BRENT PELTIER
Peltier's Specialty Meats – New Iberia, LA

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Interviewer: Sara Roahen, Southern Foodways Alliance
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs
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Project: Southern Boudin Trail – Louisiana

[Begin Brent Peltier Interview]

00:00:02

Sara Roahen: This is Sara Roahen for the Southern Foodways Alliance. It's Wednesday, July 13, 2008. I'm in New Iberia, Louisiana at Peltier's Meat Market. Could I get you to say your name and—and your birth date for me, and how you make your living?

00:00:17

Brent Peltier: Brent Peltier, May 7, 1964. I own the meat market and butcher shop.

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SR: And you were telling me earlier that you worked in grocery stores for a long time.

00:00:29

BP: Right, I worked for Winn Dixie for twenty-two years, and also a local grocery store from when I was fourteen to seventeen.

00:00:40

SR: And at that point early on, were you also working with meat?

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BP: Yes, made boudin, uh-hmm, and wrapped meat. I didn't cut the meat there.

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SR: And—and where was that? Was that also in New Iberia?

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BP: In New Iberia at Stein's Superette.

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SR: So you grew up here?

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BP: Correct.

00:00:57

SR: And was it just happenstance that you wound up in that industry or did you have family members there?

00:01:04

BP: My dad was a butcher when he was in high school, and also after high school, and then he left into the electrical field, but I ended up working in a grocery store and liked it.

00:01:13

SR: And so can you describe for me a little bit what your job was like at Winn Dixie?

00:01:18

BP: Basically wait on customers, cutting meat, making sausage, ground meat, average meat market stuff. **[*Laughs*]**

00:01:27

SR: Did they make boudin there?

00:01:28

BP: No, they didn't.

00:01:31

SR: And so what inspired you to open up your own place?

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BP: It was always a dream to own my own business, and I loved working with meat and cooking it.

00:01:43

SR: And so now, I mean I'm interviewing you primarily about boudin so I'll start there, and then we'll talk about the other things that you do here. But tell me a little bit about the process of developing your own boudin recipe. You weren't making it professionally for a long time.

00:01:59

BP: The recipe came from my dad. My dad made it. It was our family recipe; that's the way it, you know—just more or less kept the same recipe. A few things had to be changed, but not much.

00:02:10

SR: And so would your dad make boudin at home when you were growing up?

00:02:12

BP: Yes.

00:02:14

SR: Wow. Would he—would you have a boucherie at home or would he just go buy pork?

00:02:20

BP: Just go buy the meat at the store and just make it at home.

00:02:23

SR: Uh-huh, and what kind of cut would he use?

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BP: Mostly Boston butt and pork liver.

00:02:31

SR: And what would be the occasion of his making boudin at home? Would it be—?

00:02:38

BP: A reason to drink beer. **[*Laughs*]** That's it; you know, just to have fun.

00:02:44

SR: And how often would he do that?

00:02:48

BP: Say every couple of months.

00:02:50

SR: And so he had a meat grinder?

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BP: Little hand grinder. Everything was done by hand—no, no electrical equipment.

00:02:56

SR: How would he stuff it?

00:02:58

BP: With a bull horn.

00:03:02

SR: Like a real one?

00:03:03

BP: Yeah. Real bull horn, yeah.

00:03:06

SR: Do you still have that?

00:03:06

BP: No, sure don't. It got lost somewhere.

00:03:09

SR: Is your father still alive?

00:03:11

BP: No, he passed away. It's been—been five years.

00:03:15

SR: Well I'm sorry to hear that. When you were working at Winn Dixie before you opened this place, were you making boudin at home?

00:03:22

BP: Yes, I was making it at home and that was—I probably make it about every three or four months, and we'll run out.

00:03:30

SR: And so can you tell me a little bit about your recipe or—without giving away any secrets…could take me through making a batch?

00:03:40

BP: It's taking—I use Boston butts and I—with pork liver—and ball it and make it. When (the pork) is cooked just take it out and you grind it with vegetables—your onions, you bell peppers, celery, parsley—and then mix it with your rice, your broth, and then stuff it into he hog casing.

