

**RICKY LEBLANC**  
**Meat Inspector, Specialist Three - New Iberia, LA**

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Location: New Iberia, LA  
Interviewer: Sara Roahen, Southern Foodways Alliance  
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs  
Length: 1 hour, 24 minutes  
Project: Southern Boudin Trail – Louisiana

**[Begin Ricky LeBlanc-1 Interview]**

**00:00:00**

**Sara Roahen:** This is Sara Roahen for the Southern Foodways Alliance. It's Monday, June 16, 2008, and I am in—am I in New Iberia, Louisiana?

**00:00:09**

**Ricky LeBlanc:** Outside.

**00:00:11**

**SR:** Outside of, all right. And I'm—I'm here with Mr. Ricky LeBlanc. If I could get you to say your name correctly and your birth date and tell me what your profession is?

**00:00:20**

**RL:** Full name is Richard LeBlanc, born March 20, 1953—as a meat inspector, Specialist Three for thirty-three years.

**00:00:37**

**SR:** Specialist Three, is that what you said?

**00:00:39**

**RL:** Yes.

**00:00:41**

**SR:** And what does that mean?

**00:00:42**

**RL:** It's different steps that we have as inspectors, and Specialist One is the lowest meat inspector; Specialist Three is probably your highest and you go on from—after Three is a Supervisor.

**00:01:01**

**SR:** Your address, just for the—just so I understand where I am—is your address New Iberia or is it Lafayette?

**00:01:06**

**RL:** It is New Iberia. It—we are right in the middle of New Iberia and Lafayette, and I'm ten miles from New Iberia and fifteen miles from Lafayette.

**00:01:20**

**SR:** Can you tell me a little bit about how you got into your line of work?

**00:01:24**

**RL:** Back in [nineteen]'76 I was looking for a job that I could train my horses also. And a friend of mine was a meat inspector and a bus driver. And it got to where it was too hectic for him to bus drive and to be a meat inspector because his plant hours in New Iberia were from 6:00 in the morning until 2:00 in the evening. So I said, "Well, that would be great for me, and I'd have time in the evening to work my horses." And that's where it all started.

**00:02:03**

And then as time changed, I had to change my living to the way meat inspection would change, and through the years New Iberia lost all the processing and the slaughterhouses they had; and I had to change to working in Lafayette and area plants within our district, and so I had to actually change my hours of work to meet meat inspection.

**00:02:37**

**SR:** So when you started out in '76 were you only working in New Iberia? Were there that many slaughterhouses?

**00:02:43**

**RL:** We had New Iberia Slaughterhouse in New Iberia; we had Bodin's Boudin, which chose to change from State inspection to Federal inspection when they moved over to the airbase in New Iberia. The New Iberia Slaughterhouse finally closed down in [*Sighs*] in—I'm going to say right around 2000 they gave up their inspection.

**00:03:18**

**SR:** So can a—can a slaughterhouse—you have a choice whether you want a State or a Federal Inspector?

**00:03:27**

**RL:** First of all, you have different types of inspections. You have where you can have custom slaughter, which is each individual going knowing what animals they have; bringing them to that slaughterhouse; and coming to pick up their process meat—which is called custom slaughter.

You have inspection slaughter, where an animal can be bought by the actual establishment, processed—killed and slaughtered, processed—and an individual can buy any type of parts—it can be halves, quarters, parts, and the meat was inspected. And that’s your—your types of inspection.

**00:04:19**

**SR:** And what’s the difference between being inspected by a State Inspector and a Federal Inspector?

**00:04:28**

**RL:** We have all the same guidelines. The State is half funded by the Federal Department, so we have to go by their guidelines, and the only difference you have between a State and Federal is Federal plants’ products can be used across state lines, where State product is processed and can be only sold within the State of Louisiana.

**00:05:08**

**SR:** Okay, so where I met you at Babineaux’s Slaughterhouse, they wouldn’t be able to send their product across state lines?

**00:05:17**

**RL:** No, they—product can be bought from someone out of state, but they have to inquire to the plant and say, “Look, this is—can I have ten pounds of this and be sent to me?” And that way it can be sent. It cannot be sent as a wholesale product.

**00:05:46**

**SR:** I see, oh, okay. So if I wanted to buy, you know, twenty pounds of boudin from a plant that you inspected, I could inquire, but I couldn't buy it in a store in my area?

**00:05:57**

**RL:** Correct, correct.

**00:05:59**

**SR:** Outside the state, I mean. How—you know, I guess this is kind of getting ahead of myself, but I was wondering in this area, you know, whatever area it—I don't know how far you work, but tell me a little bit about how many slaughterhouses there are now in this area compared to when you like started.

**00:06:23**

**RL:** When I started, we had in—neighboring in this area we had probably three—two—one state-inspected plant that was inspected. We probably had three custom plants in the area where local people would bring their animals to process. And now there's none in this area. The major ones that are left for inspection is Babineaux's in Breaux Bridge, Kurt Martin's in Carencro, Clement Hebert's in Abbeville, and that's probably your three larger ones that are left, and you possibly would have a couple of custom slaughterhouses in between here and there.

**00:07:24**

**SR:** So if you were somebody, you know, that raised a couple of, you know, hogs a year for your—for your own consumption, it would be kind of—you'd have to work at getting somebody to slaughter it for you?

**00:07:36**

**RL:** Yeah, it—it's—you would have to bring it to these places, which is changed—another thing that has changed, like I would have some animals to kill here. A lot of these custom places would come in a vehicle, kill the animal, bleed them, load them up in a trailer, go to their place and slaughter them and butcher them. Inspection has changed that. All animals that are to be slaughtered—custom and inspection—are to be slaughtered live at the plants.

**00:08:17**

**SR:** When did that change?

**00:08:20**

**RL:** Must have been the last ten years that enforcement, you know, gradually got to where with all the testing that we have to do now of seeing the animal—anti-mortem, if he has any type of symptoms of Mad Cow Disease—any type of symptoms—while you can see in the live stage before the actual slaughtering stage.

**00:08:50**

**SR:** Well that brings me to a question, which is very—I feel sort of silly asking this, but I think a lot of people wouldn't know the answer—a lot of lay people. What—what does it mean for you to inspect? What—what do you—when you're on the job, what exactly are you inspecting?

