

**COZ FONTENOT**  
**Eunice, LA**

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Date: June 19, 2008  
Location: Ruby's Café – Eunice, LA  
Interviewer: Sara Roahen, Southern Foodways Alliance  
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs  
Length: 32 minutes  
Project: Southern Boudin Trail – Louisiana

**[Begin Coz Fontenot Interview]**

**00:00:00**

**Sara Roahen:** This is Sara Roahen for the Southern Foodways Alliance. It's Thursday, June 19, 2008. I'm in Eunice, Louisiana, at Ruby's Café with Mr. Coz—I'll let him pronounce his last name. If you could just say your full name and your birth date we'll get started.

**00:00:19**

**Coz Fontenot:** My name is Coz Fontenot. September 23, 1955.

**00:00:24**

**SR:** Thank you, and did you grow up in this area?

**00:00:27**

**CF:** Yes. I was born and mama raised me in Eunice.

**00:00:31**

**SR:** And what about your family—are you Cajun?

**00:00:36**

**CF:** Uh-huh, yeah, I'm Cajun. My—my father hardly talked any English. If my father would be living he would be 104. And I'm fifty-two, so he was fifty-two when he had me.

**00:00:50**

**SR:** Your mom was a little younger, I guess?

**00:00:52**

**CF:** My mother was twenty years younger than my father and my dad hardly talked any English. So when you'd get a spanking we'd get two of them—one in French and one in English.

**[Laughs]**

**00:01:02**

**SR:** And do you speak French, I guess?

**00:01:05**

**CF:** Yes, I speak it.

**00:01:08**

**SR:** How often when you're—when you're working during the day or meeting people—what percentage of the time do you speak French and what percentage English?

**00:01:16**

**CF:** Well a lot of times I'll drink coffee with a bunch of old men; I'm not old yet but—and they all talk French. We all talk French.

**00:01:25**

**SR:** Where do you go for coffee?

**00:01:26**

**CF:** Well I come to Ruby's, but a lot of times I'll go to McDonald's because they got a lot of old-timers that go over there that talks French, and I just keep my heritage up.

**00:01:38**

**SR:** Um—

**00:01:38**

**CF:** The coffee is better. I just—I feel more comfortable there as far as being able to talk my language, my second language.

**00:01:45**

**SR:** What about with your sister who is also in here—does she speak French?

**00:01:49**

**CF:** No, but she understands it very well. So we listen to the radio and I make jokes and I tell her this and that, or you know what it means, and she says, *I know*. [**Laughs**]

**00:02:03**

**SR:** Could you say something in French?

**00:02:07**

**CF:** *Comment ça va?* That means *How are you doing?* And most people say, *ça va bien*, but a lot of them is lying. That means you're doing good, but a lot of them lie to you.

**00:02:21**

**SR:** So you also sing in French?

**00:02:23**

**CF:** Yes, I love to sing. I've been singing ever since I can remember, yeah.

**00:02:29**

**SR:** Was music and singing a big part of your family?

**00:02:31**

**CF:** Well the music was, not so much singing. I'm the only one that sings in my family. Besides that one of my mother's sisters that used to sing Country and Western on the—on the radio when she was a little girl, which she's no longer here, but I mean you know—. Most of them, they talk French but not much. I love my heritage and I love to sing. That's my life. **[Laughs]**

**00:02:57**

**SR:** Well if not very many people in your family were singers, how did you take to that, (do) you think?

**00:03:03**

**CF:** Well my father was paralyzed when I was seven years-old and we took care of my father while my mother worked at night, so there was no play time outside after school. But on Saturdays we used to listen to the radio program, which was French. It started at like 7:00 in the morning until noon and then at noontime they would play the mambo two-step and I knew that was the end of our quality time—me and my father—so I always hated that song. Not too much that I hated mambo; I just hated that song because it was a key to let, you know, that—that was the last song that was going to be played that Saturday, and there went our quality time. So I always hated that song. And to this day I never did learn how to play it at all. It's an instrumental, but I never learned how to play it for that simple reason. I never did care for it on that—you know—. [*Laughs*]

**00:03:58**

**SR:** And then you would have to go do chores, or what—what happened after that?

**00:04:03**

**CF:** Yeah, oh yeah we always had chores. We always had to see about my father, feed him, and bathe him and bring him to the bathroom, you know and everything. And I was just seven years old when that happened.