00:03:55

SR: What kind of rice do you use? Long-grain, short-grain?

00:04:00

BP: Long-grain. Yeah, long-grain.

00:04:02

SR: Is there—I find that sort of certain pockets of Acadiana use certain—a certain grain of rice. Is New Iberia generally a long-grain place?

00:04:10

BP: No, they're generally a short-grain but I prefer the long-grain rice.

00:04:13

SR: What do you prefer about it?

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BP: The texture. I just find it has—gives it a better texture.

00:04:19

SR: I like it too personally, but I've heard people who use short-grain say that the long-grain falls apart too much.

00:04:27

BP: It depends on how you cook it I guess. In mine, I don't find mine falls apart.

00:04:32

SR: Yeah. So you do use liver in yours. Do you—do you have problems from customers? Are there customers who come in who won't eat the liver?

00:04:42

BP: A few—not many. But this—this is an old recipe. People who want an old-fashioned boudin know that we have that.

00:04:52

SR: What about your vegetables? Do you add them in raw or do you cook them first?

00:04:55

BP: We—we brown them. We smother them down, yeah, and then—but the green onions and the pork go in raw. It's just the onions and bell peppers that we sauté.

00:05:05

SR: Oh okay. And any garlic?

00:05:07

BP: Yeah, we do use garlic and also garlic powder.

00:05:13

SR: I tasted your boudin the other day; it was good.

00:05:16

BP: Thank you.

00:05:16

SR: So how much do you go through in a day?

00:05:22

BP: The days—varies. You know, you might sell 100 pounds one day and the next—next day you might only sell 10. It just depends on the weather, and I guess if people are hungry for it or not.

00:05:32

SR: Yeah. And so do you—how often do you make it?

00:05:35

BP: Every two to three days, we normally make up—normally it's about a 250-300-pound batch.

00:05:43

SR: So when you were growing up would you just—and you know your dad would make boudin or you would go get it at a shop—would you mostly just eat it by the link or did—did y'all cook with it?

00:05:55

BP: We made sandwiches with it, or just ate it in the car coming home.

00:06:01

SR: How would you make a sandwich with it?

00:06:03

BP: Put it between two slices of bread or on a po-boy bun—French bread.

00:06:05

SR: Oh like the whole link, huh?

00:06:07

BP: Yeah, uh-hmm.

00:06:08

SR: All right. Tell me a little bit about this transition that you made. Was it—what are the advantages and the disadvantages of—of working for a place like Winn Dixie and then owning your own meat market?

00:06:26

BP: The advantage is everything you do you can, you know—you can experiment more; you know your hands aren't tied. The disadvantage is you don't know if you're going to make money from one day to the next. You know, you have a lot of expenses.

00:06:39

SR: Yeah. What about, do you have to deal with inspections in a different way now, or were you dealing with that at Winn Dixie?

00:06:44

BP: I dealt with that at Winn Dixie. I did all the, you know like when the state inspectors would come in I was—I was one of them that had to walk with him through the meat department. And the same thing here, just the same rules—same regulations.

00:06:58

SR: So it seems like, I think—is that your family working here?

00:07:03

BP: My wife and my daughter.

00:07:07

SR: A whole family operation?

00:07:08

BP: Yeah. We had—my other daughter was working with us but she's going to college, so she moved away. And my little niece was working with us, and then she's also going to college now so she got—got a job where she can put in more hours—more evening hours—when she's out of school. So it's just family, and (I) have my wife's nephew, he's working with us too. He's a freshman in high school and he makes sausage and boudin with us.

00:07:29

SR: Oh he does?

00:07:29

BP: Uh-hm.

00:07:29

SR: So it's—it's being passed down to the next generation already?

00:07:33

BP: Yeah, uh-hm.

00:07:36

SR: And so can you tell me a little bit about your family heritage? Are you Cajun?