00:09:09

**RL:** You have different stages. You have anti-mortem. You're there to inspect the animal, see its movements forward, walking away, left, and right. You're supposed to be seeing if it can walk correctly without any type of numbness, anything broken. You're to check symptoms. If you think they have a fever, you're to check their fever, and if anything is out of the ordinary, as an Inspector, you're supposed to put it as a suspect. It will be held for twelve hours. In the meantime, you have a veterinarian on your side that you're supposed to call, and then he's supposed to come and make a physical examination of the animal, if it's considered a suspect. If not, you move onto stage two and—and you go into the slaughtering part. And then you have other parts through the slaughter, as you have to make sure it's killed in a humane situation. You're to undress it in a formal matter to where you don't take any outside dirt, bacteria, anything that's supposed to be touching the actual meat. The meat is then quartered or—or halved or whatever way they want to put it into a cooling stage and in a manner that no bacteria can be touched, as E-Coli from itself or from any type of human-type hands not being washed or anything like that at all. It's supposed to be inspected, and you have a final inspection—at-the-rail inspection—before it goes to the cooler and before it's stamped. Once it's stamped, it can be processed or sold whatever which way you have it in that manner.

00:11:28

**SR:** How often would you say you've had to put a halt to, you know, sending an animal on at any stage?

00:11:40

**RL:** That's hard to say because I—I stayed as—I stayed more as an Inspector for about—as a Slaughter Inspector for about fifteen years, and after that I went into processing, so on the slaughter part inspection [*Sighs*] I probably retained, myself, only about three animals that I could say that I could see that had to be—I didn't need a veterinarian to—to destroy them. Situations like a large abscess in the stomach. We had to discard the whole animal. And different situations—broken leg that was like three days (old) and I could see that she had fever. No use calling a veterinarian; the leg was not going to get any better. She had fever for—out of—out of sight. It wasn't going to get any better, so we had to slaughter it and go ahead and discard of it—and situations like that. And processing, the—that part there you don't see anymore, so it's—it's more or less like using parts of the meat to make a product that's going to be made.

00:13:07

**SR:** So if an animal has a fever, you can't use that meat because there might be infection all throughout it?

00:13:14

**RL:** Right.

00:13:16

**SR:** So you said earlier that you're also inspecting to make sure that the animal is killed in a humane way. What does that mean exactly? What would an inhumane way be?

00:13:27

**RL:** Like they used to do years ago, hit them in the head with a hammer. It was kind of a way to slaughter the animals but it was—ended up being inhumane because a lot of people would hit them, and they wouldn't die. They—well, they wouldn't put them in a stunned situation. When they—I consider an animal dead is when they bleed them. The stunning gun was a humane way. It was a blank pistol with a rod, hit into the brain that stunned it. When it fell on impact, it immediately bled—lifted and bled. That was the only—besides electric shock, which I didn't think was all humane—but it was the humane way of killing animals.

**00:14:24**

**SR:** But some people use not just a stun gun, right, but an actual bullet?

**00:14:28**

**RL:** The—the actual 22 bullet or a largest shell-type can be used to kill an animal but you—because of the lead poisoning you don't know here that lead went to—possibly in the cheek meat or anywhere. We have to sever the head and destroy the head after inspection, throw it away. So a lot of people don't want to lose the cheek meat and the tongue and all of this good stuff on the head, so they use a stunning gun or the electric shock on the brain.

**00:15:11**

**SR:** So it sounds like in the beginning, before you got into inspecting processing, you had to have like some veterinary skills.

**00:15:21**

**RL:** In [nineteen]'71 I did training at the Federal Plant at Frye in Lafayette, and we actually had schooling two weeks at a time throughout the thirty years of—of my inspection. And as federal people would send down guidelines to study by and change, they would give it to us and we'd pass it onto our inspectors.

**00:15:57**

**SR:** So why did you transition from—from like, you know, the kind of inspecting you were doing in the beginning to processing?

**00:16:11**

**RL:** Really, it's a step. The more you know, the more you can move up, and that was a move-up stage from slaughter to processing. That's number one. Number two, losing the plants that we had in Iberia Parish on the slaughter, and I had to move on and to stay with meat inspection and move into Lafayette Parish, move into St. Mary Parish, move into Vermillion Parish—anywhere from Lake Charles to Morgan City to Baton Rouge.

**00:16:53**

**SR:** That was your—and I'll just say we're sort of speaking in the past right now because you're on—on leave from an injury.

**00:17:01**

**RL:** Correct.

**00:17:01**

**SR:** You're technically still an inspector?

**00:17:04**

**RL:** Paper-wise, yes. [*Laughs*] I'm still on the time. I'm on sick leave right now.

**00:17:10**

**SR:** So you would go all the way to Lake Charles, huh?

**00:17:14**

**RL:** Yes. We have—we've had two slaughterhouses in that area. We had Stroy's—they have gone under since my inspections. You've had Leroy Istre that changed over to processing, and they've gone under in the processing part. You—there was another plant on Highway 13, they went under. That was completely slaughter. Then they opened up processing plants when a couple of these casinos opened up—up there, one a Cajun-type food and they opened up with a boudin and sausage plant in that area.

**00:18:06**

**SR:** That's interesting that the casinos would—how do I want to say it—encourage local culture.

**00:18:19**

**RL:** Well what—I guess it was the supply and demand part and—and people wanted to—to kind of put the Cajun image in there and then they had red beans and rice in their—their meal

and it took smoked sausage to go into it, and when you're using 10,000 pounds of smoked sausage, that will open up a plant real quick, you know, and that's more or less what happened.

**00:18:48**

**SR:** Can you tell me—so I met you first last summer, I guess, when I was—I discovered the Babineauxs' slaughterhouse and their boudin. You were there inspecting. Can you tell me—can you kind of take me through a typical day from—from that era of your career? You know, you were there on that day inspecting them, and I'm not sure exactly at what points you were inspecting what they were doing. And I'd also like to know like how many places you would visit in a day.

**00:19:23**

**RL:** In that case, there it's a slaughter plant, and you are not to say, "Okay, I'm here for an hour." You get there; you do an inspection of the plant; you do an inspection of the animals, and you're asking him what he has to kill that day. You kill until your eight hours are up and, normally, they don't kill past your eight hours. But if you do have any type of—any processing or any slaughter you—after eight hours, you have a breakdown. You have to stop, completely sanitize and wash everything—all your tools, all your—whatever contact surfaces you have and then start all over again, and that's a control of any type of bacteria growth—situations like that. There's no temperature control on the slaughter part, but you—you—nowadays, if you go on the slaughter floor, you'll see them with an air-conditioner in the room, where when I started it was the only cooler you had was in the cooler with the meat, you know, and that was it.

