

What's Next? Podcast

Mike Allen

[Snip-it's from Podcast] Mike: On this day, can it be June 14th? And she's like, yeah, but I need you there, are you in? And I was like, yeah, sure.

So I, my call my mom was like, Mom, I a job after college. And she's like, what are you doing? I'm going to Alaska, I guess. I feel like a lot of college kids, they don't really know what to do. So I was like, man, I might as well do something fun that I...

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

[Introduction] Welcome to the What's Next? podcast. Let me just start off by saying. Not everyone has the same background. There is no road-map for success. Life begins at the edge of your comfort zone. Leaning into your curiosities. It does suck when you grow up. We're all still figuring out who we are. You can't just sit back and be silent. Black lives matter. It is the little stuff that makes the biggest difference. Do you have another hour? [Laughs]

[Bouncy theme music fades.]

Cody: Hello, Beaver Nation, and welcome to the What's Next? podcast.

I'm your host, Cody Stover. As the weather starts to get a little bit colder here in the Pacific Northwest, our episode is taking us to a place that's even a bit colder than that. And that's the chilly waters of Alaska. Joining us on the podcast today is fishing captain for Vonnie's Fishing Charters, Sitka, Alaska. He's also a 2015 OSU grad with a degree in marketing and with our back to school theme here on the podcast, he's representing the College of Business and we're happy to have him on.

Mike Allen, thanks for jumping on the World's next podcast with us.

Mike: Awesome. Thank you guys for having me.

Cody: So I have to ask, are you calling from the boat right now or are you somewhere else?

Mike: I'm actually at Vonnie's Lodge right now where I'll be staying the rest of the winter, so. But, yeah, is it is a little chilly out, it's been raining all day and I'm happy to not be on the boat right now.

Cody: I last was in Alaska when I was seven, and I feel like it's on my list of places that I keep saying I'm going to get back to, and then it's that place that I always just put off, Canada and Alaska, really. But so I said, I want to hear all about Alaska life and some other stuff, but maybe first you can fill us in. Did you always want to be captain of a fishing boat or did that come later?

Mike: So I'm actually a fourth generation boat captain. And so I kind of grew up like with my uncles and grandfathers and stuff happened. My dad wasn't a captain or anything, but always having boat stuff and like in the house, like a, you know, like anchors in the yard.

And so I always kind of grew up with that kind of atmosphere. And my dad took me up to Alaska with one of his buddies when I was 12 years old. And I think from that point on, I was kind of obsessed with it. I kind of knew I wanted to go up there and at least be a deckhand.

When I became a deckhand, I was like, man, I'd be I'll be cool to be captain. And then I just went all downhill from there and then I ended up buying a boat. Now I'm in over my head. But now it's been awesome. I love it.

Cody: So you got a degree in marketing at OSU? Was that like why did you choose that? Was that leading into this career path or was that just talk me through that?

Mike: So I always felt like marketing was like a great, you know, point to having any business, I always wanted to do the entrepreneurship program at Oregon State, but I decided to go through marketing just because I kind of I looked at the whole, you know,

the way the classes were structured and everything, and I was a little bit more interested in some of the global marketing classes.

And it was it just kind of fit more of what I wanted to learn about in college. And I feel like you could apply both marketing to entrepreneurship and vice versa. So it's kind of why I chose marketing.

Cody: On the note of OSU, something we've been asking our guests is and maybe this can give a little bit of context to just your background. I want to hop into the Alaska and fishing stuff here in a second. But do you have any specific like maybe it's a favorite OSU memory or specific things that were like especially formative that you look back on were like special things of your time at OSU and maybe. Is there one or two of those that stick out to you that you could share?

Mike: I think it was my senior year when the Beavers beat the Ducks in a football game. That was pretty awesome, or maybe it was my junior year. But as far as education or anything, I went to the Weatherford College of Business and I forgot what class...

Cody: Oh, was at the BA, 160 series?