00:07:39

BP: Yeah, born in raised in South Louisiana. My dad was born and raised (here). My mom was from Delcambre and dad was from Loreauville…My mama's dad was from Georgia, so she didn't have much of a—as far as influence as far as Cajun ways, but my dad's whole family is from South Louisiana.

00:08:00

SR: Do you know how far back they go?

00:08:01

BP: No, sure don't. I know—I know his great-grandfather was from Houma, so I don't know; it goes back a pretty far ways.

00:08:12

SR: Yeah, and how did he learn to make boudin?

00:08:15

BP: My dad?

00:08:17

SR: Uh-hm.

00:08:17

BP: From his dad, and I guess his dad from his dad and on down the road, you know.

00:08:23

SR: Were you ever part of a boucherie, a hog killing?

00:08:27

BP: Yes. My family—I think we had in-laws—my dad's brother—that we done it a few times but we no longer do it.

00:08:36

SR: Does anybody do that anymore?

00:08:38

BP: In St. Martinville they have a boucherie festival once a year. It's—I think it's the weekend before Mardis Gras they have that festival.

00:08:44

SR: Yeah, I need to catch that.

00:08:48

BP: They do that on the Saturday and the Sunday; they have a real big thing out there.

00:08:54

SR: Did your dad ever talk about, or have you heard from anybody else, theories about where boudin traditions came from?

00:09:02

BP: No, I have no idea. No, I never really thought about it. **[*Laughs*]** It's just something we did.

00:09:09

SR: I hear you. Tell me a little bit about the other sausages and prepared foods that you make here.

00:09:15

BP: We serve plate lunches daily and do all kinds of fresh sausages: green onion, turkey, chicken, rib-eye. We just, you know we take the meat and grind it and add different seasonings and vegetables to it and just put it inside the same casing you make boudin with.

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SR: Rib-eye sausage?

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BP: Yeah, it's a lower grade rib-eye. It's not good like for a pit, so either have to cook it in a gravy or grind it. And I just add seasoning and vegetables to it and make a sausage, and once you put it on the pit if you cook it right you'd swear you're eating a rib-eye steak, but it's already seasoned.

00:09:51

SR: I've never heard of that. Is that common?

00:09:55

BP: No, a lot of people don't know about it.

00:09:56

SR: How did you know about it?

00:10:00

BP: Just something I did one day, just playing around.

00:10:03

SR: Huh, I'll have to try that. Could you cook it on the stovetop?

00:10:05

BP: Yeah. You can brown it and cook it like you do bratwurst or any other type sausage, you know, but it's best on the pit.

00:10:13

SR: Huh. And then I saw maybe some bacon-wrapped goodies over there.

00:10:18

BP: Chicken, yeah; bacon-wrapped chicken breast. We wrap it with a cream cheese or jalapenos, or just plain. We also have the bacon-wrapped thighs. And we do a stuffed catfish, stuffed potatoes. You know, we do it with crabmeat or shrimp, bacon, broccoli and cheese, butter and cheese. We just do different things. People ask us to—if we could do—if we can do things for them, and we just experiment with it and we find out it's good and we call them up and let

them know we have something for them. And they'll come and try it, and they like or not you know.

00:10:50

SR: Can you give me some examples of that? Have you had any—anything really strange or really delicious that somebody has asked you to do that you were surprised by?

00:11:00

BP: No, not right off hand. No, nothing strange. I made some deer sausage for a guy. He wanted to put spinach and shredded…Swiss cheese in his sausage. And it was kind of strange. I did it for him and took a link and we cooked it and it was pretty good.

00:11:21

SR: Had he had that before or—?

00:11:23

BP: He—he just had me do it for him. I don't know if he had it or somebody made it for him. And then one of the guys that we buy—one of our distributors that we buy from, the guy he's a real health fanatic, and he wanted to know if there is anything else he could put with his deer sausage that would actually add fat to it without being unhealthy. So I said, well the only thing I can think of was avocado. So we added avocado to his deer sausage and it was pretty good.

00:11:49

SR: Really?

00:11:51

BP: Yes.

00:11:51

SR: Would you have known that it was avocado in there if, just by tasting or—?

