under the rug as soon as you get stressed because that's often what happens. It's like, oh, but we're in a rush. We're trying to meet a deadline. And therefore, all of your emotional needs are not important to that deadline, I guess. Yeah, and I've been in situations where that has worked. I've been in really good management situation, so I know it's possible. And I know that there are people trying to do that structural change. There is precedent, so it's not like I'm just hoping into a void here, you know.

DOLDE: Who benefits from that kind of work culture?

ZINKY: [00:38:26] The workers.

DOLDE: All the workers or just the women?

ZINKY: [00:38:41] Everybody needs psychological care. And that's something I actually tried to bring up because there was a period last February where almost everyone on the team was depressed, like seriously. I had actual serious concerns about a couple of my work mates and because I have -- one of my best friends just killed herself, all of my

siblings have gone through suicidal depression, I know the signs, and a lot of it was just beginning and maybe just like whatever, weather related, but those are serious concerns. And if everyone on the team is exhibiting signs of like, overworking, over stress, depression, like loss of motivation, that needs to be addressed in order to move. Our working time lagged. No one was as productive as they were when they were sharp and on it. So it's for everybody.

DOLDE: You know, I hadn't asked anyone else about this and I can't believe I haven't. What was it like to continue this project, you know, thinking of challenging times, with COVID?

ZINKY: [00:39:57] Oh my god, yeah. Lock down was really, really hard because I was living alone and --

DOLDE: You were no longer in the apprentice house at that point?

ZINKY: [00:40:08] I was only there for a week.

DOLDE: Okay. I didn't realize. Okay.

ZINKY: [00:40:12] Yeah, yeah, because I wasn't part of the apprentice program, it wasn't part of my deal to have housing.

DOLDE: Oh, okay. You were not. Okay. I didn't know that.

ZINKY: [00:40:21] Not at all, yeah. Yeah, so I didn't have any sort of cultural sort of -- or social structure around me, I guess. But, yeah, it was super tough during lockdown to be alone all day trying to like construct some type of, okay, I'm going to schedule for myself. I'm going to spend a couple hours doing [oakham?] and whatever. And then when we came back, because we were doing sort of two separate teams and we were -- there was actually -- yeah, it really exacerbated certain cultural rifts inside the team. It made us all feel isolated and trapped and having the fence around us at first was like, oh my God, I feel like I'm in a zoo. There's total restriction of freedom. Yeah, it was pretty intense, and having a mask on all day at work was like, yeah, especially in the summer, tricky, really hot and sweaty and dusty.

DOLDE: And even more isolating than it was already?

ZINKY: [00:41:34] Yeah, yeah. And if I didn't have a partner at that point, I definitely would have left.

DOLDE: This is all really valuable insights. Thinking about the work itself, tell me about what you enjoyed the most or what you're most proud of, the things that you've helped construct, fabricate, build.

ZINKY: [00:42:04] I really love those points when we got in our stride, so mostly what I did, I did framing for like

half a year and then planking. Those are the two major chunks of my time. And I did other little pieces or whatnot. But there were points in each of those processes where we hit a rhythm where you're able to think five steps ahead in your thing that you're doing and set yourself up. So it's just such a satisfying ability to see ahead and at the present at the same point and be working in multiple planes at once and just sort of like, go, go, go, go, go, and on to the next, just such a satisfying pace, exhausting as well, and yeah, those periods of just getting something perfect, getting like a plank just perfect. It's just very -- yeah. And the physicality is something that I really love. I've always been a very physical person, can be a little aggressive if I'm not careful. But having that sort of just putting your whole body into something every day and just like feeling that you've given everything to a project feels very -- it's pretty rewarding. It's, I think, why working with your hands is so powerful, you can see the exact product of your labor. You can say I did this and see exactly what it is you did and step away at the end of the day and just leave it there. Yeah, I love that part of it.