Mike: Yeah, it was kind of like my, you know, it was before we got in the actual business school and I couldn't decide if I wanted to be fisheries or business or whatnot. And it kind of taught me, kind of the structure of business and all that stuff. And it just became more and more intriguing to me. And I ended up going to business school.

And I remember having a teacher named Jonathan Broom, which I'm sure many of you guys had. And I remember him being a really big influence on me and helping me out through. I had some issues, some personal issues in college, and he was kind of my mentor through that whole thing.

So just, you know, probably the highlights are just meeting some great people and just learning how to work with people and all that stuff. So it was it was a lot of different ups and downs in college, and it just kind of taught me how they go through life, you know, with dealing with those ups and downs, so was a good, good thing.

Cody: You talked about trying to decide, like, is my better path fisheries or should I do this business route? And like what you just said, right. There seems to be a lot of our guests have the same opinion that it doesn't really matter in the end. Like, it's a lot of just learning how to how to get through different situations, how to be resilient, how to, you know, work hard. So I don't know if you feel the same way, but that seems like a common theme with a lot of folks.

Mike: Yeah, no, definitely, I just I'm just happy I got through college on time and my plan was to go straight to Alaska. I ended up going straight to Alaska after that the day I walked.

So do my walk, June 13th. And I was on the flight June 14th to Alaska. I really missed my first two days on the boat and they threw me on the boat...

Cody: Wow.

Mike: the very next day after college. And I luckily I don't get seasick or anything, but I didn't really know at the time.

And I went straight from my last two weeks of senior year partying with my friends to working every single day until September 15. I did not have one day off as one hundred hours a week. It was just like a real wake up call.

Cody: Wow.

Mike: So, yeah, that was that was I mean, college help with that, you know, finals and all that stuff. But it was...

Cody: Yeah. Welcome to the real world there.

Mike: Definitely a slap in the face. I was like and you know, being the deckhand, I had to bite my tongue. It was just so it was like that was a real wake up call.

Cody: Ok, so you went straight from walking up to Alaska, did you? So did you work with up in Alaska before graduation. Sorry if you just mentioned this, but take me through that. Did you get this kind of lined up?

Mike: So I worked with a professor at Oregon State actually who taught to fly fishing classes. His name's Michael Gorman, and I did some marketing stuff for him, helped him with his website, his YouTube pages and video and stuff.

I did a lot of different. I fish with him a lot. I mean, he really was kind of an influence on me on like, hey, you should, you know, go experience the line of, you know, some industry and fishing. And he's like it can be really, like with the personality like you, it could be, you know, really, you know, profitable or successful or whatever. You know, I would never got in this for the money, but he's like, I think you'd really enjoy it.

So I kind of looked more into it and I think it was January of that year, I was I called the lodge that my dad took me up to when I was younger and I was like, hey, do you guys have a position open? And the owner, Theresa, was like, hey, let me call you tomorrow and I'm going to give you a full interview. So I did the interview the next day and she's like, all right, I need you up here by, June 10th. And I was like, well, I walk on the 13th, can it be June 14th? And she's like, yeah, but I need you there. Are you in? And I was like, oh my. Yeah, sure.

I called my mom was like, mom, I got a job after college. And she's like, what are you doing? I'm going to Alaska I guess.

Cody: That's crazy.

Mike: Yeah. Like, I you know, I feel like a lot of college kids, they don't really know what to do.

So I was like, man, I might as well do something fun that I enjoy and that, you know, I didn't really care about money. If I would have not made any money that summer would have been fine. But it was it was it was awesome. At least it taught me how to work or grind and wake up at 3:30 every morning and not be done by seven. So that was

something new for me. But it was a great wakeup call and it really helped. I mean, it changed my life, to be honest.

Cody: So you started as a deckhand, right? And then you worked your way up and your captain right now, like, what was that moment like your first time going out, being like, I'm the captain now?

Mike: Oh, my goodness. So there's a little story behind that one. So I did two years as a deckhand and I did 100 days basically each year, and then I work down south. So you need three hundred and sixty five days on the water to be a boat captain. So I got my boat captains license and Vonnie hired me. I didn't have any real fishing days Vonnie until, like, kind of, you know, usually we try to start in May, but I didn't have any days until June 5th or 10th or something.