**00:04:14**

**SR:** Was that a work-related injury?

00:04:18

**CF:** No, he had a stroke and he was paralyzed. And when he passed away I was 10 and I'd cut grass 50-cents a yard with a motor—lawn mower with no motor, push mower, and the St. Augustine grass which was really thick. And then I bought my first harmonica when I was 10. I saved up enough money and bought my first harmonica the first year at Mark Savoy's—that Savoy's Music Center was in business. And I paid \$3 for the harmonica. And now they're \$30.

**[Laughs]**

00:04:48

**SR:** Do you still have that one?

00:04:51

**CF:** No. I probably done went through 100 of them since I've started playing because I just blow them out. They don't last very long. I usually go through two or three of them a month, so that gets to be pretty expensive—you know, like \$90 a month. I could buy me a real good accordion, but the reason I started playing the harmonica was I loved the music so much but my father—my father passed. And all my neighbors, their dad bought them each an accordion but I didn't you know—didn't have no means to get one.

00:05:31

When I—when I got old enough I bought my own, and then I started playing fiddle, and then I started playing drums and I played bass tuba in school and never played football. I'm a great big guy. But everybody said, *I bet you played football*. I said, *No, I played music*. And I said, *I got all my bones*. **[Laughs]**

**00:05:53**

**SR:** And now what do you primarily play, the harmonica and—?

**00:05:56**

**CF:** Mostly, yeah. I still play the accordion every now and then, but I lost my accordion and my fiddle and all my awards to a fire.

**00:06:10**

**SR:** Sorry to hear that. Well you got your voice. I've heard you sing before. I have. I heard you at Bubba Frey's, and then I also—I guess you told me yesterday I heard you at Jazz Fest, but I couldn't see far enough to see that that was you onstage.

**00:06:25**

**CF:** Yeah, it was probably a million people there so it's kind of hard to see that far away, but yeah, we had a great time. We really did. As a matter of fact they got a clipping of us on YouTube.

**00:06:38**

**SR:** I'm going to look that up.

**00:06:38**

**CF:** It's on You Tube under *Cajun Jams*, I believe is what it's called. And they—you can dig it up. And there's only one song, and naturally they filmed the one that's an English song.

**[Laughs]** *Keep Your Hands Off of It*. And the people went crazy. Jimmy Buffet was playing on the side of us, and I'm sure he was wondering who was that on the side of us that the people were going crazy for. Yeah, I had a blast. It was a great experience.

**00:07:08**

**SR:** Well I could talk about the music forever, but I know you don't have all day. Let me—let's get to the boudin. You told me, when I first met you at Bubba Frey's you mentioned that you make your own boudin—or have—at home. Can you talk about that?

**00:07:20**

**CF:** Well Bubba Frey told me it's a good thing I'm not far from—I don't have a shop not far from him because I'd put him out of business because he's ate some of my mine. I used to do the boucherie downtown in Eunice for seven years in a row and make the boudin. But I—I had to quit on the count of my diabetes; I was just too sick to be able to do it anymore. But I learned since I was 12 years-old how to make boudin, and I'm 52. **[Laughs]** So there's 40 years I know how to make boudin.

**00:07:54**

**SR:** Who taught you how to make boudin?

**00:07:57**

**CF:** Well they had a store named Pete's Stop and Shop, and mister—Mr. Pete used to—he showed me a lot of that. And then they had another place called the Easy Shop, which is no longer here—both of the places are not here—and they had a guy named Mr. Steve LeJeune that showed me. And then they had another man that worked there, and he made it different, and his name was Mr. Frank Bordelon. So I learned from three different men, and then I kind of put my own seasoning and my own vegetables the way I like it and came up with my own recipe. And it's just—as a matter of fact, this gentleman named Mr. Jimmy Pelican about four years ago had a boucherie at his house—a butcher—and I made some homemade boudin. And he told me his father made boudin ever since he was a kid and Mr. Jimmy is about 70 now. And he said he's never ate no better in his whole life. Even his father couldn't touch my boudin. He said I missed my calling; I should be making boudin for a living.