00:11:56

BP: No, it didn't have any kind of avocado flavor to it once it was cooked. It just, you had a wild deer flavor to it but you didn't have a dry flavor. It was—it was moist.

00:12:07

SR: That's so interesting. You might be onto something.

00:12:10

BP: Maybe so. **[*Laughs*]**

00:12:11

SR: So yeah, you can explain that a little bit? I see on your sign that you do deer processing. And I guess we're talking about that a little bit. What does that mean?

00:12:20

BP: People go out and hunters go out and kill the deer, and a lot of them don't know how to process their deer. They'll bring it to us to cut, wrap, and make sausage; deer patties; salami, jerky; beef steaks—deer steaks; tamales; whatever you can think of—bologna. Whatever you can think of you can make with anything we can make that deer out of.

00:12:46

SR: Huh, have you made tamales before?

00:12:48

BP: Yeah, uh-hm.

00:12:49

SR: Hmm. I suppose you can't sell those to the general public?

00:12:53

BP: No, you can't. I can get deer in from New Zealand and I can sell that. You can also buy domestic deer, but it's real expensive. But you can get deer in from New Zealand that's about the same price as beef or pork, and you can turn around and sell that you know. It's not outrageous for the consumer.

00:13:09

SR: Do you ever do that?

00:13:09

BP: Yes, I got some deer in today. It comes in a 60-pound block frozen and you have to thaw it out and then grind it to make your sausage, and I should be doing some within the next week.

00:13:22

SR: Cool. So can—so you can do that with deer. Do people bring any other game animals in?

00:13:26

BP: Oh yeah. We did buffalo, hogs, elk, bear, any— any kind of game really.

00:13:39

SR: What do you make with people's bears?

00:13:41

BP: Jerky is the only thing we've—they brought it in just to make jerky.

00:13:43

SR: That would make a lot of jerky, huh?

00:13:45

BP: Well it was just—he didn't bring in that much. I guess he had—was on a hunt with a few people and they killed a bear and they just got portions and all of his was for jerky.

00:13:52

SR: And do you have some sort of drying apparatus for the jerky?

00:13:55

BP: We have a smoker. We just—a homemade smoker we smoke it in.

00:14:01

SR: That's interesting. So I'm sorry; I'm trying to backtrack. You said hogs—

00:14:07

BP: Elk, deer, moose, let's see. I don't know what—.

00:14:16

SR: Where do people kill moose and elk around here?

00:14:17

BP: People go out on hunting trips and then they'll like—business owners, they'll take clients out to hunt and then they'll go hunting, and then they'll come back and they'll say, *My deer and my moose is getting flown in in a week or two weeks*; wants to know if I have room for it. And then they'll just bring it in, you know whenever it—the moose flies in.

00:14:40

SR: So as long as they bring the animal in already dead—

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BP: It has to be cleaned. It has to be gutted and cleaned. I—I do not take it if it has the skin or hasn't been gutted.

00:14:52

SR: But somebody—if somebody killed a hog on their own property and—and cleaned it and then brought it in here, that would be okay?

00:14:59

BP: Yeah, we'll cut it up for them.

00:15:02

SR: Do cows—do people bring in cows?

00:15:03

BP: No, because the cows—you're going to slaughter it you're going to bring it to a slaughterhouse because it's a lot of work to kill it and gut it and skin it yourself. It's a lot larger animal.

00:15:15

SR: What about fowl?

00:15:18

BP: We haven't got any in a while. You know, no one has brought in any.

00:15:24

SR: Is this—the custom processing, is that something that you also did at Winn Dixie?

00:15:30

BP: No, that was not done at Winn Dixie. The little store I worked at when I was 14 to 17. I worked at Winn Dixie, and then like during deer season the guy who owned the store—I'd go in on my days off and he was processing deer at that time. And I would help him process all of his deer, which he no longer does.

00:15:45

SR: It seems like that's such a niche market and it's such a specific skill. Was there a big learning curve when you first opened?