So I was decking for another guy. And they asked me. Another lodge needed a captain so they called me and they're like, hey, we need a captain for this day. Can you do it? And I was like, you know, I guess, yeah I can do it.

So this was my first day on the water. I go out, there's ten foot swells. It is like stormy as all hell. And I did not have a deckhand hand. I had three people on the boat and I caught a king salmon on one of the pass. It was like to stormy to go out. Everybody was like catching lemons. But I was my first day. So I drop in, I catch a King Salmon.

The nets go or like I grab the net off the top of the roof where we set our nets and the wind was so blowing so hard. The net flew into all the rods, so I had a giant tangle. The boat was going sideways. I go to I get it undone.

I go to scoop the fish, the hooks were in the net and then I got the fish and like so I killed the fish, brought in the boat and I was like, oh, man, this thing might be too small. Like because we can only keep it twenty eight inches.

And on my first King Salman so was all jacked up and I go to measure and it was like twenty eight inches perfectly. I was like oh my goodness that was the smallest possible King Salmon you can keep. And that was my first one.

Then we went on inside of the water because it was too, too sketchy out there and I couldn't find Rockfish. It was so scary. I was like man I'm so over my head on this stuff. But I don't know. You the funny thing is, is with that same group I had, I did another subcontracting group for that same lodge. I had that group again this year and we were telling stories about that day. And it was so funny. They loved it. They had a great time, which is all that matters. But it was so stormy. Everyone was puking. And I thought I was in over my head.

Cody: You're like here we go. Am I into this?

Mike: I was like this way, harder than I thought. This is not good. But I mean, just like anything you get thrown in, you know, the waters, you got to swim. So I started, you know, trying to find new spots of fish or whatnot and trying to get better every day. And it just takes time.

You're not going to go out there and go kill them on your first day normally. But, you know, we did find that first day. It was just, you know. I was a lot more scarier than I would have imagined.

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

Ally: Hey Beaver Nation, I'm Ally and I'm a 2015 OSU grad and part of OSU Next. Figuring out your journey post college in these times can be tough and it sometimes can seem like there's a lot flying at us all at once. We started the OSU Next LinkedIn group to be a place for Beavs to support Beavs. Whether you're looking for tips on negotiating your first promotion, hoping to connect with others in your area, or simply trying to stay sane while working from home, we're here for you. Join us by searching OSU Next on LinkedIn. Now back to the show.

[Bouncy theme music fades.]

Cody: So take me through a little bit on that you said that there was a few other people out there with you. Take me through like the business model. Like these folks are tourists who are coming out to fish with you all or who is on your boat on any given day?

Mike: Oh, yes. So I guess that whenever I tell people like what we do, it's not like Deadliest Catch. So most of the time it's not 8 foot swells but that's about the biggest we will go in.

Cody: And it sounds pretty crazy. And your first go there.

Mike: Yeah, it's not normal. Usually we got like three and a half, four foot swells. And, you know, it's kind of like the Oregon ocean. Alaska's beautiful. Like a lot of times it's pretty. It's like springtime in Oregon is I how would kind of explain it as far as the weather. You got beautiful, sunny, 70 days, you know. Then you get your rainy and 53. But for the most part, the weather up here is pretty moderate.

But as far as the business is, like people come up to come fish with us and take fish home. So you'd come in on a flight, we pick you up from the lodge, take you to lodge, your get your rain gear, get you all set up, get your fishing license taken care of, feed you dinner. You wake up the next morning. You meet me at the dock at 5:00 a.m., I pick you up and then we head straight to where we've been catching fish or where I think the best spot is to go fishing. And I have a deckhand on my boat. My buddy from high school was my deckhand the last three years and my cousin was my deckhand this year.