**00:20:42**

**SR:** I don't—I can't remember if they had an air-conditioner in their room. Are they required?

**00:20:48**

**RL:** No, but when you go back to paying employees and—and an employee is going to work in an air-conditioned-type situation. Your product will stay in a better condition, instead of in heat, and in a—and that stage of the game is a bad thing. And, you know, in our area you can get ninety-degree heat outside and go up to 100-degree heat, and you don't want the meat to be staying out in that type of situation long. You want it to drain the blood as (soon as) possible as you can; get it in, washed down, cooled down and sent into a—a cooler stage.

**00:21:44**

**SR:** So—so on that day when I saw you, you were probably with them all day?

**00:21:50**

**RL:** Yeah. Yeah, because they are—they are—they're a mediocre-type plant, and they only had like one slaughter person. He does all the part of an anti-mortem; he does all the part of actual killing the animal and undressing the animal and getting the viscera out and washing it down, getting all the hide put up after that and the viscera put into a situation to where it's inedible and it's—it's a slow-type deal, if he's a one-man band, you know. And that's why it—it was there. And you go to larger plants when they have two, three, four people processing and killing, it moves a whole lot faster. In twenty minutes, you know, you can kill one, it's gone, you know, and you—the next one is gone, come on.

**00:22:55**

Years ago, when I worked at Kurt Martin's Slaughterhouse in Carencro, I'm going to say we would kill two calves in twenty minutes and for—for the processing sometimes we were killing twenty-some head of cattle and possibly ten-, fifteen-head, twenty-head of hogs.

00:23:18

**SR:** Wow, what is that word you're using—*anti-mortem*?

00:23:21

**RL:** Anti-mortem, that's before slaughter.

00:23:27

**SR:** Technical term. [*Laughs*]

00:23:31

**RL:** Yeah, post-mortem and anti-mortem. Post-mortem is after death.

00:23:35

**SR:** So who sets the schedule? I mean if they want, let's say, you know, a small slaughterhouse like the Babineaux's—which I'm using that example because that's the only slaughterhouse I've been to so far—do they call you up and say, "On Wednesday we need you here," and then you might have to stay the whole day, or do they—does the state assign certain days when they're allowed to slaughter?

00:24:00

**RL:** That's another type of setup system to where they are sent a letter to fill out and what days a week. You have Monday through Friday. Then the supervisor is to look and see how many head that you're going to kill. You can't say, "Okay, I'm going to have one for Friday." Well if you only have one for Friday, we're going to put you down, and it happens to be like that every Friday, we're going to put you down—okay move that animal to Thursday to where, you know, an inspector doesn't have to travel that far and go for inspection just for one animal. You—you—the amount of animals are recorded on a week—daily, weekly, monthly thing, so we know how to say if you're going to have an inspection or not for eight hours or not.

00:25:10

**SR:** It's pretty complex. *[Laughs]*

00:25:12

**RL:** Yeah, it's—it's hard for a supervisor to have one inspector at one plant and killing ten animals and then another inspector at another plant, and he's killing thirty animals but you—you have to kind of take care of your—your plants and—and without a plant operating, you have no inspection, without you know—. And it gets to where the smaller you are, the harder it is to stay open.

00:25:47

**SR:** Who pays—so you—you get your salary from the state. Do the slaughterhouses or processing plants have to pay the state for the services or is that—or not? How did that—?

00:26:01

**RL:** Meat inspection is the only plant—the only state-implemented inspection to the public that is not self-generated. It is state and federal, so half federal and half state, and the state has to employ itself to—to make it generate as much money tax-wise to give to us—different departments and the State Department of Agriculture. Like eggs, they got to where they charged the processor x-amount of dollars or cents per dozen eggs, and that generated enough for inspection—different deals than the Department of Agriculture.

**00:27:02**

**SR:** Why do you think meat inspection is the one—?

**00:27:01**

**RL:** Because we were—probably the oldest one that was started back years ago, and as it went on and they saw that the state couldn't keep on paying for this and—and come up with nothing, you know, and so they were smart enough to generate money by inspection. Like the only—the only generation—we have to generate money—is when we process for these schools, and we charge the processor x-amount of per-pound, and that is called certification. We don't have that much certification in the area anymore.

**00:27:58**

**SR:** What—I'm sorry, can you describe again what—what that is sort of—?

**00:28:03**

**RL:** It's a different branch of processing, like if for all—all schools, hospitals have to have an inspection on their—their meats and if Iberia Parish Schools would want to have 10,000 pounds

of ground meat certified, it would have to be certified, not only inspected but certified. So the certification would come in after the actual inspection for it.

**00:28:44**

**SR:** Okay, and so the day that—I think it was the day that I met you at Babineaux's—they were also making red boudin, blood boudin. I—were you—was that part of your job to inspect that?

**00:29:01**

**RL:** At—at Babineaux's Slaughterhouse it's inspection slaughter only. Whatever I inspect is to be stamped at the slaughter rail, and it goes into the cooler. I have control of the cooler where there's inspection animals. He can have another part, which is custom, completely different than the inspection part, but he has to put not-for-sale on that animal. He has to identify that animal, who owns it. When you get into the retail part I have no guidelines that he can go by. So his boudin he makes, his cracklings that he makes, which is sold inside the plant only—his plant—are not inspected besides (by) the Board of Health. When he makes red boudin he is to tell the inspector that he is saving blood to make red boudin. We have guidelines that we have to go by on the process of saving the blood to where it's not contaminated, to where it's put in a stainless steel funnel, a stainless steel container and whatever which way he chose to, either by air or by adding salt, to stop it from clabbering. And then he saves it and he can use it in his red boudin. It's not to be—to resell as a blood type situation. He can use it only in his red boudin.

**00:31:25**

**SR:** I see. So you were there to inspect the—the procuring of the blood and the slaughter but not the making of the boudin?

**00:31:33**

**RL:** Correct. Correct.

**00:31:35**

**SR:** Um—.

**00:31:37**

**RL:** That when it comes into those doors into that little kitchen or the processing room in his plant, it's retail. It's on the Board of Health only.

**00:31:50**

**SR:** How common is that in this area for you to be—for you to see people keeping blood to make boudin?

**00:32:01**

**RL:** There's only that plant and Clement Herbert's Slaughterhouse that actually are legal to save—well, that actually saves blood. Each slaughterhouse that is state inspected can choose to save blood under the inspection, but they have to go by the guidelines of saving it correctly.

