

Interview with Erin Parker

For HUM 2504: Introduction to American Studies, Prof. Emily Satterwhite, Spring 2010

Occupation: Head Cook, More Than Coffee, Blacksburg, VA

Time and Place: March 21, 2010, 1:30p.m.-2:30 p.m., More Than Coffee, Blacksburg, Virginia

Interviewer: Corey Toler, sophomore Communication major, from Lynchburg, Virginia

C= Corey Toler

E= Erin Parker

S= Stacey Pannell

C-Will you please state your name, your job title and the name of the organization you work for?

E-My name is Erin Parker, I am a supposed head cook/server at More Than Coffee, which is changing its name to PitaVera, downtown Blacksburg.

C-How long have you worked at your current job?

E-About a year and a half at this place.

C-Would you please tell me a little about your family background?

E-My parents are in Lynchburg, Virginia. And my mom is a volunteer, and my dad works as a mechanical engineer (pauses) with stuff (laughs) that we can't talk about.

C-Does your husband work outside the home also?

E-yes, he works here at More Than Coffee as well as his full time job at Zeppalies, which is behind the old blockbuster at University Mall, Blacksburg.

C-Would you describe in detail a typical day at your job?

E- (laughs) it usually starts out pretty slow, we double check to make sure everything is stocked and ready for the shift to come, umm you know make small salads that will go on the plates get those prepped and ready. Make sure that the line is filled enough so that you don't run out of any ingredients. Ummm you know, make sure everything is cleaned up, because it sucks to come into a dirty kitchen.

C-so true.

E-Especially when its slow, cause when its really busy some times you cant take care of that, but okay. Umm yea that we usually have a couple of orders that start coming in once we make sure everything's done there. And usually we only need about one person in the kitchen for about 45 minutes, then you need 2, and then a third one shows up for no reason so then the kitchens really crowded and it gets frustrating cause people start screwing up because they think its busy

but its not really. You know football games, weekends like that, it does get really busy and we can use up to 4 people in the kitchen for extended periods of time. In addition to having a dishwasher, which we don't normally have. Because normally we do the dishes once it gets slow later in the evening, around 7:30 or 8. Sooo.

C-excellent

E-Oh, and we get to work at about 4:30.

C-what time do you usually get off?

E-usually we get off around 9:15, during Monday or Wednesday. But if theres a special event going on downtown or sometimes on campus that will bring extra people in. you know football games, basketball. The NIT helped a lot so yea. Oh and we did a charity event last Monday; that brought in a lot of people. We were still doing dishes and cleaning up until about 10:15.

C-wasn't that for Haiti?

E-yea! They brought in a lot of people, that was really cool. I think that might be something on the agenda for the future with the owner here. So I guess charity's good (laughs).

C-I guess (laughs).

E- I guess. (laughs) im just kidding, of course it is.

C-okay so how did you come to have this job?

E-I was at the beach with my family, and my mom told me my phone was ringing, and so I answered it and it was the old owner of this place, who's kinda crazy. But ya know, he's allowed to be, he's got cultural differences and uhh he's also just crazy (laughs). But anyway he was like (in accent) "you know how to cook right?" and I was like uhh kind of, because at the time I was working at Gillies like 4 days a week, cause that's the most they'd give you usually. Which really doesn't work out very well. So I was like kind of, because I only knew how to do breakfast and I was just really learning how to cook that. And so he was just like (in accent) well, well you can just figure it out right? But you know how to cook. I was like dude I worked at the diner with Sean, that's the best I can tell you. Cause Joe's Diner is next door and I worked there for years. But uhh yea. So that was that. He called me at the beach and was like (in accent) well when you get back you come and talk to me, we interview.(laughs) and so that was that and I had a job. and shortly after he was asking me to work doubles and I had to quite Gillies. But that's okay because Gillies involved having to wake up at about 4 in the morning to get there on time to make biscuits and have everything ready by 7, when we opened. So, breakfast is a tough shift. Wouldn't recommend it if you're not a morning person.

C-is that the only reason you left Gillies, was just cause it was early?

E-well that and I think I might be slightly claustrophobic, and they're kitchen's really small (laughs). I would get really frustrated really easily there. So. And not that things would screw up, its just theres no room to do anything. And when you go to do your job there's somebody in the way that making soup that going to be served 4 hours later, and you're just like what the hell's going on here? There are people out there that are getting mad because their food's taking too long and you're taking up all but one of my burners

S- yea I worked at Hardees over the summer, and it sounds just like Hardees.