So me and my dad can take you out. And every fish you catch, I mean, we bait your hooks, we get all the rods set up, we got G. Loomis rods, and all the nicest gear you can imagine. Electric reels if we go out to the deep and a heater in the boat, a full walk around. It's like pretty booshie style fishing for sure. And then we process all your fish that you catch. And usually people do like three day packages and people usually take home 50 to 100 pounds of fish each person.

Cody: Wow, wow.

Mike: So, you know, sometimes more or less. But I'd say this year, most people went home with, you know, probably seventy five to one hundred pounds on average.

Cody: Wow.

Mike: Three days. So. The trip that pays for itself is what I say.

Cody: Yeah, you come back with that much fish to eat for the rest of the year.

Mike: Yeah, and it's all line caught. So we bleed out the fish, throw it on ice. So it's literally the best product you can possibly get. It's you know, we handle it as good as any commercial or any processor does or even better than any processed or what most processors do. As far as just, you know, being able to have that small amount of fish and being able to deal with it and put it in a freezer as fast as we can, makes that fish and we put it in a flash freezer, which I could talk about how good those things are. But that's a whole other story. But, yeah, it's good fish.

And we're excited to show you guys the end product and you guys can eat fish, you know, throughout the winter and think about us and think about catching your next fish.

Cody: So as I take a scroll through your Instagram, like as myself, I'm not much of a fisherman. But as I scroll through, it looks like some pretty crazy looking fish that you're catching on a day to day basis. Take us through like what's typically the fish that you're reeling in? And maybe what's more of the rare ones to?

Mike: On a normal day we, I mean, it all is weather dependent, tide dependent. So but we always target rockfish, halibut and salmon every day.

So May and June and July, we usually primarily catch king salmon. And so the limits change. This year it was three king salmon a day, which is unheard of for nonresidents. So on the boat, we'd be catching, you know, king salmon ranging from 12 to 50 pounds. We didn't end up winning 100 pounders this year, but some other boats did. And then our halibut, we catch one halibut every day, I'd say we limit out probably like 95 percent of the time.

Ninety-nine percent of the time on halibut. I don't even remember what day we struggle. There is one day we struggled because of weather this year. But halibut fishing is really good up here. There's a length limit on those. Forty five inches and under was the limit this year or over 80 inches. And it's one per person and that's like a 40 pound fish. That's like a decent sized halibut. So that was that's good. And then three rockfish. And then in between that we catch black cod, shark, short Reika Rockfish. There's over 50 different species of rockfish we catch up here so something different every day. Sharks that we catch - blue sharks, salmon sharks. They'll come up like the salmon sharks I've seen totally torpedo out of the water chasing a salmon out of the boat or sea lions.

Cody: Wow.

Mike: Bald eagles coming by to steal a fish. And it's just like it's the craziest, craziest thing in the world to me every day. I've been doing it for six years. And yeah, it's still while it's still wild. Yeah.

Cody: What's the look on someone's face when they reel in a shark like someone especially who is like not necessarily the most advanced fisherman. Like is that pretty cool?

Mike: Yeah. I mean most of the time the shark will break the leader off. But yeah, people get super excited about the sharks. I hate the sharks personally, but I can't.

Cody: Why so?

Mike: Because they steal my leaders. All that stuff, you know, takes time to prepare. I lose a whole set up and I'm like gosh dang it and screw that shark.

Cody: Customers happy but you're thinking that's more work for you.

Mike: No, I have to remember that it is important. You know, each fish that that you guys my customer catches, they probably never caught before. So I, I make sure, you know, if they want a picture of it, we'll take pictures of it or whatnot. But if I see it

swimming next to the boat, please don't catch that thing because it'll just break off. But yeah, people get pretty excited about sharks.

Salmon sharks we can keep. I caught one. The only time I got one was in I think was in 2015 was my only one that we caught. But I think that was on, that was on my Instagram pretty deep somewhere.

Cody: Ok.

Mike: The blue shark is on my Instagram too. Those are the ones that we usually see in August and they come through and they're pretty cool, it's cool, it's something different every day. I mean, lingcod are pretty cool creatures. We get them up to, you know, 50, 55 inches and under.