00:15:56

BP: No. I mean as far as the processing of deer, it's just like cutting a—a cow or a pig. And to make sausage—sausage is just basically meat with seasoning, and you put whatever seasonings you like in it, and that—that is sausage. Ground meat and ground deer, ground pork, ground—you know whatever you put is—is sausage.

00:16:15

SR: Are you a hunter?

00:16:16

BP: No, I've never—no.

00:16:20

SR: Well that sounds difficult to me, but—so what about the cracklins? Did you do that at your previous job?

00:16:28

BP: No, we did it at home. My dad always did—cooked cracklings just basically—about every Sunday he would sit down with a pot full of pork bellies and make cracklins.

00:16:41

SR: And he would like—would he buy the pork bellies and then cut them up himself?

00:16:42

BP: Yeah, he'd buy the whole bellies and slice them into cubes himself and then put them in a pot of water and let them boil until they made grease, and then he'd start frying them.

00:16:51

SR: That's a lot of work.

00:16:52

BP: Yeah, that would take—the process he used would take probably about four hours and he would only end up—he'd start out with probably five pounds of cracklins and he'd end up with a pound and a half or two pounds.

00:17:05

SR: Would he share?

00:17:06

BP: Oh yeah, he gave it to the whole neighborhood.

00:17:10

SR: So describe that process for me. So you—you cut the pork belly, which you would buy at a meat market I guess.

00:17:16

BP: Right, and then after you cut it—his process, he'd put it in water and boil it. Now over here, to cut down the time I start it in the lard from the previous cooking that I've done, which cuts the cooking time down and it—I can have cracklings done in about two hours. You just keep cooking and stirring, and when the cracklins float you pull them out and then when they—you let them cool. When they become room temperature you turn the grease back on and let it get to about 400 degrees. Throw them back in. And once they—you throw them back in, the skin will

start to pop, and then now you have some—skin. You can eat the skin. It becomes real crunchy like a pork rind.

00:17:53

SR: I've never heard of that boiling in water step rather than—. You know, everyone I've talked to so far does what you do: they do both batches in the lard.

00:18:05

BP: My dad does it from the old way. When you killed a hog when he was growing up, you had no lard to start it in, so you had to start it in water to be able to boil the—the lard out of it, to be able to fry it. And you just keep cooking it; the water evaporates as it's cooking, and while it's evaporating you're making lard, so you're always in the liquid.

00:18:26

SR: Can you tell a difference in flavor between the two styles?

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BP: I can't. It's—you can tell it with the different cooks, but I wouldn't say between—if I was to cook it with water versus starting in oil it would be—probably be about the same flavor. It would just be maybe a different taste if my dad was cooking it.

00:18:45

SR: All right. So someone's coming in to buy cracklin' right now. How—is there an average amount of cracklin' that you make a day?

00:18:55

BP: We probably make—probably about 50 pounds. We start out with 50 pounds of bellies a day. And as you can see, we empty them and we're trying to cook some more.

00:19:07

SR: Right. Do you have one of those—the automatic stirrer things?

00:19:09

BP: No, everything is done by hand.

00:19:13

SR: Well let me know if you need to run over there and stir it.

00:19:15

BP: My wife and my daughter are taking care of it for me.

00:19:18

SR: Oh okay. What is—were there any surprising challenges about operating a place like this?

00:19:26

BP: Surprising, not really. No, not that I can think of. I—I researched it for many a year before I did it, so I think—I didn't have everything, but nothing really shocked me.

00:19:40

SR: What is the biggest challenge of having a place like this versus, you know, working for a corporation?

00:19:46

BP: Trying to make enough money and save it to—in case something breaks down. It's a real big challenge because the cost of meat and fuel and operations is going up, and now it's just family working here. But we still all—all got to get paid. The biggest challenge is trying—trying to keep the doors opened, you know.

00:20:06

SR: Has it gotten easier over the three years?

00:20:10

BP: Yeah, it has gotten easier. But like I say, the fuel cost has gone up a lot which has in turn caused the meat prices to go up, and I'm trying not to—I'm trying not to pass it onto the consumer and trying to hold it, you know, but we can't just keep eating (the cost).