E-(laughs) They're like the soups our signature, we make them from scratch everyday! I was like yea but after a while people stop caring about vegan soup (laughs). I mean unless you are vegan. Of course Gillies caters to that. (pauses) I love how they think the shrimp stuff is

C- Not.

E- (laughs) im just like, No. Those are animals.

C- and you're killing them.

E-and you're eating them. They are delicious.

C- um what do you like best about your job?

E- that we have a lot of freedom. Once you prove that you're worth your salt, I guess is the phrase, I think rednecks say that. I don't know. Um once you prove that you're worth a shit pretty much, um you have a lot of freedom. You pretty much come in, you know what your job it, you do it. Hopefully theres not too much stuff in the way, often times there is. People, children, scooters, boxes, stuff. That you don't even know what it is. Bags of flower, trashcan. There's always stuff in the way. I don't know why. Maybe that's the claustrophobia. Anyway.

C- but freedom? Like to just do whatever you want?

E-yea its not a rigid schedule. Most, a lot of people in this profession smoke cigarettes and they have a lot of time to go out there, as long as they know to get the orders done first. That's the first priority. Then you know, you can figure out the rest of your day, once you've been here long enough to get the swing of it. And ya know when you have time to do that and when you don't, you don't have to ask to do things usually. I mean if they see you sittin around for a long time, then they'll tell you to do something. But you know if you ever want to get a raise or something, don't let them see you sitting around you know. Find something to clean. There's always something to clean, it's a kitchen. I mean walls need to be scrubbed, floors detailed. That's fun work. Theres always stuff to be done.

C-what do you like least about your job?

E- Um, lack of benefits. There's always a possibility that it's not as secure of job. Like job security is that guaranteed. But this town it does help because of the student population keeps businesses going pretty well, even if they're poorly run. But yea, Zeppalies is great. (laughs) this might should be off the record, but the order um drinks constantly. Especially when stressed out and ahh she lets her employees drink. She's pretty much hemorrhaging money right and left, cause she gets drunk. They steal from her. They steal wine. She's got a very extensive wine shop, with some very nice wine. So they steal food by like the tray platter. You know. So that's one of the reasons a lot of people like this kind of work because you can get away with stuff like that. Especially in this town, because the owners don't have to try as hard to make ends meet. So they're not paying as much attention as they could. They don't, they typically don't want to pay somebody to be a manager and look out for that kind of thing. So. For example, a well run establishment would be The Cellar. Cause the manager comes in for a few hours each morning, does the books, goes home, he's got people designated to watch over every section of his business. You know, makes a ton of money. They advertise every where. And those ads are not cheap (laughs). So you know, the ones that are really going to last, they know what they're doing. And they usually do it right. The other ones, they have fun (laughs). It's that freedom thing again you know. You can always say, Oh, the weather's terrible, I mean that happens in Blacksburg (laughs). The weather's terrible, I'm going to close. Go home. If you have enough employees you can just leave. It's not too bad. You know, you always run into the issue of trusting one of them with a key, which is bad. (laughs) the old owner did that here and you know the server, she might or might not have been on drugs. And her boyfriend came in a stole a bunch of tools, equipment.

C- oh gosh!

E- Yea, but it was Steve's fault for leaving all his good tools here. He's got a 2000 square foot house in Christiansburg, so. Yea you know (laughs).

C- do you think that's a result of um being not like a chain restaurant?

E-Yea there's definitely less rigid requirements

C-there more flexible I guess?

E-mhmm. Like Moe's, they have to do certain things, certain ways, every time. Here we have flexibility with the menu or a certain menu item goes way over, you know due to famine or something. Well that will happen with like crop famines and stuff. And they'll cause prices to skyrocket out of nowhere. And you know small restaurants can't afford those fluctuating cost, as well as a chain either. So you have the

flexibility to temporary substitute something on the menu until it comes back to the price range you can use. So it's nice, in some ways.

C- so do you like to experiment with the ingredients?

E- yea! That pretty much the only way I will eat here anymore, is if I make something up completely. (laughs) because I get tired of everything else. But I do that pretty easily with food.

C- so that's cool. Excellent. Umm lets see. Okay where do you live? I guess in relation to here (More than Coffee).

E- umm about 3 blocks, 5 blocks away. I don't know how big blocks are.