And two hundred pound halibut is not unheard of. We usually catch a couple of those every year. Seeing orcas, all different kinds of whales, mostly humpback whales. We'll see sperm whales out in the deep.

Cody: Have you ever had whales coming up right next to you?

Mike: OK, look at the... I don't know what. There is a post on June 26. Oh, wait. Now there is like my fifth post down if you're scrolling through the gram.

Cody: I was going to say for folks that are listening and want to have a visual to this. Mike, if you don't mind, I'll shout out your Instagram. The handle is at monsta with a, mikea with an on Instagram. So if you type in monstamikea should pop up and you might be able to catch a visual of some of these fish. But go ahead. What were you saying, Mike?

Mike: But yeah, they, they have. You know, they don't see people too often because Sitka is secluded, there's no other towns that you can get to other than by boat. So these animals are basically as wild as they get. So, yeah, they come up, take your boat out and then just do a drive by.

This year, I saw part of orcas actually eating a baby humpback whale.

Cody: Wow.

Mike: Which was pretty interesting. So it was it was just the life cycle was kind of sad, but yeah, it was it was cool to see for sure.

Cody: Right. I one thing that I did see is that you had made a post about you had caught a king salmon and it was of the ivory king variety, which was a higher quality of meat. I had no idea that that existed. But take me through that. Like, how do you come across these, like, rarities on occasion or what's that like?

Mike: Oh, it's awes So there is so much that I've learned throughout this whole experience about just seafood processing and all these things that people don't know, certain cuts of meat like belly cuts, of meat, of king salmon, are basically like bacon but you can't find it on the market. Or like cheap pieces out of halberd that are just wasted or black cod tips. I mean, processors are wasting like the filet mignon of these because it's not sellable or doesn't look good.

Yeah, so cutting into fish, there's always something just... So first you bleed them, you let them sit, and you gut and gill them, so you take the intestines. This sounds disgusting for some of you guys. I'm sorry.

You take the intestines and you can see what those fish eat. And, you know, usually it's harring or needle fish. You know, some species of salmon will have like microorganisms like plankton in the in their stomach. But that alone is pretty cool. I've heard people have told me I went, oh, well, one time I found a paperclip in a yellow eyes stomach.

But another time one of my buddies says that he found a, he got a 200 pound halibut when they could keep those, and he found a license plate in its stomach.

Cody: Whoa.

Mike: So, yeah. So I mean, there's always something weird going on.

Cody: It seems like a big object and.

Mike: Yes. And a sharp one. I would not want that.

But yeah, as far as meat goes, each fish is kind of a different quality of meat. So to me, each when I eat fish, I'm super particular. So each fish, especially wild fish, has like a different taste. And it is completely unlike what they're what they're eating or how much fat. Have you, if you've watched *Wicked Tuna* ever, and they take like the core samples of that fish and kind of do the, you know, the fat samples and then give them a price point. Correct. You follow me?

Cody: I haven't watched it, but keep going.

Mike: Yeah. So each fish has a different, you know, fat content. So actually the king salmon, the ivory king salmon that you brought up has a fattier fat content than the normal, you know, salmon colored salmon does, which you can't tell until you cut into it.

And that's because they don't process omega 3s the same way as the other. It's a genetic defect.

Cody: Yeah.

Mike: And some people get them confused because the white king salmon, it's not really marketable, so you never really see it. So they'll turn that like processors will turn on the smoked salmon or something. But now it's kind of getting big. It's kind of people are finding out that ivory king salmon taste better.

So, yeah, it'll sell now, you know, at the Seattle fish market for forty, fifty dollars a pound.

Cody: Wow.

Mike: Just because it's a rarity. It's ivory. You know, the name sounds better than just normal salmon. So that's kind of catching on. There's a lot of trends in the seafood market that are that are kind of catching on or stuff like that's going but yeah.