00:20:27

SR: What about in your household growing up—it sounds like your dad cooked a lot? Was he the main cook?

00:20:34

BP: He was the main weekend cook when he wasn't working. My mom was the Monday through Friday cook, and he was like the big meal cook.

00:20:41

SR: What other kinds of things would he cook?

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BP: Everything: jambalaya, chicken stew, crawfish étouffée, boiled crawfish. He—he can cook anything.

00:20:53

SR: And it sounds like you kind of took that over. Do you cook in your household?

00:21:00

BP: Oh yeah, I do all the cooking. **[*Laughs*]**

00:21:01

SR: Do you?

00:21:02

BP: Yeah. My wife does some, but I'm the main cook.

00:21:07

SR: What about—we're also doing a project on Louisiana gumbo traditions. What kind of gumbo do you make in your house?

00:21:16

BP: Chicken and sausage, and also seafood; shrimp and okra. That's about the three that—we don't eat any wild game, so we don't make any like duck gumbo and stuff like that. We—we process it, but nobody in my family likes it, so you know we just—so just the traditional type gumbos.

00:21:39

SR: And with a roux, I gather.

00:21:41

BP: Yeah, homemade rouxs usually. But when—when we're in a crunch we'll use a store-bought, Savoie's (or) Richard's roux.

00:21:49

SR: I see that you have Savoie's on the shelf over here.

00:21:51

BP: Right, yeah.

00:21:53

SR: And did you—who did you learn how to make gumbo from?

00:21:57

BP: My mother and father, both of them. They—they both had their own techniques on ways, and (I) kind of combined the two.

00:22:06

SR: Uh-huh. What—what shade do you get your roux?

00:22:09

BP: Dark. I like the dark shade—really chocolate color.

00:22:15

SR: And do you use the whole trinity—the onions, bell pepper and celery?

00:22:19

BP: And celery, yeah. Sure do.

00:22:22

SR: Let's see. What else was I going to ask? I guess I'm wondering in a place like this, you also do plate lunches. What—like for example today, what did that consist of?

00:22:36

BP: Barbequed chicken and barbequed pork chops, baked pork chops or crawfish étouffée. And then we had sides: we had green beans, pork and beans and corn; white—white rice. I put the crawfish étouffée on rice dressing to go with the barbeque.

00:22:52

SR: You must get up early.

00:22:53

BP: We get here—normally we're here at 6:30 in the morning, and then we—we get here and we have two platters we got to get out…for some breakfast platters. And then we have to—we start cooking for plate lunches.

00:23:05

SR: And what is your—you know I came in here for boudin, and it seems like you do sell quite a bit of that. Is that one of your—the main parts of your business, or is that just a sideline?

00:23:17

BP: I think the plate lunches and the meat is more of the main part, and boudin is more of the sideline.

00:23:24

SR: Do you—do you smoke sausage here?

00:23:26

BP: Yeah, we do smoke—I'm out of smoked sausage right now. We do smoked sausage, smoked beef jerky, smoked beef steaks, salami.

00:23:34

SR: Do you make andouille?

00:23:36

BP: Yes, we do. Well it's more in the wintertime than in the summer.

00:23:38

SR: Oh really?

00:23:39

BP: Yeah, it's—you put it in your gumbo you know, and summertime you don't make too many gumbos.

00:23:44

SR: Do you ever make gumbo here?

00:23:46

BP: We do. On—when it gets real cold we'll do that as a plate lunch, but not on a daily basis. We usually have it in the freezer.

00:23:57

SR: Oh okay. Can you tell me just for the record what's the difference between smoked sausage and andouille?

00:24:03

BP: Andouille is—it's a more heavily seasoned and also a larger grind pork; it's a pure pork sausage. And smoked sausage is more of a fine grind with less seasoning; you can use that on po-boys and you don't have to cook it in a gravy type to actually be able to eat it without being over-spiced.

00:24:22

SR: But people still buy that in the summer?