C- yea I don't know either

E- cause they change in size once you get further away from main street. But anyway, yea.

C- uh yea. What cost are involved with you getting to work? Like transportation wise. Do you just drive?

E- well I could walk, but I'm pregnant right now. And it's a lot of trouble considering the fluctuating weather in this town so. Usually drive. My husband and I carpool here so that helps. You know, I have ridden my bike in the past. At one point I had a mo-ped.

C-oh really?

E- that was kind of fun, but it was from the 70s and it kind of started to scare me after a while (laughs) so I sold it for 250 bucks. Which is less than I paid. Or more than I paid for it. So yea.

C-that's awesome

E- a lot of bartering goes on among restaurant people.

C- really?

E- yea. If you're, like I got it from my co-worker at the diner. He had owed me some money and he was like, well I just started fixing up this mo-ped, and I cant anymore money because Travis wont give us, like you know he wouldn't authorize us to keep the place open all day because he wasn't making any money.

C- at Joes?

E- yea. Travis was the, or is the owner of that place. So anyway, its ah, oh yea he has the mo-ped. He was like I'll trade it to ya if you don't make me owe you all that money. And I was like okay. But the fact that I got 250 dollars out of it, for like a 75 dollar debt, that's alright (laughs).

C- yea. I'd say so.

E- but that's the example of downtown bartering (laughs).

C-that's like um, when I worked at Applebees we would trade food with Pizzahut. Or whatever.

E- yea good trade.

C- Yea so like you said, you get sick of the food here so.

E- Yea Zeppalies does that with FiveGuys sometimes. I think Five guys might be winning out on that but (laughs). Zeppalies food is so good.

C- I've eaten there.

E- its kind of expensive. Maybe that's why they are still in business. But its really really good.

C- really?

E- Yea. Its awesome.

C- Ill have to try that out.

E- they make their own pasta.

C- oh, do they?

E- its about 40,000 dollars worth of equipment involved. So you know, a good reputation goes a long way. They win best in Blacksburg for Italian most the time.

C- Is this known for anything, More Than Coffee?

E- Well according to Mark (interviewee's brother) actually he said he found some stuff online that said it's like the "Diamond in the rough of Blacksburg" and to come here if you want semi-healthy, semi-fast but really good food. I was like, Oh well that's a nice thing to say about us.

C- you're welcome Blacksburg.

E- (laughs) that's a nice thing to say. Yea we are starting to overcome the slightly bad customer service ratings that we used to get. The owner's wife, she's from Lebanon, she was prissy. What can I say? I don't know if that's her excuse or if that is an excuse. You know she can be nice, but you have to warm up to her. But customers don't have that kind of time (laughs).

C-yea I can see that.

E- yea and the standards for servers up front were not very high with the old owner. Now they're getting better. So that helps (laughs).

C- Umm okay. If you could change one of the things about your work, would you change the wages, the benefits, the schedule, the location, the availability of child care, the availability of health care, the kind of people you work with, or something else?

E- that's, see I pretty much want to change it all. Which means I pretty much want to have my own restaurant (laughs). Like I don't think I would change every single one of those; I think there are like 2 that I wouldn't change. The location's fantastic. They said I could bring the kid in once I have him, but I don't know if raising a child on top of a stack of flour is a good idea.

C- maybe

E- (laughs) we'll have to think about that one. But uh yea, I mean the wages are fair for downtown. They're actually a little bit better the other places. Its just across the board, in this town, in this kind of work, the wages are not high. Most of them don't have health care available. Um I'd like to eliminate about a third of the people that work

here. Um I'd like to work doubles everyday so I knew someone wasn't coming in behind me and screwing everything up. That's why we need our own place (laughs).

C- that's it! The perfect solution.

E- That's why Jim (Interviewee's husband) is working on an idea and we'll see if its going to work.

C-what is the idea? Or is it secret stuff?

E-(laughs) its not that secret. He makes soup here, often, and he's pretty good at them. There are very good, and he enjoys it. And soup has very low overhead. Cost wise. So he wants to make a soup restaurant. Obviously we'd have sandwiches, salads. He also wants to have smoothies. So we were thinking maybe we could just call it "S". (laughs) and people would be like what the hell is "S"? Lets go find out.