**00:09:00**

**SR:** What do you think makes—distinguishes yours from other boudin?

**00:09:02**

**CF:** Well a lot of people now, they don't like to put liver—pork liver—and I still put pork liver, but I don't put enough to overpower my taste. I just—I usually put like one pound of liver to 10 pounds of pork meat. And then I put bell peppers and I put onions, green onions, parsley, celery—all my vegetables, I run it through the grinder twice. Most people put it just once, and I put it to where it's almost like liquefied to where you get a consistency all throughout. Where a lot of people just chop it up once and put it in there and you bite it and you get a big old piece of

celery or something and it just—all you taste is that big piece of celery instead of it all combined together.

**00:09:57**

**SR:** What about, what kind of pork do you use? What cut?

**00:10:02**

**CF:** We just usually use the Boston butt pork meat.

**00:10:07**

**SR:** And what kind of rice? What grain?

**00:10:08**

**CF:** I like to use long-grain because when you're stirring it up, if you use short-grain it breaks it up so much that it just turns to mush. So I like to use the long-grain where it stays together better.

**00:10:21**

**SR:** That's similar to Bubba Frey's. He uses long-grain too.

**00:10:24**

**CF:** Except he don't use no liver in his boudin. *[Laughs]*

**00:10:29**

**SR:** So I'm—

**00:10:29**

**CF:** To me it's not boudin if there is no liver in it. And in the old days they used to make blood boudin, where they would put the blood from the hog and mix it in with the—but it's not—no longer allowed today to be sold. You can still do it at your home, you know, when you butcher a hog. But as far as to buy it in a store or—you can't buy it, blood boudin.

**00:10:55**

**SR:** Do you like blood boudin?

**00:10:57**

**CF:** Yes. Yes, that was the first kind of boudin I ate probably when I was a kid, because they used to sell it in the stores when I was a kid. But now I'm getting old and they don't do that no more. [*Laughs*]

**00:11:08**

**SR:** So I'm curious: so you were 12 when you learned. What do you think inspired you to learn to make boudin? Were you working for these men or—?

**00:11:13**

**CF:** Yeah, I worked at a grocery store and they got me—first I started off as a bag boy and then they put me in a meat market, and she showed me how to cut meat and how to make boudin and

how to smoke sausage in the smokehouse and how to season chickens. They had a big rotisserie, outside on the sidewalk, and they would put chickens in the rotisserie. I learned how to do that. I made an accident one day and knocked over a Dr. Pepper all over a chicken, and I just put it on the rod. And then a lady came back two days later and she told Mr. Pete, [**Speaking French**]. *I'd like one of them chickens that are sweet.* And he said, [**Speaking French**]; he said, *We ain't got no chickens sweet.* [**Speaking French**] *I've only—I bought one the day before yesterday.* So he came in the back and he asked me if I put sugar on it and I said, *No, sir, but I can't lie to you. I knocked a Dr. Pepper on it.* He said, *Well, every Tuesday,* he said, *Put a little bow tie on two chickens, on the—on the leg.* And he said, *Season it like you did and drink the rest of the Dr. Pepper.* He said, *The lady is going to come every Tuesday and get her sweet chicken.* So I came up with a recipe just by accident.

00:12:29

**SR:** That's how a lot of recipes are born, I think.

00:12:32

**CF:** Yeah, I think so. But I had a very good child life. I had a lot of different people show me a lot of things, a lot of different men.

00:12:40

**SR:** So at that place—I can't remember what it was called.

00:12:45

**CF:** Stop and Shop, yeah.

**00:12:47**

**SR:** What was the boudin like there, do you remember?

**00:12:51**

**CF:** It was good. [*Laughs*] It's hard to find bad boudin, but there's just some better than others.

**00:13:00**

**SR:** Would he make blood boudin?

**00:13:02**

**CF:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, Mr. Pete would make blood boudin.

**00:13:06**

**SR:** And so back then, I mean I know it's not allowed anymore to just buy blood, but is that what he would do? Would he buy blood from someone?

**00:13:13**

**CF:** No. He—when he butchered a hog he'd get the blood from the hog, yeah.

**00:13:18**

**SR:** Can you tell me a little bit about—you said you were recently at a boucherie at Jimmy Pelican’s house, is that right?

**00:13:23**

**CF:** Yeah.

**00:13:26**

**SR:** Tell me what that is just for the record, a boucherie, and what you did that day.

**00:13:29**

**CF:** Okay, a boucherie is a killing of a hog and you cut it up and use some meat to make boudin. And you make backbone stew, pork backbone stew, and make pork jambalaya—anything you can make. You don’t—you use everything except the squeal on a pig at a boucherie. You make cracklins; you know, boudin, hogshead cheese—you make it all. The only thing you lose on the hog is the squeal because they eat the tail; they eat the feet. Pig tail, pickled pig tail, pickled pig feet.