**00:32:29**

**SR:** But those are the only two that, currently, you know of that—?

**00:32:32**

**RL:** Correct.

00:32:34

**SR:** What about earlier in your career—did you see more of that?

00:32:38

**RL:** You saw—earlier in my career you saw a lot of stores making their own boudin. They were little mom-and-pop places and they possibly illegally saved blood when someone killed an animal, and they put it in their red boudin.

00:33:04

**SR:** So you saw a lot more red boudin just being sold in general, like at little—?

00:33:10

**RL:** In—in the past, yes. Mom-and-pop places, they all had a little—their own way of cooking their own boudin. And then it got to where they could buy boudin. In the '70s, in the '80s, a person that bought boudin from a place that processed boudin, it was like a three-day rotation. They—they made sure that if they sold thirty pounds in three days, they only sold them—brought them back thirty pounds. So the next three days they'd come back again; they wouldn't let them—they wouldn't bring fifty pounds of boudin if they only sold thirty; then they had to pick up twenty pounds—you know. It wasn't good. And the life of boudin in the coolest stage was possibly three days, and that's all they would let them keep it; otherwise, it would go bad on them and start getting tacky and start getting—your bacteria growth started. And places didn't want it, so they'd have to get more and—and now processing plants have changed. They have coolers; they have air-conditioners; the—they work under fifty-three-, fifty-five-degree

temperatures to control bacteria. They—they change their garments. They have—they don't work in their outside garments. They wear a—a garment to work processing. They wear hat-type garments. They possibly will either sanitize their hands each time they walk into that room, or they wear plastic gloves as they come in. They have learned a lot and—and—and you know it's not only our guidelines that enforced them. It was—they were smart enough to say, "Okay, that saved my product from going bad." Now you have—they checked themselves, "Why is the bacteria growth going up?" They can troubleshoot. A store used to say, "Okay, I've got ten pounds of bad product. Come pick it up." Well, there's a lot code now that can back it up, and they can say, "I delivered 1,000-pounds that day, but ten pounds just at that store was bad." You know, they can say—they can say it's their fault for some reason, and that's why, you know, you go to a lot of these stores—Board of Health has guidelines only. They're there once in a while. If that store puts ten pounds of boudin in the cooler next to a beer case, and it's not sanitary to me.

**00:36:17**

**SR:** No?

**00:36:17**

**RL:** You know, meat inspection is supposed to stay in meat inspection. Put the meat where the meat is at, and put other cooler-type situations in—in that area. And that's where I pushed a lot that we're going to probably, as a meat inspection, be weeded out if—with the HACCP. situation and—.

**00:36:44**

**SR:** The what situation?

**00:36:46**

**RL:** HACCP, it's away of inspection now—Hazard Analysis. I'll get exactly what it means in a minute.

**00:36:56**

**SR:** How do you spell that?

**00:36:59**

**RL:** HACCP

**00:36:58**

**SR:** H-A-C-C—?

**00:37:01**

**RL:** P.

**00:37:01**

**SR:** P.

**00:37:02**

**RL:** And we have tried to teach the actual places that are ready to eat to protect themselves. No use me going through all kinds of inspection, all kinds of protection, if this lady is going to sell the meat or the boudin and in a—in a hot store and there's—it's out in the open, or if that boudin is there exposed for more than two hours. I mean bacteria is going to grow, you know. That's

where the gap is now. It used to be the consumer was going to get the product, and you had to do something with it once you got home. If you wasn't going to cook it that day, you were going to have to freeze it, so you took care of that part. Now it's in between the store to the consumer, and we have to worry about that part more than anything else, I say.

**00:38:20**

**SR:** So you're talking about like—

**00:38:21**

**RL:** On the wholesale.

**00:38:22**

**SR:** —like—yeah, like a bigger, you know, Babineaux's, I think they only sell their boudin. But a bigger place would sell their boudin to a store who would then sell it—?

**00:38:32**

**RL:** Right. But that's kind of what I'm trying to get at is if you notice, there's no more places like Babineaux's anymore. There is no new places that's opening up on that part, and they're a dying breed. They—when their plant closes down, I mean that puts the consumer going to the store—to the big guy and saying, Wal-Mart, places of—Winn Dixie or—that has to slaughter an animal that's not even in your state and then brought down to the store. So be careful. I mean it has to be carefully—carefully taken care of.

**00:39:17**

**SR:** Why are those places dying out? Financial concerns?

**00:39:23**

**RL:** That's a touchy, touchy situation for me to get on because I—I blame the guidelines coming in there being so strict. They have to worry about testing E-Coli, Salmonella, Phisteria, where before, these people didn't have to worry about that. You have to worry about being large enough to keep up with the minimum wages of people that work in—on the bottom side. The larger plants just—just ate the smaller up, you know, and if—if you would look back and see each individual out in the country, each had an animal. Nowadays, the person that has an animal, he's got 100 acres. We don't—each individual doesn't have that. Subdivisions have grown up now and—and people don't have areas to have their own animals killed. Then the ones that had 100 acres and had 100-head of cattle, they bring them to the stockyard because the stockyard is getting more money than the actual person would give on the local street. So they load up their animals; they bring them to the stockyard; they sell them there, and the—the slaughterhouses don't get them. Well, they'll get them but through a feedlot that has fed them and brought them back.

**00:41:19**

**SR:** What about if I—you know, if I lived around here, and I had my own animals, and I wanted to slaughter them at my home for my own consumption? Is that legal, or do you have to be inspected?

**00:41:36**

**RL:** No, it would be no way of inspection because you—you'd be slaughtering them outside and that would be a—number one deal against it. But I can't tell you what to do in your own yard, you know. But if you would, for some reason or another, trade the meat or sell the meat to a friend or a family member, then you broke the rules. I mean you—you're selling that product and it has to be inspected. That person has to be protected.

**00:42:13**

**SR:** So over the years, you know, since you've been involved, the restrictions have gotten a lot tighter. Have you noticed a change in, speaking of boudin, in the taste of boudin—in the flavor?