C- Secret stuff

E- Yea. Surprise. Its all a surprise. So anyway, yea it sounds kind of funny. And college kids go for weirdness, don't they? Atleast I did (laughs). I was always like that looks weird, lets do it! Lets go hang out at that whole in the ground. I guess that's how I ended up in the diner. I was like this place looks like crap, lets go there. (laughs) and then it got clean and then it got dirty again.

C- so what was it about the diner that you didn't like? Like what drew you to this instead of the diner.

E- well what lead me to leave the diner and to Gillies pretty much? Well the owner stopped paying the bills. So when I went to close out the credit card machine, the phone wouldn't connect because the phone was dead. And I was like Travis you're going to lose a forth of a grand here because it was a really busy weekend and a lot of the transactions were on the credit card machine. And if you cant use your credit card machine, people with green dot cards and things like that are going to zero out their card on other charges before that one goes through and then you're screwed for money. And the longer you wait the longer people have to deny the charge things like that. And I was like Travis we can't run this restaurant for you if you can't pay the bills. We had already taken over the bills that were sent directly to the restaurant and we would pay them out of the safe. So yea. Cause we got a hold of his check book because he stopped doing it. So one time he left it there because he was drunk, and we took it and we were just writing checks for things. And we were like you know what, we want to keep our jobs. We're going to call you and remind you but if you cant do these things there's only so much we can do. So you know, it was a great job for a while. I was making anywhere from 50 to 250 a day. Most days I was averaging around 80, which income stays pretty sweet for someone who's living in a relatively affordable apartment.

Not that affordable because they keep jacking up the rates every year but that's the college thing. So you know its hard to find apartments that are rent controlled for people

C-what happen at Joes, has that ever been a problem here at all?

E- no. they pay their bills (laughs). Gillies is really on top of things but they've been in business, at least since the 70s so.

C-How long has this place been open?

E- as a Lebanese Mediterranean restaurant, I would say about 6 years. Because he used to own Amelio's, which is where DP Doughs is now. And then he got married and his wife told him he couldn't own a bar because she was worried about him looking down girls' shirts. Which after seeing how he acted, I could completely understand her (laughs). Cause he was always like ooooh! And I'm like, seriously you can't do that to girls. Like somebody's going to punch you, or your nuts. But Amelio's was better I think.

C- really?

E- they had I guess a more comprehensive menu. It was as much salad (laughs). I'm not a huge fan of salad. I like a little substance to my food.

C- that's why I always add ranch.

E-(laughs) blue cheese. I good blue cheese is nice.

C-im not really a fan of blue cheese.

E- I can't wait until I can eat blue cheese again.

C- can you not eat it now?

E- soft cheeses. Can't have feta, can't have bree, can't have spreadable cheese, I'm not supposed to have caffeine. Can't get drunk. Not that that's been that big of a deal cause I've been tired so (laughs).

C- you're just going to pass out anyways.

E- But I can't wait until I can enjoy beer in this weather. Go sit by the river, yea. A lot of downtown workers like to go get drunk downtown. I don't understand why because the prices are for the students pretty much. Which is not that good. But if you go to Kroger you can get some good beer, drive yourself to the river, and have a great time! (laughs). Start a fire, stab a crawl fish. Seriously no, he just crawled right up and we were like juuunk. And we cooked it and gave it to the dog (laughs).

C- Kojo?

E-Mojo.

C- Mojo. I don't know why I always want to call him Kojo.

E- its like Moo and Mojo. They match.

C- hmm lets see. Can you time me of a time when you were tempted to walk away from this job?

E-noo. I usually get people in trouble when they piss me off that much. Cause usually I'm right. Which you know sounds kind of hauwdy , but um. Im sorry I worked doubles for like almost a year, like doubles like 7 days or 6 days a week. You kind of pick up on things and you remember it a lot easier if you're there every day, all day. You know its pretty awesome. Job training just falls right into place. Unless you're one of those people who works twice a week during training and drives everybody insane. Cause you come in and you can't remember how to read a ticket. You don't remember what the pizza topping ingredients are. Like they're not that hard. I mean most servers right them out anyway. So its like read and do it and shut up. (laughs). But they don't like doing that. They like getting in my way and driving me nuts. Yea I don't really enjoy training

C- is there anything you think is important for people to know about what you do?