**00:14:12**

**SR:** And so at this particular one, did y’all make all that?

**00:14:12**

**CF:** Yeah. Oh yeah, yeah. We ate good that day. [*Laughs*]

**00:14:18**

**SR:** Can you make all that food in one day?

**00:14:21**

**CF:** Oh yeah, but there's—there's a bunch of different people participating, and I was the one making the boudin.

**00:14:29**

**SR:** And they just let you make your recipe?

**00:14:30**

**CF:** Yeah, yeah. They let me do it my way and everybody loved it. I still get compliments about it.

**00:14:39**

**SR:** Have you ever written your recipe down?

**00:14:41**

**CF:** No, I never have. I just do it by memory and taste.

**00:14:50**

**SR:** Have you taught it to anyone else?

**00:14:53**

**CF:** No, I never have. [*Laughs*]

**00:14:54**

**SR:** You better pass that down.

**00:14:58**

**CF:** Yeah, I need to. I know there's another place in Mamou that makes very good boudin, is Charlie's Meat Market. His boudin is excellent but he makes it different from around here. He cooks his rice, which we do too, but he puts his meat in, he grinds it up raw, and we boil our meat and then we grind it and mix it altogether. So he stuffs his with raw—with raw meat and cooked rice and puts it on a low fire and boils it real slow to where it cooks the meat inside and you don't lose none of your flavors. From boiling your meat you—naturally your juices is—but I use my juices to moisten up my boudin; that's how I do it. And him, he don't—he don't boil his meat, so he don't lose no juices at all because it's all cooked inside of the skin.

**00:15:54**

**SR:** I've never heard of that.

**00:15:57**

**CF:** You never heard that; you see, you learned something today. Now you got to drive to Mamou and interview Charlie.

**00:16:03**

**SR:** Oh, do you know his last name?

**00:16:05**

**CF:** No, I don't. I would want to say Fontenot but I'd be lying if I said that because I'm not sure.

**00:16:12**

**SR:** There are a lot of Fontenots around here, huh?

**00:16:16**

**CF:** Yeah. There's one man that said—one day he says, *Oh no, not another Fontenot*. And I said, *Well whether you like it or not you're probably kin to a Fontenot if you was raised around here* because in—right outside of Ville Platte, Louisiana they got a place called Fontenot's Hatchery, but I mean they hatch eggs. I tell everybody there's Fontenot's Hatchery in Vidrine Louisiana, and I say in Eunice they got Fontenot's Exterminating. **[Laughs]** And I just say that as a joke, but it's really true. **[Laughs]**

**00:16:47**

**SR:** So if you put your meat in there raw, then doesn't it—it doesn't get too moist in there with the—and mushy with the rice?

**00:16:54**

**CF:** No. Well the rice absorbs some of the juices. And then to me it's very good. It's totally different than anybody around Eunice that makes it. There's nobody in Eunice that makes it that way.

**00:17:07**

**SR:** So you're very conscious, it seems like, about preserving your culture.

**00:17:16**

**CF:** Oh I love my culture. I love to talk French. I love my—just the people in general. The people around here is the most friendly people. I've been all over the world and I've never met nobody around here—not that I'm stuck on Acadians, but we are very kind people, very loving.

**00:17:36**

**SR:** What do you think—what does boudin mean, just in the culture at large? Does—what does it mean to the people?

**00:17:42**

**CF:** Well when I was a kid we'd get boudin every Saturday. That was like a ritual, and every Saturday morning we didn't have breakfast; we had boudin. That was better than breakfast. As long as I can remember every Saturday my dad would—. And then when my dad passed away my mother would get it. Every Saturday we ate boudin, and that was like our weekly treat.

**[Laughs]**

**00:18:07**

**SR:** Would she or he get it and bring it back home or would—?

**00:18:09**

**CF:** Yeah, yeah. We'd eat it at home, yeah.

**00:18:13**

**SR:** Like sitting down at the table?

**00:18:16**

**CF:** Sitting down at the table, or we might open the package up on the way home and eat some. It's just something that we was born and raised with you know, all our life. And when you go out of state you really learn to appreciate your culture even more because you can't get the stuff like you can over here. There's no comparison.