**00:42:29**

**RL:** Yeah. [*Laughs*] The places that started making boudin, it would be people that used to make boudin in their backyards; they would save the pork chops, they would save the ham, they'd save the shoulder meat—all the trimmings would go in with the boudin, cooked in a—in a big black pot and there's something about a black pot that makes a good gravy. And then each individual would add their own seasoning, how they wanted it seasoned, and mix it with rice and stuff it and make hog casings. Well in those days the hog was—casing was taken from the hog that was killed, cleaned out, and that was the hog casing. Now you buy a hog casing from a plant, and it comes in a fifty-five-gallon plastic drum in a brine solution. That's a cure, and that's where a lot of people said, "Well, okay, I can eat boudin, and it's ready to eat." No. Boudin is cooked. The rice and the meat, it's all cooked inside. But the actual casing needs to be heated to make it a ready-to-eat product. And that's where the Federal Government doesn't even recognize the word *boudin*. No. I—we had one of the first plants that went federal in this area, and when they sent in the actual label to say *boudin*, the federal people refused it. There is no such name

registered as that, so you can name it *boudin*; but to protect the consumer, in quotations you have to put *a pork and rice pudding product*. And that kind of ticked off people around in this area that we don't want it called a *rice pudding product*. That—that throws the imaginary mind that it's in a pudding stage and it's not. It's—it's—it's a product that was made in this area, the way that people slaughtered and—and did in the old days. And when this federal plant decided to take different parts of pork—which was normally the shoulder meat or the butt part on the shoulder—and mix it with seasoning and onions and bell peppers and rice and put it in the casing anyway—it was a casing that was artificial or a casing that was in brine solution out of a drum—and wanted to sell it in California. But the Federal people wouldn't let them sell it as a boudin—labeled *boudin*. He had to put *boudin—pork and pudding—rice pudding product*.

00:46:09

**SR:** Is that still the case?

00:46:10

**RL:** Yes, the label actually—the actual label still has to be that way, yeah.

00:46:22

**SR:** So did you have experience—? You know, I didn't even ask you where you grew up.

Where did you grow up?

00:46:24

**RL:** Here. I was born and raised in New Iberia—in Coteau.

00:46:28

**SR:** So when you were growing up did you have experiences eating boudin at people's homes when they would, you know, slaughter their own animals?

00:46:38

**RL:** Actually, we did some slaughtering out on the farm ourselves, and there's a yearly thing in St. Martinville. There's a boucherie, and we'd go to that as, you know—animals killed outside, and actually just taking hot water and poured on it and scraped and cut into parts and made cracklings and made boudin and made pork chops, made jambalaya. Jambalaya was—kind of originated from boudin, and it's a pork and rice product. And you can add smoked sausage to it, which is pork. It's in a smoked-type situation. Jambalaya is sold all over the world now.

00:47:24

**SR:** Oh, so you think jambalaya rose from the boudin tradition?

00:47:28

**RL:** Oh, yeah, it's—it's a different type of—well, I say boudin tradition and, at the same time, in the era of *what are you going to do with this pork?* We've got to make it and—and trim it and what are we going to do with these trimmings? And you'd put it in the jambalaya.

00:47:48

**SR:** So—so you grew up on a farm where you were killing your own animals?

00:47:54

**RL:** Yeah.

**00:47:55**

**SR:** And—and your family made boudin once in a while?

**00:47:57**

**RL:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, we—then custom slaughter places came up, and that was the place to bring them or have him come over and pick them up and kill them and then we—okay, well that advanced us. We didn't have to kill them and actually go through the part of cleaning them or— or de-hairing them or things like that because it's actually a job. And now they have a—a—like the slaughterhouses—you stun them, you hoist them up, you bleed them, you put them in hot water, which is normally about 145 degrees. When the hair starts coming up, you lift them up and put them in a buffer. You buff them up and—and the hair all comes out, he comes out ready to go, and you just touch up in little places and—as you will see if we go to Clement's [Hebert's] Slaughterhouse.

**00:48:51**

**SR:** What was your family's boudin like?

**00:48:54**

**RL:** Uh, I'm going to say good. You—nowadays boudin is made to meet every consumer anywhere, from a child to an older person, so you will get more less a bland-type boudin; you'll get a boudin that has a lot of meat in it; it won't be greasy. Where when we made the boudin it was fresh; it was a little bit on the greasy side, which is not good for you, but it was tasty and it

was a whole lot—whole lot better when we did it on our own, you know, and not have to make it on a bulk-type situation to please everybody.

**00:49:51**

**SR:** When y'all made it would you use the liver and—and other sort of offal products?

**00:49:58**

**RL:** Everything that we—*[Laughs]*—everything that we couldn't put as considered as a roast or a steak or whatever went in, more less: the heart, the liver—the liver you had to watch it because it's a little bit on the bitter side, so if you only came out with x-amount of trimmings, you only could put a portion of your liver in, you know what I mean. It depends how much trimmings you had on your animal. And in those cases nowadays, the actual hog that is killed and processed is normally from 225 to 275 on foot and that gives you a—a leaner pork chop, prettier pork chop, a sizeable ham. In the days that we would kill for custom slaughter and family-type situations, the animal might have weighed 400 pounds, so it was a—a larger animal, you know, and they fed it for longer and you had more pork chops, you had more—larger ham. You could make a ham into four pieces instead of just two, you know, because the ham was larger. You had more trimmings because the animal was larger and fatter.

**00:51:26**

**SR:** Well what kind of rice would y'all use?

**00:51:29**

**RL:** Local rice. There was no—there was no choice on that, no.

**00:51:35**

**SR:** But like was it—was it short-grain, long-grain, do you know?

**00:51:36**

**RL:** All depends on your—on your person. Like me, myself, I like a medium-grain. I don't like a long-grain or a short-grain. Short-grain I consider a cracked grain of rice. A long-grain, hmm, I'm not crazy about it. And as I kind of got stuck on the medium-grain, it fluffs up better and it cleans out a whole lot better to me.

**00:52:02**

**SR:** And back then when y'all were making boudin at home—you know, these days where, you know, places where I buy boudin, it seems like there are only a few variations. The rice—the kind of grain of rice will vary, the amount of pepper will vary and the amount of green onions, but green onion seems like a main component. Was that true then?

**00:52:25**

**RL:** On the green onions part, you will notice a lot of boudin that is marketed for the wholesale, you won't see a lot of green onions because you can go into a stage of freezing now—vacuum-packed and freezing boudin—and, for some reason, green onions will have a little rancid taste to you, and people got away from it on the freezing stage. So if they know it's going to the freezer—excuse me—if they know it's going to the freezer stage, they won't put green onions. And I've got one plant that puts raw regular onions and that's after the meat has been cooked and in the grinding stage, and they grind the raw onions, regular onions with the meat, and it gives it

a different flavor, and I like it like that. Some places have—still have a black pot and, but it's all—they tried to change everything to stainless steel because—because bacteria has less chances of growing. But you're going to see today, if we go to Clement's [Hebert's] Slaughterhouse, that there are black pots, and that's how they cook—all black pots. And they cook all of the parts that are left. When they kill the hogs, if they didn't sell the—the pork chops or whatever—hams—they put it and they cook it, and they make it boudin.