E- um if you're not coordinated, don't try. Start serving. Start somewhere were you don't have to handle things as much. You have to be clean. A lot of people give it a bad rep, just a bunch of dirty hippies who blah blah blah. You have to cover your dirty hippie hair. You have to wash your hands and you cant come in dirty clothes. And there's health code regulations and stuff that prevent dirty hippies from being dirty hippies all over the kitchen. So you know. What was the rest of the question? Im sorry.

C-oh is there anything important people should know about what you do?

E-oh yea and it's a really fast paced environment. If you don't have a good short term memory, don't do it. If you can't see something and figure out how to do it and put it together and like kind of an assembly line kind of thought process. If you can't do that, seriously, start serving, start somewhere else where you can build more skills. Start with dish work. Don't come into the kitchen on your first day if you've never done anything like it before. Some sports would even prepare you, mentally for it but some people come in here and they've never used their hands anything, other than a video game. And that just drives me nuts, cause its really hard to train those people, cause they just kind of drop things and moving around and you know we don't have time to show you every detail of how it works. They show you once maybe twice if there's like some really special specifics about it or something. We don't have time to show you how to do stuff a lot. So its like get the things ready, lay it out, and do it (laughs). You have trouble with a certain skill, say so, so people wont judge you and fire you inappropriately (laughs). Because sometimes that will happen. Not so much at this place but the old owner would just not call you back. Like it was pretty easy that way. Because we had some kids come in, a

lot of them were stoners and some times that's a bad thing, some times its not. Some people can work that way, some people can't. This kid couldn't. He just stood there and stare at us. And we would be like ok now what did we just tell you. And he'd be like how to make this. We were like no no no. you need tell us what you saw so we understand if you're even paying attention. You know just things like. The kid was so spacey, it was awful. And we gave him 3 shots and he was like what's a pita? Which is a pretty foundation item on this menu, by the third or fourth day you should know what a pita is. If you don't, go some where else (laughs). And somewhere a little more slow paced. Especially when you're a tire old fart like I am. We don't want to train all the time, over and over again. So that's why people don't get fired as quickly as they should. Cause people get tired of training them. So whatever.

C- understandable. I know I would get fed up with. Even though I'm one of those people that people would probably get fed up with
E- well if you can communicate, it helps. Like some of them come in and they're real quiet and awkward and its hard to get them up to speed because they don't say what they're having trouble with. They just kind of act confused an think they'll figure it out later and that's not the way to do it. That might work in school and stuff or at a desk job. Its hard, just cause things are fast. Or at least they should be (laughs). The menu is kind of built to be fast so. A lot of times they'll add a menu item try it out for a few weeks, if it slows every thing up to much it doesn't last. So anyway, sorry. That was it.

E-its hard just cause things are fast. When you do that the menu is kind of built to be fast. A lot of times they'll add a menu item try it out for a few weeks if it slows everything up too much it doesn't last

C-do you find your job beneficial in ways other than making money?
How so?

E-Well you can always eat food, we get employee meals. Then you know how [to cook]. Which is a really great thing I woulnt have learned to cook anything hardly except like cookies if I had just never come to a resturant, cause mom raised me to make cookies and that's pretty much else

C-Is that beneficial like saving money wise?

E-Oh yeah, you can like take cheap ingredients and make something good and not have to buy like frozen dinners, I haven't been out in months, because I don't feel like it now, kind of lazy these days. It does save money.

C-What about the people that you meet?

E-You meet some very eccentrics people, and some very normal people but most of the people are on one end of the eccentric spectrum their either this kind of crazy or that kind of crazy. A lot of

drugies, a lot of ex-drugies, weird mountain hippie folk that live around time you run into a few of those. A lot of them are just from other towns in Virginia that aren't as liberal. Places like Lynchburg, there's probably three or four people directly from Lynchburg that just never left town after college. This guy I went to church with growing up, he's the head cook over at Cabo [Fish Taco]. So, its just weird, really weird people. A lot of time there's extreme personalities but usually they get themselves fired. Cause, there is always battles of control and if you don't own the place you shouldn't act like you control it unless someone tells you "you the manager and you control this". But there is always people for some reason thing that they should control things. They walk on thin ice until they get fired. So that's cool, I like it when they get fired.

C-Are there any responsibilities required of you that someone would not normally expect from you position?

E-[Pause] No, (laughs). We wear plastic aprons but they have their advantages, they protect you in the dish pit, clothes does not help (laughs). I suppose it all kind of makes sense with the job. Might help with remodeling which is just a thing, cause I like that kind of thing, its not an expected responsibility.