00:24:25

BP: Right, yeah. Because you'll barbeque it and make a sausage po-boy. You—some people do put andouille on a po-boy bun and eat it as a barbeque andouille po-boy. But it's not—it's just a lot more spice to it.

00:24:40

SR: Yeah, it's pretty intense.

00:24:41

BP: Yeah, and a heavier smoke.

00:24:44

SR: Yeah. Did you—besides your dad, did you have any people in your life that were inspirations to you in this business or in boudin making?

00:24:55

BP: My dad's brother, my Uncle Kurtis. He was a caterer and he was an excellent cook. He can make a two-by-four tender. You know, he was just a real good cook.

00:25:07

SR: Is he still living?

00:25:07

BP: No, he—it's been about six months. He's passed away.

00:25:10

SR: So he was in New Iberia too? He had a catering business here?

00:25:13

BP: In Loreauville.

00:25:15

SR: Oh okay.

00:25:18

BP: About eight miles down the road.

00:25:22

SR: And what about your daughters—do they cook?

00:25:25

BP: Hmm, one can boil water and the other one is trying.

00:25:31

SR: To boil water? **[*Laughs*]**

00:25:32

BP: Yeah. **[*Laughs*]**

00:25:33

SR: Well I guess she's probably spoiled then with your cooking.

00:25:35

BP: They never—never had to cook, but she's learning though. She's making Hamburger Helper and stuff now.

00:25:42

SR: That's good. **[*Laughs*]** What was in this space before you moved in here?

00:25:48

BP: It was a diner. It was Hebert's Country Kitchen.

00:25:54

SR: Did you—when you were growing up, did you ever go out to get boudin or was it all in the home?

00:26:01

BP: No, we—we also went out to eat to get it to different meat markets or grocery stores that had it. And if we were hungry for it, you just went out and got you a soft drink and a link of boudin.

00:26:14

SR: Kind of like people in other places who'd get a bag of chips and a (soft drink)?

00:26:16

BP: Correct.

00:26:19

SR: It wasn't any ceremony or special occasion?

00:26:20

BP: No, just—it was something to eat.

00:26:25

SR: I think I sort of asked this before, but would you say that there's anything specific about—in New Iberia, the style of boudin making versus other places?

00:26:37

BP: The style, I'd say that everybody I know that makes boudin in New Iberia just basically has their own style. It's not—you know some have a coarser grind or finer grind; some prefer more rice; some don't have any liver in it. It's just—I'd say it's up to the individual. I don't think it's like—to say New Iberia is a certain way.

00:26:57

SR: What about, so you're relatively new. What was it like to gain a clientele? Were there people who already—was it people already knew you, or did you mostly get people from the neighborhood or—?

00:27:11

BP: It was just put a sign at the road saying, *We're Open,* and what—letting them know what we had and just hoped somebody came in. And it's just, you know, win their trust and having a quality product I believe is what it took.

00:27:21

SR: And tell me, you mentioned earlier making platters for the oil field workers. What did you mean by that?

00:27:30

BP: You have some oil field companies that come in and they'll buy it for their customers where we'll make breakfast platters with bacon, egg, and cheese with biscuits; we'll do—cook some of the bacon-wrapped chicken breasts and bake that; smoke some Boston butts and mix it with —make pulled pork po-boys. Just different things for them every morning just to—they can go out and feed people, their customers.

00:27:59

SR: And so these are people working for the oil fields, or like salespeople?

00:28:05

BP: Salespeople selling to the oil fields.

00:28:07

SR: Buttering them up?

00:28:07

BP: Right, yeah. **[*Laughs*]** It's basically what it is.

00:28:11

SR: Do they buy boudin also?

00:28:15

BP: Oh yeah. They'll buy—sometimes you know you'll sell 50 pounds to one. Like they're having a big thing for oil field companies and they'll—they'll call and say, *I need 50 pounds for Saturday morning*. You know you sell a lot too like for funerals, for people coming and eating because it's a quick easy meal, something you can just wrap and go.

00:28:38

SR: Do you—is there a certain time of day when it's—when boudin is in higher demand than others?