Cody: You mentioned like there's one thing I'm interested about asking. It sounds like you probably have a great perspective on it, but obviously there's limits on what you can catch. And like, I know there's like a lot of stuff out there now about like wildlife sustainability, like how do we make sure that the waters that we're fishing today are still available to fish like 50 years from now? One hundred years from now. What's your take on all that or what do you see on a day to day basis, being someone who's on the water all the time?

Mike: Oh, I'm all I'm all about the sustainability of the fisheries. So, you know, we get a lot of old timers that I do like the Portland Outdoor Show, Sacramento Expo show and all those. There will be old timers walking by. And then what's the limit to halibut? Can you guys keep in? One year was thirty eight inches and there, which is not it was pretty, pretty kind of a harsh limit on us. They change it up every year on the quota.

But we were, he was like, oh man, we don't we need the meat. And those people, you know, the meat hunters and some of the even the younger generation and all generations do that. But we're trying to make it not about the meat hunters. So like we do catch a lot of fish and people go home with a lot of fish and that's enough fish. You don't need to halibut any size. You don't even need one halibut at any size. If you can keep six coho a day, which is the limits, and you start catching June, July, August and September six, coho per person a day. That's like fifty pounds of fish right there.

They're just letting go, you know, like, like you don't need and then you catch a forty pound halibut and that's, that's plenty of fish. So I think the limits are perfect. You know, if they even went down in limits on coho or whatever, I would totally understand that. But they never will because it's a giant quota size.

So each we have - commercial fishermen, sport fishermen and charter fishermen - and there's a big pie on what and usually we're below our limit on everything. So that's good. And commercial guys are allowed, you know, 70 percent of the pie or something. I'm not

don't quote me on that. But they're allowed a larger chunk of fish, and that's what you guys see in the grocery store. I'm not a lot of selfish at the grocery store, I just send people home with fish and give it out as gifts or something. But I don't I don't sell any of my fish. I don't do any of that as of right now. Yeah, I think the sustainability of catch and release, I'm all for limits, enough is enough, really.

I think the state of Alaska is a really good job. Each time I come home from a trip, they check me at the dock, they measure my fish, and they see how well the fishery is doing. And then if we're not catching salmon they'll close, they'll shut the salmon season down, which I've seen before, which sucks. But then we have other fish we can go catch like black cod, or we could do a long soak for the perfect size halibut, you know, get some rockfish. So there's always something to be caught even if they closed something down.

So this year, they closed down yellow eye. I was you know, they are even that much fun to catch, but I was like, you know, if they need it, if they need to live, if they need some help, I'm fine releasing them every day, you know.

Cody: Right.

Mike: There's plenty of fish out there. I'm not I mean, I'm in no need for anything different.

Cody: Maybe we can talk a little bit about Alaska just in general. You live in Sitka, right? Yes. So in my head, I've always kind of been like, yeah, you know, we got Oregon, Washington. We're up in the Pacific Northwest here. We got the mountains, we got rivers, we got the ocean feeling. You get that Pacific Northwest life. But then I've always had it in my head is Alaska seems like it's like the 2.0 version. Like there's bigger mountains, bigger ocean swells it sounds like. You know, more snow, bigger trees. Is that kind of like the vibe or take me through what's your take on being someone who lived in Oregon and Alaska?

Mike: So what I always tell people is that Alaska is Oregon on steroids. So everything you think is great. I mean, not to be like arrogant or whatever, but like Alaska is just like everything is bigger. Like the fish are bigger, the mountains are bigger, all the trees are

thicker. Like there's so many trees, you really walk through them and it rains harder. The weather is, you know, like the weather is harder. It's you know, it's definitely a rougher life. I mean, you have you don't get the sun as much or and whatnot.

But I'm happy to be outside all day no matter what the weather is. So it's no, you know, I grew up in a rain forest in Oregon. So the transition here isn't as hard as it would be from someone from the North or from the Midwest or something or Texas. California. But no, I'd say, you know, it's it would be more like, you know, the is it, the Olympic Peninsula.

Cody: Yeah.