**00:54:15**

**SR:** Is that what you would use on the farm, black pots?

**00:54:18**

**RL:** Yeah.

**00:54:19**

**SR:** And you would use green onions or not?

**00:54:21**

**RL:** Yes. On the farm, yes, because you knew that you wasn't going to freeze it. You'd always just make as much as you can for that week or whatever.

**00:54:32**

**SR:** And who in your family was in charge of making the things like boudin when you would—when you would kill a hog?

00:54:38

**RL:** As an inspector, they'd never let me do it. **[Laughs]** They said, "You—the way you do it doesn't taste good." But no, normally it was—you had the—the better cooks that came out, like the older people, and they—they knew how to cook. Why, I don't know. I mean just nowadays—my daughter is twenty-five—twenty-seven years old and she doesn't know how to cook that stuff. But we didn't raise her like I was raised, and she has to go to the store to buy her meats and—and she's into a routine of, "Okay, I'll get a chicken. I'm going to get a couple pieces of sausage, I'm going to get a couple of pork chops and this and that, and that's my range of meat to cook at home." And it's completely changed from the way we used to have it (when) you'd go and slaughter a calf and put it in the freezer, and I'd go into the freezer and go look for seven steaks *[a chuck steak with a bone shaped like the number seven]*. I'd go look for t-bones or whatever in the freezer. Now, kids say, *A freezer: is that the part on top of the icebox?* I mean you know we used to have a freezer that was a 50-quart type freezer in the—in the other area.

00:56:05

**SR:** And you learned to cook from your parents?

00:56:07

**RL:** Yes, yes, browning of meats and that—that's the secret. And when you say browning of meats, it's the blood that's left in the meat, browns against the pot, looks like it's burnt, and you just add water and onions and it makes a gravy. I got little secrets to make—make brown, like if a chicken doesn't brown, I got little secrets to make—make a browning gravy but—.

00:56:37

**SR:** Little cheating?

**00:56:41**

**RL:** Yeah.

**00:56:41**

**SR:** What is your family heritage?

**00:56:46**

**RL:** Uh, really and truly my father was a—he'd haul milk. My mother's side was a homemaker, besides being a trainer on—horse-trainer on that part. It was no meat inspection or anything as an inspector prior to me, so it's kind of like me starting the heritage in the inspection part. I might end it too. I'm—I don't know if we're going to have any more inspections.

**00:57:26**

**SR:** What about ethnicity? Was your family from France, do you know, or—?

**00:57:33**

**RL:** Actually I think we were—we were sent down from France and went to Canada, and we came down and had that heritage.

**00:57:46**

**SR:** Cajun?

**00:57:48**

**RL:** Cajun. It was strictly Cajun. It's a touchy situation because we have LeBlanc and on my mother's side twice, and my father is a LeBlanc and none of them are kin to each other, so it's kind of scary.

**00:58:06**

**SR:** Do you know anyone, you know, in your life these days that still slaughters their animals at home or makes boudin at home?

**00:58:17**

**RL:** No; my brother makes a—a jambalaya and he has gotten to where he—he has established a name for himself as a party cook when they—say, for a candidate running for election, they have a little get-together, and he'll cook a jambalaya large enough to feed 400-500 people. And he has a good—a good jambalaya mixture and he's a—he's a good cook. And I guess that's kind of why he got into the restaurant business but he—you know he—he's lucky enough to have a restaurant.

**00:59:08**

**SR:** Wow, does he still have a restaurant?

**00:59:09**

**RL:** Yes, Subaki's in Lafayette.

**00:59:13**

**SR:** Oh, I don't know it. Could you spell that for me?

00:59:16

**RL:** I don't know.

00:59:16

**SR:** I can look it up.

00:59:20

**RL:** Yeah, Subaki.

00:59:23

**SR:** Well do you—what town in this area is the best for boudin?

00:59:28

**RL:** Wow. That's a touchy situation. Airport—Bodin's has a federal plant; he has a good boudin. Comeaux's has a federal plant in Lafayette and has a good boudin. Where we're going to go at Clement's—Hebert's—has a custom boudin, not wholesale. It's good. Babineaux's has a good retail boudin, and they sell it at their plant. But all of them have a different taste—same formality, but a slightly different taste. One might—one might add more green onions; one might add more raw onions at the end; one might add just shoulder meat; they all have their own little—little taste and it depends on who—who was eating it, if they—what they liked and—and how they liked it. And that was a good thing about eating at all of these places and seeing the difference in all of these places. I didn't just acquire one taste for boudin. I saw each place that—that made boudin and they made their little way of making it and—and that was one thing about

an inspector. You couldn't—you couldn't go out and say, "Okay, this is their recipe. This is their recipe." I could—I could—when I went to this plant I treated this plant as this plant and took the guidelines and worked on it—on that plant—anyway, if he was making boudin or making any type of product, or if they was slaughtering or whatever, that plant was that plant—used all the guidelines at that plant.

**01:01:52**

**SR:** Can you—without betraying anything about your profession—which I know that, you know, you're a professional—but can you talk a little bit about the tension between guidelines and people and, you know, some of these people you knew for decades, I guess, and probably formed friendships, and was it, you know, difficult to enforce guidelines sometimes?

**01:02:15**

**RL:** Well, I'm a friendly type of person, but when you walked into the plant you had to take friendship and throw it away. You had to say, "Okay, when I'm looking at you, and you didn't wash your hands, what did I have to do to correct when you didn't wash your hands? I had to make you wash your hands. And did you touch anything to contaminate anything that was in the plant?" And that was my biggest thing because ninety-percent of the time it was a mom-and-pop-type situation, and it was a one-person thing, and that one person would leave the inspection area and come back and, you know, it was hard to enforce the rules that way. But finally we—we have gotten to where we showed the actual plant owner, this is what happens when you do that. It—contamination can be anything. You might not see it with your own eyes, and that was my hardest thing to change from the way we inspected at the beginning to the way we're inspecting now.

**01:03:26**

The way we inspect now, I don't have to watch you do—all I have to do is sample it at the end. If it comes up bad at the end, you messed up something down the line, and it's not me to tell you. Correct what you messed up down the line. You figure it out. And if it's—if it's you, were making boudin and one burner did not completely cook everything in that product the same way this burner did, and this one stayed raw and you had some contamination in it and mixed it with the good one, well, you screwed up the whole batch.