C-Have you ever considered a different career or job?

E-I have and it bored me to tears and so here I am. I had a desk job as a cad-monkey, a few summers architecture. Yeah it literally bored me to tears.

C-Do you like this better just cause of freedom?

E-Yeah, freedom, the fact you not sitting still all day, like I'm not one of those people that sit still all day. I like to be able to get up. It kind of keeps you physically fit which is great you don't have to go out your way to go to a gym which a lot of people never get around to doing.

C-Do you plan on keeping this job or keeping a career as being a cook?

E-I plan on learning from it for it a while longer. Maybe a year so Joe can get his soup idea and then we'll probably try to branch off. I'll probably be the fry man, just because I mean Jim's been cooking for, he'll be cooking for close to 20 years by then, well not by then maybe 15, 16 maybe 17. Anyway I think its more like 17 anyway, he's been in the industry a long time. That's his realm he's making up the recipes, I'll let him do that. And since I use to be head server at the diner for years like two or three years, I don't know time kind of runs together doing this kind of work. But um yeah it'll probably find a house. Plus I'm dressed better. He likes to wear old stuff every single day where as I only like to do it most days. Anyway, we'll see if that changes. So get my old clothes packed. I don't want to spend a lot of

money on it [new body] since I spent a lot of money on the old one, just try to get that back.

C-Money wise, are you worried at all with about having a baby?

E-Not as much as I was. But I am on wic and all that to help pay for the medical aspect of it. And wic gives you food which is good but that doesn't last forever its just temporary to make sure the baby gets the right amount of nutrition so you know I'm not like ashamed of it cause I don't know. Its not that much but it really is something you can appreciate. And um I will never ever feel bad about paying taxes so at least some it is going somewhere good and not being squandered on crazy road projects like that smart road or whatever. The smart road, it doesn't do anything. [excerpt cut out] it's a big experiment and its cost a lot of money right now its being staled because there's not that kind of money floating around for kind of mess. Normally Blacksburg is really efficient with their money like when they built the overpass of toms creek and 460. [cut]. Its and efficient overpass.

C-What kind of benefits do you receive from your job?

E-Food if that counts. Never have to pay for boxes cause shipments come in twice a week. So there's always a sturdy box when you need it. I guess there's an option of [health care] but most of us cant really afford to consider the option. I mean we'll have to figure something out once my coverage with the state ends, health care, but yeah the benefits are hard. I'm sure they would be available if we pressured enough for them, no one has really ask. You know its just no one quite has the money to pursue it. But I'm gong to have to try so if you need an update call me in a few months.

C-Does your current career or position provide adequate means to help you live in todays economy?

E-Um mostly if that's an answer. They do as well as they can. I'm pretty well paid for this kind of job its just you know in this town doesn't fetch that much money. so pretty much you have to use the skills you learn hope to advance and get your own resturant otherwise you kind of have to decide whether to okay im just going to be a drunk im just going to rent im not going to do much im not going to amount to much im not going to own my own car. A lot of the people in this town have resign over, have just yeah.

C-How do you feel about the concept of the American Dream? Do you feel you've achieved or on your way?

E-They shouldn't make it seem so easy when they make that statement. It is achievable but you have to work hard you cant be a drunk piece of shit all the time. Like you know you can have your fun but theres also the famous ideal of the American work ethic. You know maybe people need to scale things back and go back to more manual labor daily workforce. And just pay them better I mean I know its hard

with oversea competition and stuff but maybe we should tax overseas more, I don't know. Its possible its just no easy but has it ever been that easy, I don't know.

C-Do you feel the American dream is subjective? Do you have your own American dream? What is yours?

YE-eah. for sure. We would like to have our own business. We like to have some land to get away from this town a tiny bit. Not that its bad, its rowdy, we want space, we want more dogs. I don't know, its like, it can work.

C-What advice would you give young people about finding the right job for them?

E-If you don't know what you want, just try different things. Don't be too serious. Don't always have high expectations of things just go in and try it for the fun of it. if it doesn't work out it doesn't work out. Sometimes you learn some really cool along the way. You know some people do know what they want to do straight out of high school and college and stuff and they should go for it. I thought I wanted to be an architect, and I do not want to be architect. I prefer a lot of freedom in what I do. Like I would like to flip house later or something that would be cool. I prefer renovation, architecture is kind of wasteful these days honestly. Don't tell the department (laughs) cause their like really high in the country right now. But um you know rehabilitation of structure is much more important because it waste far less materials. Sometimes it doesn't create as many jobs but sometimes it does cause a lot of things have to be analyzed by specialist so rehabilitation is good. It saves money and its recycling.