Mike: You know, kind of jagged mountains and stuff. I mean, it's pretty much, it's pretty much on point with the Pacific Northwest. We have once you start getting to Anchorage and stuff, which I just I was just in Anchorage and I was just in Bethel, Alaska, which is farther north. But, you know, it's like a thousand miles. You're not Anchorage, but Bethel is way far north from here. It's a totally different landscape. Alaska is...

Cody: Changing all the way up.

Mike: Yeah, you can see every part of Alaska is different. Sitka is definitely more of a Pacific Northwest kind of kind of atmosphere. But once you start going north, its more tundra. I guess Anchorage was talking to a client from Anchorage and she was telling me that it's like 70 degrees there and in the summer or 80 degrees there in the summer usually.

So I don't even know that. I was like, Alaska gets over 80 degrees, you know, but we're like, you know, we're kind of like Seaside or whatnot. You know how it's always cloudy there in the summer. So it makes sense. So I don't know. I enjoy it. It doesn't really... I need to go to take a vacation to Mexico every year, but I'm not.

Cody: Just to get the contrast?

Mike: Yeah. Just in, you know, get some vitamin D because yeah, that is what I need.

Cody: I this is a different place in the world, but I spent a little time in Iceland and I asked some of the local folks like, oh, you know, like people in Oregon some people have like a beach house over, like you said, Seaside or something. People have that is like they're kind of like get away home or whatever. I was like, do y'all have like, you know, at the south coast of Iceland, you have like your beach house down there?

And they looked at me and they're like, when I'm when I'm going on vacation, I'm not going I'm not staying in Iceland. Like, I'm going somewhere warm. I was I like touché, touché.

Mike: Yeah, no, I feel that.

Cody: I want to get into to wrap up the episode with a few fun segments here, fun quick hitters. But before we hit that, I just have one more question since our podcast is called the What's Next? You've gotten to this point in your career where you're a fishing boat captain. And so we just want to know, like, what do you have on the horizon, any personal, professional goals or ventures that you could maybe share with us?

Mike: Yeah, so I just finally paid my boat off and I ran off and I'm looking forward to growing my business in another direction as far as fish processing. So I am working on getting my licensing for that done. Hopefully by the end of November is the hopes and on the warehouse this week, and I'm going to hopefully get that up and running.

That's kind of the only thing that I'm I mean, that's what's next. I mean, I would be super busy with that. And then charter fishing in the summer and then processing fish and hopefully by - the goal is at least January, possibly February - we'll have a product to market and we're going to be focusing on value add products, so it's going to be more of like salmon patties or smoked salmon.

After working and processing I've seen a lot of waste and stuff. So we're going to take advantage of every piece of meat on the fish, which is all super healthy. Good, good meat and then hopefully be turning them into salmon burgers and get that to market.

Cody: Where can folks find this stuff once you're live with it? Are you going to have like a ecom shop or will it be in certain stores or how can we get a hold of some of this?

Mike: So the first plan was to actually get it into stores. But because we have to acquire more fishermen and get it product and we're starting in like 800 square foot, you know, processing room with a twelve hundred four square foot freezer. But we are starting small. So I think the first this year will be all online and then the year after that should be in the stores. So I will be definitely posting something on my Instagram soon.

I've been kind of. Kind of not posting anything lately just because I've been so busy doing this, I was up in Anchorage, I was in Bethel trying to get all my permits done and everything. But, yeah, I will be definitely announcing that hopefully in the next few months on Instagram, and the company is called a Omega Mike's, so like omega 3s, the value. The, you know, the fatty part of the fish, and so we're going to be the name of the company and hopefully it will be dropping 2021.

Cody: We look forward to sharing some of that, too. That's exciting stuff. Thanks for sharing.

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

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[Bouncy theme music fades.]

Cody: Ok, so we got the final three little sections here, our fun segment, so these will be quick, but they're just a little quick hitters to get a little more info on who is Mike. But this first one is called Give Some, Get Some. And imagine you just won ten thousand dollars and you get to donate half of it to something and you get to spend half on something fun. First with the first half of it, what is one cause, charity or organization, et

cetera, that you support or that you would want to donate to? And then second, for the other half, what's something fun you do with the other five thousand?