**01:04:07**

**SR:** And you can taste that?

**01:04:08**

**RL:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. I could taste—I had one plant that had a black pot and had a stainless steel pot and I could test—take the batch that was in that black pot—different than the one that was in the stainless steel. The black pot had a different taste to the gravy, and I could watch him; he would take the gravy from the black pot and mix it in the meat of the stainless steel because the gravy wouldn't make in the stainless steel pot the way it would in that black pot. But that was—that was his little thing. You know, I mean you couldn't stop him. You—it was—it was for the better of the boudin.

**01:04:59**

**SR:** So I didn't realize that part of your job—big part of your job was tasting.

**01:05:03**

**RL:** [*Laughs*] Wow, you caught me in a trap again. Okay, the—the tasting part wasn't a requirement. [*Laughs*] But after you look at it, you touch it, you smell it, and tasted it, it was good.

**01:05:24**

**SR:** Is that a health hazard?

**01:05:25**

**RL:** Kind of, if you had too many plants to go to. [*Laughs*] I had one plant we had cracklings; the next plant we had boudin; the next plant we had gumbo or whatever—entrees—and you tasted everything. You were full when you got home.

**01:05:41**

**SR:** Yeah, really, you didn't need dinner. That sounds like a good life, but it could have its—I mean you're not a big person—you're not a big person, but it definitely could go that way.

**01:05:49**

**RL:** Could come up to be a health hazard when you've got too many starches and everything else. I'm a diabetic now.

**01:05:57**

**SR:** From meat inspecting, you think?

**01:05:58**

**RL:** No, I hope not. [*Laughs*] That's inherited.

**01:06:00**

**SR:** Yeah, so I was wondering—I ask everybody I talk to this question—I have—I've yet to meet a female boudin maker. Have you met them?

**01:06:09**

**RL:** Maker?

**01:06:14**

**SR:** Yeah.

**01:06:18**

**RL:** Um. Okay, in my case, we had a friend that probably was the first people that owned a state-inspected plant making boudin smoked sausage—was Mac's Boudin Sausage.

**01:06:38**

**SR:** Mac's?

**01:06:40**

**RL:** Yes, he originally sold to his son, Mac's Boudin. He—his wife used to work with him, and I would say that it was a fifty-fifty thing. His sister—Darrell McGuire's sister ended up opening up Mac's Three, and they made boudin, so she was an owner of a—of a boudin place.

**01:07:22**

**SR:** Is that still open?

**01:07:25**

**RL:** No, she—she closed down and—and Mac’s Boudin is still open, yes.

**01:07:29**

**SR:** Oh, where is that?

**01:07:30**

**RL:** In Lafayette on Marne Street.

**01:07:38**

**SR:** Is that M-a-c-k or M-a-x?

**01:07:40**

**RL:** M-a-c apostrophe s, Mac’s.

**01:07:46**

**SR:** What about black or African American boudin makers?

**01:07:50**

**RL:** We have no inspection plants that are owned by blacks that I know of. But now if you go to these boucherie-type things that come once a year in the fall in St. Martinville, you have a lot of black people that are involved. They cook cracklings and compete in crackling contests and—really good. I mean and—and—north of I-10 you start seeing, not the crackling part, but you will

see the skin part, and they'll puff up skins. New Orleans area you see them take away from the—the crackling part, which is the fat, and the meat is still on it, and they'll puff up the skin part, which is pork skins, I call them.

**01:09:07**

**SR:** Is that also—is that the same thing as pork rind?

**01:09:10**

**RL:** Right, correct. Correct.

**01:09:13**

**SR:** I'm going to have to go to that event in St. Martinville this year.

**01:09:16**

**RL:** It's—it's nice. Hmm, it's a bad thing to see—because the animal is killed and bled and—but it's a learning stage. It comes from that part. I mean a lot of the ladies don't even like to touch raw meat. They don't like to smell raw meat, but you've got to go to that stage to get something cooked and have it fresh, you know.

**01:09:47**

**SR:** Do you—so I guess you were saying this earlier about your daughter, but I guess you do have a different relationship to meat—foods and meats, in particular—when you grew up around animals that got killed—that you—you went through all the stages, the life and death stage?

01:10:04

**RL:** How it changed in my case, my daddy used to have 100-head of calves in the pasture. He sold to the custom people; you come pick your calf out, tell the guy to come kill it, it's yours; pay me x-amount of pounds. We were lucky enough—four boys—to have a calf when we needed it. Pick out a calf and kill it and put it in the freezer. Now the wife goes, pick up a chicken, pick up sausage, pick up pork chops; that's the only thing on the freezer on top of the icebox. The freezer that's outside, I mean what goes in it, we don't—we don't use it. **[Laughs]** I mean I've got fish that's five years old in there that's in water. It's still good, but that's the only thing that's in the freezer.

01:11:08

**SR:** It's a different life. So I'm going to see—I wrote down some other questions. I want to see what I've missed but in the meantime, can—do you still have horses?

01:11:19

**RL:** Yes, yes, racehorses.

01:11:21

**SR:** Back here—oh.

01:11:22

**RL:** Not in the stage that I had when I first started inspection because that had to change also because inspections took more time in different times. So now I'm into the breeding part and raising them and sending them off to someone else to train.

01:11:41

**SR:** So how many horses do you have?

01:11:43

**RL:** One brood mare, two yearlings, two on the racetrack.

01:11:55

**SR:** Maybe—maybe I'll be able to see them.

01:11:55

**RL:** Oh, yeah, sure.

01:12:00

**SR:** I guess I've pretty much gone through my questions. I was—I had in my—my list to ask you this, but I think you've already told me. No, I was wondering if you had ever put anybody out of business.

01:12:14

**RL:** Difficult question to answer. We had a situation to where one plant manipulated [*Note: manipulated*] the way they sold the plant. Our guidelines were that if you sold the plant, it was no grandfather clause for the person that was buying the plant. And they slipped the plant over some kind of way to—and sold it. Well that's when we had a lot of guidelines we had to—to kind of reinforce. And it didn't fall under the grandfather clause anymore, and it got harder and

harder. And each day, ninety-percent of the time when I inspect, I'm going to work on sanitation first on a processing plant and then you have to work on contact—what does that product contact when it comes through you. And each place is different because they work different—different—one making boudin, one is making sausage, one making smoked sausage. So you have to have different guidelines. Smoked sausage has to be smoked, processed, smoked and cooled down and be ready to be sent out. Fresh sausage just has to be brought in and mixed, hung and cooled, and you have different guidelines you have to go by and my—my worry was contact. Did this person stay in this room, grind this meat, and did I follow this meat all the way through its different stages, all the way to the part that it is ready for the consumer? And that's my—that was my worries. I mean I—and they're automatic. After thirty years I'd walk in [*Finger Snaps*] and I'd look [*Gestures*]. Everything was—everything was covered in one glance and I could—I could possibly tell if this person broke that piece of equipment down and cleaned and sanitized it before it started after it actually started, you know, and it's certain little clues that you had, you know.

