

Doug: Hi there, welcome to my interview project, my name is Doug Vinci, and I am interviewing Sean Brown. This interview is going to consist of 15 questions, which I am going to ask over the next 35 minutes or so. It is going to focus on some areas of his job and what consists of his job title, responsibilities of his job, how he feels living from paycheck to paycheck life. And we are going to start with the first question, All right what's going on?

Sean: I'm doing pretty good tonight, how are you doing?

Doug: I'm doing well. Um I of course work with Sean at Buffalo Wild Wings where he bartends with me on weekends and nights, and we have a pretty good relationship, so I wanted to include that in the interview. Will you please state your name, your job title and the name of the organization you work for?

Sean: My name is Sean Brown, I work for Buffalo Wings in Blacksburg and I am a bartender.

Doug: Where are you originally from, and what did your parents do for a living?

Sean: I was born in Ellsworth Air Force Base, cause both my parents were in the Air Force, but I have moved from Utah, to South Carolina, North Carolina, Texas, and Maryland. And then we resided in Virginia when they wanted to retire.

Doug: Ok, what did they do, was it mostly military?

Sean: Yea it was mostly military, my mom she just had a desk job, she was a sergeant and just had a desk job, my dad was um, my dad was a marksman, I don't remember where he was but he was a marksman. He's been to Saudi Arabia and stuff like that; it was pretty crazy when he left.

Doug: Ok, did you ever about going into the military yourself?

Sean: Yes,..... yes I did, but I got in trouble, trouble with the law, and I'll go ahead and say it, I had 5 misdemeanors and I had a high ranking, uh, what's it called, well anyways on that test I scored a 67, which was great and I could have chosen any job they had.

Doug: The ASVAB

Sean: Yes the ASVAB, I had 6 misdemeanors, which weighed heavy, the cutoff was 5 and I tried to get a waiver, but I couldn't get in.

Doug: ok so how long have you worked at Buffalo Wild Wings?

Sean: Around 2 years, I'm working on a year and 8 months.

Doug: But not all as a bartender though?

Sean: Noooo, I started as a cook, left, started as a cook February of 06 until December, left to work for UPS in Roanoke, and that didn't work out and I came back to work up here last year and now I'm working now.

Doug: Most people view 40 hrs/week as a full time job. Do you find you have to work more than 40 hrs/week to make ends meet?

Sean: To me no, but to most people yes. Um the way the economy has been and the way things are going to be yea you have to, with the gas prices going up, everything's going up, grocery prices going up, so yeah you have to work especially if you have kids, I don't have kids but I work 40 hrs/week 3 weeks out of the month maybe. That's not because I want to make ends meet, I just want to live comfortably.

Doug: So you do have disposable income?

Sean: When my bank account hits \$500, I am broke, cause you never know what's going to happen, if you'll need money, so one week your out, your sick, ok I have this to fall back on. I have a little bit of a cushion.

Doug: At Buffalo Wild Wings you make money based on tips, do you find that you can support yourself based on the tips that you make?

Sean: Yes because as a bartender you have to be personal, like I like this person I want to tip them more, where if your not as personal as a bartender or server they think what is wrong with them, where going to short them and give them less of a larger tip. And that goes back to be nice to people, cause when your nice and when your serving people you want to make them feel welcomed, feel comfortable so then they will tip you more. Get bigger tips more money and then yea you can live comfortably.

Doug: You said as a bartender you get tips based on how friendly and how hard you work, you have always been a bartender though when you were hired, you were hired as a cook. My question is and this is something I did a paper on for class and I had done it based on you and I had spoken with you in that regard, that they didn't give you really an option of being front of the house.

Sean: no not at all.

Doug: Why do you think that is? I had a perception and I have seen this a lot in restaurants, when I look I see a lot of female employees in the front of house, and the front of house is your wait staff and your bar staff and you will also see young white males as well. And then if you look at the back of the kitchen you will see it looks completely different then the front, and I noticed this at Buffalo Wild Wings, and I was really glad that Sean was able to work his way from being a cook to bartender, which is a promotion, the question I do have is that do you feel there

were outside influences holding you back from applying to be a front of the house employee if you had wanted it?

Sean: Oh yea, yea yeah my um regional manager Mark Puckett did not want to see me move up, did not want to see me move up. Did that bother me at all? No, tell me I cant do something, tell me I can't work my way up, when I know I can do the responsibilities of the job and do them well. Become one of the best, because I m going to show you your wrong, I don't care if its outside influences, I am going to overcome them.

Doug: what do you feel were the outside influences, why do you think Mark Puckett did not want you to move up, why do you think you were not even initially offered a front of the house position when you applied?

Sean: Cause the way I dress, the way I am may come across as an uneducated black man, and I hate to say it like that but racism still exists today, and some people don't want to see minorities serving them. Some people still have problems some people still think that we live back in the day, we weren't bad people then we aren't bad people now. I don't put everybody as a whole, know what I am saying? Everyone should look at people as individuals as I do. You can see me as black, I understand that, but I am an individual.

Doug: So racism is alive and well in 2008?

Sean: oh yeah! Racism..... We hating on people who really aren't doing nothing to us, why are we in Iraq? Why are we over there? I understand, they have to work things out. I don't want to get into it; I'd love to see our boys come home..... People stopped hating, there is always going to be hate. I really don't know where I am going with that one.