Mike: Oh man, I am actually next week I'm going down help out at a junior fishing program and we're help being kids in the urban areas that don't have the resources to go fishing. So yeah, the West Virginia and hope you can kind of learn how to fish, probably donate 5,000 of them, which we donated some to. So they'll be they'll be could get another bonus. And what was the other thing you got?

Cody: Five thousand. Do something fun with it. You can't put it in savings. You do something fun.

Mike: Oh, man, I would. Well, I don't. I would have to do something fun.

Cody: You can't you can't go fishing, just kidding you can if you want.

Mike: I'd put it on my boat or something.

Cody: Fine. If that's fun for you, then, yes.

Mike: You know, I have a new alternator on the boat or something. Those are really expensive. I don't have any fun money.

Cody: If your definition of fun is an alternator belt, then we'll let you say that.

Mike: Maybe go to Mexico or see the sun. Go see my sister. I haven't seen her for a while, so but yeah, I would probably buy something for the boat. But, you know, unfortunately when I'm pretty boring only I think about...

Cody: You said you wanted to go to Mexico, I guess. I guess travels a little bit difficult right now. Speaking of that, our next and maybe this, I'm not sure what the covid/ quarantine life has been like up in Alaska. It's probably different in every state. But this next segment is called My Quarantine Thing, and that's because folks from all over are

trying something new during covid, a.k.a. getting a puppy, cutting their own hair, trying a new hobby. What's been your new thing that you've taken on since covid started?

Mike: Well, believe it or not, once the covid thing came out, I was in Portland for my mom's birthday and I just flew up to Alaska and I haven't really quarantine here for 14 days. And, you know, we're taking precautions and, you know, wearing masks and stuff. But like I mean, I felt the effects financially. I've had a lot of cancellations and everything, which sucks. But as far as the one thing about quarantine, I guess I. I did have a month off. I was. I just I, I ate all, my dear, that's all I learned how to make a meatloaf I guess.

Cody: You switched from meat from the sea to meat from the land.

Mike: Yes. Yes.

Cody: All right. This last one is a 45 second OSU trivia challenge. So each of our guests are doing this as their final part here on the podcast. So basically, you'll have forty five seconds. I'll hit you with some OSU/Corvallis trivia and we'll see how many you can get. I'll tell you afterwards where the bar is set up, but we'll see if you can gain the lead here.

Mike: Horrible. Alright.

Cody: All right, name a Corvallis restaurant or pub?

Mike: Impulse. Does have be correct?

Cody: No, that's a good. Name a class that you took outside your major.

Mike: Bird watching.

Cody: Name a Corvallis zip code.

Mike: 97022. It's not right.

Cody: I don't think that's right.

Mike: That's right?

Cody: No, no it's not. Name a building where you had classes.

Mike: Weatherford

Cody: What year was OSU founded?

Mike: 1853.

Cody: Mmm... Close.

Mike: What was it?

Cody: I can't tell you in case it's a question in the future. What was the number of the highway from high five to Corvallis?

Mike: Uhhh...

Cody: Well, your time's up. So I believe you got...

Mike: I think I have three.

Cody: You got three, which is, yeah, now tied for the lead. Three was the top. So you almost pulled off the four at the buzzer. The zip code was - you rattled one off there quick it just wasn't quite in the range.

Mike: I think I said Bend that on accident.

Cody: Oh. Did you live in Bend?

Mike: Yeah.

Cody: All right. Well you'll probably be trying to go to sleep tonight and it'll pop into your head as all your Corvallis zip codes, but.

Mike: 97... I'm not going to say it.

Cody: Well, we appreciate you coming on. We know your time is valuable, so we appreciate you taking the time and sharing all the ins and outs of life on a fishing boat and life up in Alaska. So, yeah. Thanks so much for your time.

Mike: Awesome, thank you, Cody enjoy.

Cody: To all our listeners out there in Beaver Nation, as always, we will see you next time.

Mike: Yes, go, Beavs!

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

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