**01:15:00**

**SR:** But that particular plant, when they sold it, it wasn't grandfather clause(d) in, but were they able to, I don't know, keep going?

**01:15:10**

**RL:** No; they actually shut down after a while and they got to where I—in my thought, the people that bought it thought that they could make the—more money than what they actually made and the person that sold it was the type of person that he could mend the trucks if it broke, and he could mend the equipment if it broke. The people that bought it didn't know how to mend

a thing, so they had to bring in people that were technicians, and it cost them a whole lot of money to fix. And after about two years it—it just broke itself off to where they said, “Nope, we’re going to shut it down. We’ve invested enough money in this thing. We’re not going to bleed ourselves to death.”

**01:16:11**

**SR:** What did you enjoy or do—did you enjoy most about your job?

**01:16:14**

**RL:** Two things: seeing a person that had pride in what they did and seeing a person that really enjoyed what they did. I took pride in return—that this person came back for this product time and time and time again. You knew it was good. Just like in this place we’re going to go to, I know of people that drove to get meat at this place in the raw stage from New Orleans. They passed by one day and they stopped, and they picked up some meat and they just—next month they came back. The next month they came back. You know, you don’t need to inspection that; that’s some quality product, and that’s how I’m—you know, I was—pride in people, you know, and—and anyway, they didn’t get rich making that product. They took pride in making it.

**01:17:43**

**SR:** Did you see—do you see that kind of pride in the larger plants?

**01:17:46**

**RL:** No. No, all you see is somebody in the office in front that’s looking at numbers, somebody in the back that’s processing that’s looking at numbers. No quality whatsoever.

01:18:00

**SR:** Hopefully we can find a way to keep the little places going.

01:18:02

**RL:** Yeah, mom-and-pop organizations, you wouldn't believe—it's the hardest thing—hardest thing.

01:18:11

**SR:** Yeah, I saw that with the Babineauxs. You know, they're a small operation, and they talked about that. It's a challenge.

01:18:17

**RL:** Yeah, it's a challenge.

01:18:18

**SR:** Were you—I'm going to wrap this up, don't worry. I've kept you long enough. But were you inspecting when their mother ran the place?

01:18:25

**RL:** I was there, yes, when they were there back in '76 when I first started, but not as an inspector that was always there. I'd go in as a fill-in.

01:18:42

**SR:** Does—.

**01:18:42**

**RL:** That plant was here in New Iberia when I first started—Prejean’s Meats in Carencro, now which is Prejean’s Packing House. They converted into a big packing house with eighteen-wheelers coming from up north with product that goes to all the stores and whatever—wholesale places.

**01:19:09**

**SR:** Thank you for giving me your time. Maybe we can eat some boudin now.

**01:19:15**

**RL:** Thank you. Here we go.

**01:19:18**

**[End Ricky LeBlanc-1 Interview]**

**[Begin Ricky LeBlanc-2 Interview]**

**00:00:00**

**Sara Roahen:** I’m here with Mr. Ricky LeBlanc again. I—I forgot to ask something that—that I should have asked, and that is about how you think the—the oil boom affected boudin trade because it seems to be connected. You know, people, before they go to—go to work in the fields or whatever the terminology is, stop and get boudin? You just were telling me about a plant that got really busy during the oil boom. Can you talk a little bit about that?

00:00:34

**Ricky LeBlanc:** Boudin is probably the easiest ready-to-eat product that you can come up with. All you had to do was—it was already cooked, and all you had to do was steam the actual casing, and it was ready to eat. You could also drink it—I mean make it almost a meal because you had the meat, you had the rice, and you had the gravy. I mean in the oil field patch, you'd bring it to the guys that were working out in the field; break out a ten-pound deal, and if it was in links everybody took a link and a drink of—and it almost made a meal. After a while, office personnel wanted some, so you had to go to all these places and bring when you visited the office personnel. And it wasn't just to the actual oil field personnel; it was people that were working like in the sugarcane mill. They—they'd pass by at lunch and they wanted something quick—grab a link of boudin and a bag of chips and a Coke and go. That was a meal.

00:01:48

So you sold a lot to any type of hit-and-go type situation that wanted something real quick that was tasty, and boudin met that criteria and it was—it was real good.

00:02:06

**SR:** When was the oil boom?

00:02:10

**RL:** Seventies and eighties. It was probably your biggest movement in the Iberian and Lafayette Parish(es).

00:02:24

**SR:** And it's sort of ongoing, right?

00:02:25

**RL:** Uh—.

00:02:28

**SR:** That people would be getting a lot of boudin?

00:02:30

**RL:** Yes, you have a lot of places that are still working, and now you have a lot of places that are being new and they're—they're larger plants. If you go along [Highway] 90 to Lafayette, you see two or three large establishments being built. New Iberia is going to be growing even more with the port; the channel is going to be larger towards the Gulf of Mexico, and you're going to be seeing more industrial-type work being done there with larger rigs. So any time you add one, and it's just a tumbling effect. It gets plants in different places to work for, you know.

00:03:25

**SR:** When you first—well I guess both when you were growing up and then also when you first started being an inspector, was there such a strong sort of gas station culture of boudin? You know these days you stop at a gas station and—and most often in this area you can get a link of boudin? Was that always true?

00:03:44

**RL:** Yeah, you—you—it was a ready-to-eat-type thing and it was—you had a (rice cooker) with five pounds in it and ready to go and if you—lunchtime, if you wasn't ready with a—another one

in the back, you ran out of boudin. It's a ready-to-eat type situation. The bad thing was 90-percent of the time that they were the ones that were making the big money because they would buy it for, say, fifteen dollars a box, and they'd sell it for double the price, you know, where the actual person that was making it didn't make that much money, you know. It was always the wholesaler that made it and not the retailer.

**00:04:32**

**SR:** And in some situations, I guess, they're the same person but not usually in the gas station.

**00:04:36**

**RL:** You see very few places that make their own boudin like in the old days. I mean it's mostly a delivery-type, wholesale-type situation. They buy it by the box, and they turn around and sell it for a profit.

**00:04:53**

**SR:** Okay, thanks. I just wanted to make sure to get that.

**00:04:59**

**[End Ricky LeBlanc-2 Interview]**