C-Where do you see yourself in 5 to 10 years?

E-5 years, still, not struggling but working hard to get by. Hopefully working hard at our own restaurant. We're going into negotiations about this condo we're going to close on later this week. You know hopefully we'll be ready to um maybe have most of that paid of so we can refinance and buy something bigger with land possibly. The good thing about this town is that if you have something like a condo you can rent. And it usually rents for much more than the mortgage payment [portion cut out]. We get to move in, in June, and get out of Stonegate. It'll be cool because its not as student populated. But yeah there are is some things in this town that is much more secure than other places, so there's always that. Hopefully we're making ourselves secure maybe use the condos alone to start the business. We'll just have to get private financing. But that's okay because private financing is good. And then 10 years hopefully we'll you know have that cool house in the middle of no where and a decently successful business. We don't want to get too big because we don't want too many people underneath us. Because a lot of time when you over

extend yourself and don't want to trust people then you end up screwed. So we don't want to do that, unless we know what we're getting into. So hopefully start small, stay relatively small unless something really crazy happens, I don't know (laughs). But yeah its there's always a demand for faster slightly healthier food in Blacksburg so this place is going to be alright.

45:00 - 46:45 [spoke about ceiling tiles. Nothing to do with the actual interview]

C- okay last question. Do you have anything else you would like to share?

E- everybody should try it for a little while. Just for the shits and giggles.

C- try cooking?

E- well restaurant work of some kind.

C- I feel it helps a lot.

E- It does.

C- I feel like most people should.

E- It helps people who some times have trouble being social; it helps you learn to get over that.

C-I think also people, I guess who are stuck up or don't really have to work for their money, it helps them see how people, you know earn a living.

C- yea (laughs) what work really is (laughs). Yea I think everybody should try it for like a month. Just don't make me train you (laughs). Yea that's kind of a jerk way to say it but awesome.

C- well is there any other questions?

Well I guess we do give the Jerk treatment to newbie's, just to see if they can handle it or stick it out. But you know if they can and if they work their way up and show they can learn then that usually goes away.

C- I guess is shows they're earning it.

E- Yea it will get people to stop, stop doing that. The people stop giving you the cold shoulder and stuff so.

C-well I guess that's, unless you have questions or you want to add anything. Oh wait I have a question. Um having a baby in a college town, do you worry about that at all?

E- We were at first but the condos are in a much less student oriented area. Its more grad students, young professionals and respectable townies. There's respectable townies and party animals. And party animals, you know there's a few of them known as Kevin's Kids. He let's them sleep in the storage area of his restaurant because they

don't have any where to live. Because they are complete alcoholics. Um you know there's a few of those. There's respectable townies, that work hard and probably have similar goals to ours, I would say.

C- And then family wise, do you believe your family's going to be involved.

E- Yea I think there's a lot of nice things to do in the area. You know we're going to be in walking distance of First and Main. Which seems like a pretty clean set up. Um a lot of the seatier parts of town are being fixed up, which is good. And the ones that aren't are pretty obvious, and we aren't going to be going near them. Like when you see them, you'll know. There's like the Mom n Pop trailer parks and then there's the crack trailer parks (laughs). So the Mom n Pop ones there's like 4 or 5 trailers and some old people maybe. Like 2 old men smoking a pipe or something. And then there's the crack trailer parks. MaryMount Rd., stay away. Like we considered buying a house over there and we were like dude we can't have our kid riding the bus with a crack dealer's kids. Like it might be bad. Because that's where a lot of them start smoking pot at like 9. And I mean that's a little bit too young. Like Chef says on South Park, there's a time and a place for everything and its called college. So 9 a little too young. And we might be slightly liberal here but uh not that (laughs). So yea the schools are pretty good in the area and since Jim likes wrestling so much and Christiansburg is like awesome at wrestling.

C-really?

E- oh yea.

C- little Takoda will get in there.

E- mmhmmm. They start the kids wrestling at like 3 years old around here. They've got camps at the Y (laughs). I was like sweet. Hes going be a wrestling champion.

C- well I guess we're done

E- cool.

C- and we are signing off now.

[51 minutes and 23 seconds]