DOLDE: Did you feel like you were starting to get a sense of the whole process? Were you part of the lofting and the --

ZINKY: [00:44:14] Yeah, I actually had a --

DOLDE: The skills acquired is what I'm thinking, you know,  
since you came into this with --

ZINKY: [00:44:21] Yeah, I'm really pretty happy with the  
amount of things I was able to do and sort of master while  
here, from driving the forklift to we did some logging and  
milling. And, obviously, I haven't mastered that  
necessarily, but just the ability to see something through  
from the very beginning, from cutting a log down, to  
milling it, to doing the whole timber shuffle with the  
telehandler, which is an endless process, to timber grading  
and evaluation and analysis and then patterns and lofting.  
I was able to do kind of the whole process, which was  
really satisfying. Yeah, and because the process is so  
repetitive you really get it in your bones. You really get  
the -- looking at a piece of wood, I'm automatically now  
just able to discern exactly where the good wood is, what's  
going on. It's sort of puts it in your muscle memory in a  
really cool way.

DOLDE: Did you gravitate to that in particular? Was there  
something in your background that you think made that skill  
come --

ZINKY: [00:45:39] I love trees. I love trees. I read a lot  
about them. And it's just something that's like, you know,

as a kid with all the things that happened in my family, going out to the woods was the healing medicine that I sought and that honestly all of my siblings sought. And so I have a deep history with the woods in an emotional sense. And during college, I used art education as a way to -- as an excuse to just pursue my own research topics in the woods and did a lot of reading about Suzanne Simard, like mycelium networks, and just everything. So I have always been fascinated with trees, and then to sort of extend that fascination to wood as a material is really, really rewarding, to be able to read wood and like what was going on with the tree is like something I really strive for, you know. I think it's super fun. And then to be able to use that knowledge in order to make a piece, make a boat part in order to understand that entire life cycle and to honor it as you're working, to be like this grain was grown in this direction because of whatever external circumstances the tree was responding to. And I am able to use that to my advantage in this situation. I think that's actually really particular to wooden boat buildings that I love is that you are responding to the material in a really immediate sense, in a really concrete sentence. Like with all of the framing, you're really reading the wood for the grain, so that you can have continuous grain around a

curve. It's sort of this material conversation with another living being that is all on the grounds of your material senses, I guess. Yeah, it's like talking to trees, I guess. Yeah. And it's that kind of thing that really feeds me, I think, in general.

DOLDE: It reminds me a lot of the way Jeff talks about trees with his background in forestry and in wood. As far as specific tools is there one that you just enjoy using, that you feel like you became proficient or adept at using, speaking of repetitive actions?

ZINKY: [00:48:36] Yeah, I would say the two that I really loved using the most, the things that I would get really excited to pick up, are my hand planes and the telehandler. I love operating the forklift. And I love using my hand plane, which is interesting, yeah, very opposite.

DOLDE: Dichotomy, absolutely. Had you worked on a forklift before?

ZINKY: [00:49:03] Huh-uh. Huh-uh.

DOLDE: Okay. So you got certified while you were here?

ZINKY: [00:49:06] Yeah, yeah, and did a lot of -- sort of made it a priority to elbow my way in there to get practice, you know, which I'm glad I did that because there's something about extending your senses. And this is what I love about tools in general that you're extending

your brain -- when you're thinking about doing something with your hands, your brain is in your hands. But when you're using a tool, your brain has to extend to the end of the tool, so you're listening to the feeling of the blade over the wood. And it's just such a wonderful extension of your physicality and sort of this almost Cyborg sensibility. You're more than your body all of the sudden, which is... And with the telehandler especially, you're like really out there in space. You're like really at the tip of your forks like thinking there, that's where your brain is. And so, I really love that process. It's like you're in your body and more than your body at the same time, which is really fun. It's fun. It's just fun.

DOLDE: So working on this project and thinking about, you know, what *Dove* will represent and what it will go out and do, do you have feelings, reflections on your participation in creating this thing and what it will do later? Is that something you've even thought about?