Doug: that's fine, with regards to your political views, you are talking about people coming home, you are a military brat, and the military career is something you would have pursued, so you have a lot of empathy for the soldiers for in Iraq, are you voting Obama or McCain?

Sean: Really I don't think any of them are going to bring the troops back and that is a big issue. But as far as the economy and McCain is talking bout having it right in 4 years? No son we ain't going to have it right in 4 years. Obama was real, he said it could take 10-12 years, be real with people, let them know we are going to be in trouble but we going to make it.

Doug: Are you going to vote for Obama because he is black?

Sean: No.

Doug: What do you like best about your job?

Sean: The people I meet everyday. I get to meet new people everyday, I like meeting new people, new knowledge cause everyday you got to learn. And plus you never know when your going to make someone's day. I am a very spiritual person; I like to make people feel good. So if I can serve them, make them feel good for 20-30 minutes a day, that's how some people get by.

Doug: What do you like least about your job?

Sean: Again I have to say the people, the people. And the co-workers, I don't understand if your getting paid to do a job why complain. I mean you can complain about some things but things you know need to get done, like portioning ranches, the little cups of ranch for people to dip their wings in, it has to be done, your getting paid for it, you getting paid to wait on your tables. Why complain when you're going to have to do it one way or the other. Do it or get fired or walk out.

Doug: How do you think Virginia Tech affects the business you have?

Sean: Good, good on some nights, people like to come out, and have a good time, do crazy things, we like to have fun here. Big groups come out and want to watch football games, cool exciting people having fun, but then on some nights when they do get drunk and start acting dumb..... But as far as them affecting us getting paid, that's good money and good tips on those nights. But you do have those people who like to cause trouble, try to use fake ids and that could get us in trouble, get us fired.

Doug: It is funny that you mentioned U.P.S in my class we were studying this book called Gig and long story short, it had little interviews like this which this project is based off of and it did a day in the life or a brief job description and the person from UPS was really negative about their job, but they sounded like a slacker, so what was your description of your job at UPS, I kind of want to see if it coincides.

Sean: Well when I started we had to be there at 2 in the morning to unload trucks which had to be at a certain rate, like 1800 boxes per minute it's a lot of boxes and your constantly putting down, grabbing, putting down, grabbing. It's good work if you're not a lazy person.

Doug: 18 boxes per minute?

Sean: 1800 per minute! Cause you know how big UPS is.

Doug: How much did you get paid to do that?

Sean: I got paid 13 dollars an hour.

Doug: how many hours a week was that?

Sean: 5 maybe 5.

Doug: And that was it, that was your only source of income?

Sean: That was the only source, the only source right there. Cause this is when I moved back in with my mother from when I was incarcerated, then I was doing that, and I also went out and helped on the truck, you see when I got my license I was going to be a UPS driver, and this is before I even came back to BWW's.

Doug: Did the need for more hours force you to go back to BWW's? And could you have gotten more hours at UPS?

Sean: No not the way they were doing it, no not at the time, cause the only time there really, really, busy and they need that extra help is December and it runs to....

Doug: So it's a seasonal job?

Sean: Yes for the Christmas season.

Doug: Did you want to become a full time employee at UPS?

Sean: Oh yeah!

Doug: But why? Was it for the benefits, the higher pay?

Sean: Benefits, higher pay, comfortable living, um I was talking with the UPS driver, that why I am such good friends with the FedEx guys at work, because I know what they have been through, everybody starts at down where I started from, they don't hire outside the company, I like that they stay in house, but as far as that yea good benefits, comfortable living, the hours weren't bad, and the work wasn't bad, cause I am not lazy so I would be active. Not bad.

Doug: So I am going to now ask you a few questions about Buffalo Wild Wings right now. The first question I would like to ask you is to describe a typical day at BWW's.

Sean: For me, I walk in about 10, 10:05, walk straight to the bar, start setting up, say hello, people don't usually bother me in the morning cause they know I am not fully awake. Uh set up the bar, turn on the TV's, uncover the liquor, fill the ice, put the chairs down, put out the menus, stock beer, cut fruit, get ready to go for the day.... That's it.

Doug: Ok. Describe to me the worst experience you have had at BWW's.

Sean: Whew! The worst experience was one football game bout a month, month and a half ago. I was bar serving; I think you were working that night. Where food, food was not coming out. Food for some reason was not coming out, there was an hour wait on everything. Everybody's food had a wait of at least an hour, I don't know what was taking so long, but the worst people when you are in a bar is drunk hungry people. Cause they keep demanding where's my food, where is my food? I had a lady come up, belligerently drunk, and keep asking where is my food, I suck at my job, you know? And I am normally a calm person, but this lady kept bugging me, and I had been there for 13 hours at that point, I was tired and I didn't want to deal with

that. You know you should treat people at a restaurant when you don't know how long they have been there. They are serving your food, serving you, have a little patience, just have a little bit of patience, you don't know what they have been through that day. I try to treat people well, but that's when it's a bad day, when people aren't respectful to other people.

Doug: You mentioned you worked 13 hours that shift; do you find yourself working a lot of weeks of 40 hours or more?

Sean: Yea

Doug: Is that because you need to, to make your bills? Do you find that working the minimum of 40 hrs/week which many consider a full workweek doesn't cut it?

Sean: No not today's life style, not today. Cause I know a whole lot of people working at least 40 hours.

Doug: Why is that do you have a lot of debt? Credit cards?

Sean: I really don't, I get bored and I'm a workaholic