**00:18:40**

**SR:** Have you lived out of state ever?

**00:18:41**

**CF:** I lived in—outside of Atlanta, Georgia for 10 years, and I had a little catering business and I had my Cajun band there. And I made my own boudin, my own tasso, and my own sausage. And one day I came back and I brought some for my mother to try and she said, *Son, Mama can't eat that you know. I'm real sick.* So she said, *But cook you some on the stove; boil you some*

*sausage. And then she said, We'll cook something tonight. She said, Everything I got is in the freezer. I said, Okay. So I started boiling some and one of my aunts got there and she told my mother, she says, Oh May, she said, That sausage smells good. And she hadn't even walked in the kitchen, so I said, Well I done something right. So when I—when it was cooked my mother told her, she said, Go make you a few sandwiches, baby. So my aunt did and she took a bite and she says, Oh May, where did you get that sausage? I need to go get some. That was like when we was kids. And she said, Well you'll have to go a long ways because Coz made that all the way over there in Georgia. And she looked at me and she said...I felt sorry for you all this time and you're eating better than us. And I told her, I said, Well Aunt May, the only thing I can't grow over there is crawfish. I said, I can make everything else except crawfish. [Laughs]*

**00:19:55**

**SR:** That's how you kept from going hungry—?

**00:19:57**

**CF:** Yeah, and—and being homesick.

**00:20:00**

**SR:** Yeah, huh. Yeah. Crawfish—there's not a lot of crawfish around Atlanta.

**00:20:06**

**CF:** No, not unless you import it.

**00:20:07**

**SR:** What do you think made your sausage taste like when she was a kid?

**00:20:12**

**CF:** Probably the way I seasoned it and the way I smoked it. I smoked it—I smoke it longer than most people. And the old people, they would smoke it all night long, and now they smoke it two or three hours.

**00:20:27**

**SR:** And let me see, what was I going to ask? Oh, what kind of wood would you smoke it over?

**00:20:33**

**CF:** I always like to use hickory, but there's not many hickory trees around anymore.

**00:20:42**

**SR:** What about, have you heard about—anything about the origins of boudin, like where the tradition came from?

**00:20:50**

**CF:** I really think it came from the Germans. You know as far as I know, that's where it come from, just like the accordion and our music came from the Germans. And our sausages. The Germans had a big influence on it too, because in Germany they're—they're connoisseurs on

sausage in Germany. And I think we learned a lot about cooking as far as sausage and boudin from the Germans.

**00:21:21**

**SR:** Do you have German blood in your family?

**00:21:25**

**CF:** Not that I know of, but I might. [*Laughs*]

**00:21:29**

**SR:** But there are a lot of German—people of German heritage in this area even now.

**00:21:32**

**CF:** Yes, yes, mostly in Mowata. Around Mowata there's a lot of Germans. That's where you find most of them—the Zaunbrechers and the Frys and the Ballacks and just a bunch of—bunch of Germans.

**00:21:46**

**SR:** Do you find that people of German heritage also speak French?

**00:21:51**

**CF:** Some of them, but not too much.

**00:21:58**

**SR:** Can you tell me a bit about when you were a kid, what kinds of places you found boudin sold in, and how that's changed if at all?

**00:22:05**

**CF:** I don't think it's changed at all because the only place that ever sold it was in the grocery stores. You know, little—little shacks on the side of the road. That's the only way; you know, I never bought it like in a restaurant or nothing, and then if I did I'd kind of be afraid to eat it because I don't know where it come from or who made it. *[Laughs]*

**00:22:30**

**SR:** Do you think—does it seem like there are more or less places now than when you were a kid, to buy boudin?

**00:22:35**

**CF:** Well in Eunice there's three places. There is—that I know of that makes it that's pretty good.

**00:22:46**

**SR:** What are those?

**00:22:48**

**CF:** The Eunice—Eunice Superette Slaughterhouse, the Eunice Poultry, and then they have another place in town called T-Boys. But I don't much care for his boudin.

**00:23:05**

**SR:** He came from another area, I think.

**00:23:05**

**CF:** Yeah, he come from Mamou. He's got a place in Mamou and one in Eunice. I think he does a whole lot better in Mamou though because the people are used to the boudin from around here, and it's totally different from in Mamou, you know. They make theirs different from Eunice.