ZINKY: [00:50:36] Yeah, I have thought about that, but I'm really not sure because -- especially since I sort of stepped away from the project early, I don't have a sense of it as a final object in some way, that, to me, it's still very much a process. And because it was so married to this internal process of whatever that I actually don't

know. I would like to see it after it's done in the water. And I think that will kind of crystallize that relationship because I just don't -- I have no idea. I don't know what... It's not a boat to me yet. It hasn't ever been a boat. It's been this process of becoming a boat that I like -- yeah, so --

DOLDE: It doesn't even seem like a boat yet?

ZINKY: [00:51:38] Yeah, yeah. In my head, it's like not a -- it looks kind of like a boat, but it doesn't function the way a boat functions. Like it, you know --

DOLDE: Did you spend any time on the water on boats sailing or learning any of that while you were here much?

ZINKY: [00:51:56] A little bit. Me and Jeff went out a couple times. And he taught me a little bit about sailing and took out Volunteer -- especially the first summer I was here, we kind of were out on boats more. During COVID, not at all because there was no -- yeah, didn't they have like restrictions on any type of recreational boating anyway?

DOLDE: Well, you know, it's complicated because we're a place of business so that may have put the -- I think recreationally on your own personal boat that was the one place we could escape, but I think it's a different context here.

ZINKY: [00:52:31] True, yeah. I did actually go down to Crisfield on *Edna* with Christian, which was a really fun experience. We hit some storms and things. It was a very classic boat adventure, but super fun.

DOLDE: Are boats going to be part of your future?

ZINKY: [00:52:59] I don't know. I don't want to build boats. I struggled again with the utility of wooden boats in that I can't necessarily -- I feel this this ecological urgency that somehow cannot justify wooden boats for me in the future. So I want to build, but I don't think it's going to be boats. However, I don't know how long... My partner, Noah, is deeply in the boat world, so it will definitely be on the periphery and I think at least for now that that's fine.

DOLDE: But not your ambition?

ZINKY: [00:53:44] Not my ambition, no.

DOLDE: Do you have thoughts about where you hope or aspire for your hand skills, the process, working with wood or just working with your hands may take you?

ZINKY: [00:53:59] Yeah, I've done a lot of dreaming about it in the past couple months, a lot of trying to formulate what it will look like and I got into a program for sustainable construction so doing timber framing, which is a really good I think translation from boat building. It's

just like it's boat building but without the curves, basically. I know it's more complicated than that. But also, I found this program that I'm really interested in that does low-income housing sustainably, so they do straw bale houses for low-income residents. It's in Utah and it's a work internship. And I'm really interested in that model. I don't want to build for rich people. That's not what I want to do. To me, that seems such a waste of resources, honestly, or my resources, my internal resources. And so I want to figure out a way to build beautiful things for people who can't necessarily afford them because the growing divide between the rich and poor is also a divide between who has access to beauty. The world becomes uglier for the people who don't have any money, the more we go on with it. And I think that that's, again, coming back to the psychological needs. People need beautiful spaces and this sort of freedom of movement and freedom of ownership. And I think that that's part of my contribution strategy, I guess, is to figure out a model for -- who knows, it might just be a dream, but --

DOLDE: You have to dream.

ZINKY: -- I'm holding onto it.

DOLDE: Sounds great. Anything else you'd like to add before we wrap up?

ZINKY: [00:56:17] I guess just to say that I'm really grateful for this opportunity, that it does take... It was sort of a silly thing to hire me because I didn't have any experience on that project. But it provided me with this like trust of like we trust you can learn this. We trust you can do this. And that was really important to think about, like to just be given this like we'll pay you and you learn and you do it and that's it. And that's sort of a freedom of like how to -- yeah, just being given the freedom of movement in that way and that kind of trust. But, yeah, despite how hard it was, it it's like one of the biggest learning opportunities that I've had in so many different levels. Yeah, I'm grateful.

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