00:28:43

BP: I think right now between—after lunch until about 4:00 or 5 o'clock. In he heat of the day you don't want to eat the rice.

00:28:52

SR: Oh I see. That's interesting. What about like early in the morning? Do you get that at all?

00:28:57

BP: Yeah, we'll—we'll get like school kids heading to school stop in and get a soft drink and a link of boudin, or people heading to work looking for something other than an Egg McMuffin.

00:29:08

SR: That's so funny to me coming from—I was only allowed to eat non-sugared cereal.

00:29:14

BP: Oh really? **[*Laughs*]** Well when the kid leaves the house you're not going to know what he's doing. **[*Laughs*]**

00:29:18

SR: Good point. I keep looking at this dry erase board because you have fried chicken and liver. So you fry chicken livers?

00:29:28

BP: Yeah. We'll fry chicken livers for lunch.

00:29:33

SR: Sounds good; sounds really good. What is your biggest lunch seller?

00:29:39

BP: I'd have to say probably the brisket on Monday. It's a real big seller—that and the pork roast. I'd say we have more people come back for that, and the chicken stew. I'd say chicken stew would have to be the—on Thursdays the biggest, yeah.

00:29:54

SR: I might have to come back for that. Describe that for me how—the process of making that.

00:30:00

BP: Browning chicken. We have a big black iron griddle and we brown all the chicken on it. And then we—after the chicken is brown we'll throw our trinity on it, and then get that sautéed. And then cook—make a roux and add it to the chicken and the trinity and the water and just let it cook for a couple of hours; let it simmer, you know, for a couple of hours and just serve it over rice.

00:30:27

SR: For the most part here, do you make a roux or do you use premade rue?

00:30:33

BP: Most part it's premade, you know, but every once in a while we don't have it so we have to make the—make the roux. We just don't have the time to make it every day.

00:30:42

SR: Right, yeah, and in an operation like this to be making roux all day long.

00:30:47

BP: Right, yeah.

00:30:47

SR: So when you—when you make your boudin and then cook it, what do you cook it in? Just a pot on the stove?

00:30:57

BP: Yeah, a stock pot on the stove with water and just boil it. Boil it for five minutes and then wrap—we'll put it in a warming oven you know filled with water, one of those—I can't remember what you call it—tabletop ovens. And just put it in there, the holding water.

00:31:16

SR: So do you still eat a lot of boudin now that you're making it every day?

00:31:20

BP: Hmm, not like I used to. Now I can't eat it like I used to because of health. I still cheat.

00:31:28

SR: That's the problem out here. I hear that from everyone. **[*Laughs*]** It wears on you after a while.

00:31:32

BP: Yeah. **[*Laughs*]**

00:31:33

SR: What about red boudin? Did you know that at all growing up—blood boudin?

00:31:39

BP: My dad's brother, my Uncle Kurtis, he made red boudin occasionally and we you know—but I don't know of any operation other than they have one in Abbeville I think is still making it. But that's the only one I know of around here that's still doing it because of the bacteria and the problems that can occur from making it.

00:32:03

SR: Did you like it when your uncle would make it?

00:32:05

BP: Oh yeah, it was good. I really did like it.

00:32:09

SR: It didn't freak you out as a kid?

00:32:11

BP: No, because you grew up with it. It wasn't something that was—the first time I ate a burrito I freaked out, but red boudin was normal. **[*Laughs*]**

00:32:20

SR: When was the first time you ate a burrito?

00:32:23

BP: I think about seven.

00:32:26

SR: That's funny. **[*Laughs*]** Well I don't want to take up too much of your time, but maybe you can tell me what is your favorite part of your job? What do you enjoy about your job the most?

00:32:36

BP: Being able to work with my family; having everybody here. You know I don't have to go home to see them.

00:32:44

SR: That's nice; that would be nice. Well thanks. I just hope I can get a few pictures if you don't mind.

00:32:50

BP: No problem.

00:32:52

SR: Thank you for your time.

00:32:53

BP: All right, thank you.

00:32:57

[End Brent Peltier Interview]