**00:23:24**

**SR:** What do you think characterizes this town's boudin?

**00:23:28**

**CF:** I really don't know. I mean probably just the way they—they made it the last 60 or 70 years, I guess.

**00:23:40**

**SR:** But—but is it generally long-grain, short-grain—?

**00:23:44**

**CF:** I don't know. Some people—I think it's mostly long grain that people use to make their boudin. See, my grandmother's brother used to make boudin and he passed it onto his son, and his son is the one that makes the boudin at Eunice Poultry, which is my second cousin.

**00:24:04**

**SR:** What's his name?

**00:24:05**

**CF:** Gary Mercantel.

**00:24:07**

**SR:** I met him yesterday.

**00:24:07**

**CF:** You met him; well that's my second cousin, yeah. And he makes great boudin. I can't take nothing away from him, but he learned it from his father. His father's recipe is what they use now. And at the Superette Slaughterhouse it's pretty much the same because he worked there for years and so they got his recipe. So they make it pretty much like he does.

**00:24:33**

**SR:** And is that—I was going to ask you if there's anyplace where I could get boudin commercially that tastes anything like yours?

**00:24:39**

**CF:** Probably. Yeah, that would be close—as close as you can get without me making it, is at the Eunice Poultry from Gary Mercantel.

**00:24:53**

**SR:** What about if you make boudin at home—where do you get your casings?

**00:24:56**

**CF:** You can buy it just about any store, yeah.

**00:25:02**

**SR:** And what about when you do the boucherie, do you use the actual animal?

**00:25:05**

**CF:** We used—we used to—the intestines, yeah. We used to use them, but by law you ain't supposed to if you're going to sell it, you know.

**00:25:15**

**SR:** Well like when you were at Jimmy Pelican's, did you use it?

**00:25:19**

**CF:** No, no, we didn't use it because it's a big process to clean those things out. And everybody is waiting and they're hungry and they didn't want to wait for you to clean the guts out [*Laughs*] to stuff the boudin.

**00:25:30**

**SR:** Is there a connection in this area between food and music?

**00:25:35**

**CF:** I think so, yeah. A lot of people like to eat and a lot of people like the music. I think it's— it's pretty close ties.

**00:25:45**

**SR:** What about besides boudin, do you cook at home?

**00:25:48**

**CF:** Oh yeah, I can make the best jambalaya in the world.

**00:25:52**

**SR:** What kind?

**00:25:52**

**CF:** Pork jambalaya. And then I can—I make the best bread pudding in the world too because my bread pudding, most people they call it bread pudding and they slice it like a cake. Well mine

is like a pudding; it's not like a cake. So when somebody offers me bread pudding I look at it and I'll say, *No, I don't want no cake. I want bread pudding.* I won't even eat it here at Ruby's because they don't make it like I do. And my sister—my mother used to make it all the time and my sister hated it. And I started making mine and she loves mine, and she never liked bread pudding before. So—.

**00:26:30**

**SR:** And so you don't make it like your mom did?

**00:26:31**

**CF:** No. My mother always made hers with milk and I make mine with water. Yeah, and when I lived in Atlanta there was this lady that was allergic to dairy products and she said, *Oh I'd love some of that bread pudding but I know you got milk in it,* and I said, *No Ma'am, I don't.* She said, *You're sure?* I said, *I promise you.* She said, *because I'll get deadly sick.* I said, *Ma'am, I'm telling you there is no milk. I use water instead.* So every time she would come to the dance she would buy a bowl to eat and two bowls to go home with because it never made her sick, because I was telling her the truth. There was no milk in it.

**00:27:05**

**SR:** Can you describe to me a little bit about the process of making that because it sounds so interesting?

**00:27:08**

**CF:** A lot of eggs, a lot of sugar, and bread and milk—I mean water. I don't use milk; my mother used milk. And I told her, I called her up from Atlanta one day and I said, *Everybody loves my bread pudding and I don't use milk; I use water.* And she said, *Do what?* And I said, *Yeah, I use water.* And she said, *Oh son, she says, Water is a lot cheaper than milk.* She said, *If they like it just keep on making it with water.* So I'll never use milk to make my bread pudding.

**00:27:34**

**SR:** And how did you come up with that?

**00:27:36**

**CF:** Just by trial and error, yeah.

**00:27:40**

**SR:** And what about the bread? Do you squish it up?

**00:27:44**

**CF:** Yeah, I just tear it up and put it in there. I like to use fresh hamburger buns though, and a lot of people like to use old bread and they save it and they freeze it, but I like to use fresh bread; the hamburger buns, because it's got a kind of—I don't know; it's got a little different taste than a regular piece of bread would, and it's got more brown to it.

**00:28:09**

**SR:** What kind of spices do you put in there? Cinnamon?

00:28:09

**CF:** No, I don't use no cinnamon at all. I usually make a rum sauce to go on top of it. But I use imitation rum, like the rum extract like you would vanilla extract because a lot of people (say), *Rum, I can't have no alcohol products.* I said, *Well it's not alcohol; it's just rum extract.*

00:28:31

**SR:** Just a couple more questions, is that okay? I wanted to ask you about this place where we are right now—Ruby's. It's been around for a while. Have you been coming for a while?

00:28:40

**CF:** I used to come when I was a kid when we'd come to the show on Saturdays right—which is right next door. And Miss Ruby was the one that would—she would stay in the back most of the time and cook. And she had a—her two daughters that would work in the front. And you used to have go through the kitchen to go to the bathroom. I had some girls from Atlanta, like four of them that came down, and I told them about that and they said, *Well we're going just to see if you're telling the truth.* And they couldn't get over it when they got back. They said, *We had to tell the—the cooks and stuff "Excuse me, we need to go to the bathroom."* And we all four went back there just to see if you was telling the truth. But now they—since it's changed hands they had to put a—a bathroom not in the kitchen. **[Laughs]**

00:29:25

**SR:** What would you eat back then?

**00:29:29**

**CF:** Well pretty much the same stuff that they cook now here. But on Saturdays we'd eat—we come and share a little box with some scooped ice cream and we'd—that was a treat, and we'd get to eat ice cream. But it would come in a big tub and it was a scoop ice cream.

**00:29:45**

**SR:** And I ran into you here yesterday. What did you have yesterday for lunch?

**00:29:49**

**CF:** I ate some fried chicken. But I like their ponce over here, which is pork stomach stuffed. That's pretty good stuff, and then they got pig tongue; that's good stuff too.

**00:30:08**

**SR:** They have that today, I think.

**00:30:09**

**CF:** Oh tongue, yeah. People say, *Oh tongue*; I say, *Yeah*. And then I like their ribs over here too because it's got like the skin on it, and they bake it in the oven and it's kind of like a cracklin', like a hog cracklin'. It's out of this world. So if you eat them, I don't know which one will be the best for you to try.

**00:30:35**

**SR:** I don't know. I was looking at the menu and everything looks—.

**00:30:36**

**CF:** If you like hog cracklins, then you just as soon go ahead and get the tongue. If you've ever ate hog cracklin' before it tastes similar to that, and if you never ate tongue I would recommend for you to eat the tongue because you've done ate hog cracklins except they was fried instead of baking them.

**00:30:55**

**SR:** So this place was open your whole childhood?

**00:30:57**

**CF:** Yeah, yeah this place was here since 1957.

**00:31:01**

**SR:** Has it changed much?

**00:31:02**

**CF:** Well they put a little bit of wall paneling and wainscoted it. Other than that it's the same old roof and same old walls, same old floor. Yeah, the food is pretty much the same. Good, real good.

**00:31:18**

**SR:** I have one last request. Would you be willing to, you know, either in here or outside sing a song in French for us?

**00:31:25**

**CF:** Hmm, I don't know. I don't really think so.

**00:31:35**

**SR:** No? Okay.

**00:31:36**

**CF:** I got a CD in my van. Maybe you can put one of the songs on there. It's hard for me to sing by myself.

**00:31:44**

**SR:** Well that's—

**00:31:44**

**CF:** Unless I'm in the shower. [*Laughs*]

**00:31:46**

**SR:** All right, well I'd love to get a CD. Well, thank you for giving me your time.

**00:31:52**

**CF:** You're quite welcome.

**00:31:54**

**SR:** Could you say good-bye in French?

**00:31:55**

**CF:** *Bonjour*. That means *Good day*, and if it would be nighttime I would say *Bonsoir*. As a matter of fact they've got a band called *Bonsoir, Catin* that just came out. And in France a *catin* is a whore. In Louisiana, a *catin* is a baby-doll, something precious. So, *Bonjour à tout*.

**00:32:22**

**SR:** *Merci*.

**00:32:24**

**[End Coz Fontenot Interview]**