



**Dawn Urrutia**

**Georgia's Sweet Potato Pie Company - Louisville, KY**

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Accession Number: BAK-056

Date: August 13, 2023

Location: Georgia's Sweet Potato Pie Company

Interviewer: Rosie Moosnick

Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs

Length: One hour and thirteen minutes

Project: Kentucky Bakers

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[unrelated conversation]

Rosie Moosnick: Okay. So I am Rosie Moosnick, and it is October– October– August 13th, 2023, and we are here in Louisville at Georgia's Sweet Potato Pie Company. And I'm here with?

Sarah Jane Webb: Sarah Jane Webb.

Rosie Moosnick: And?

Dawn Urrutia: And Dawn Urrutia, and my birth date is 8/26/74.

Rosie Moosnick: Okay. Thank you for being with us. And so we'll just start with a little background history. Tell me about, or tell us about, the community you grew up in.

Dawn Urrutia: So, actually, I grew up here in Louisville, born and raised. Throughout my life, we kind of moved around in Louisville, but I predominantly– especially my– I guess over the years that really made an impact, I lived in South Louisville, so not too far from Churchill Downs (famous racetrack).

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I lived between Churchill Downs and U of L (University of Louisville). So that's kind of where I grew up at here in the city of Louisville.

Rosie Moosnick: And what did your community look like? How would you describe it?

Dawn Urrutia: So we actually grew up in, I would say, a lower-class community. But I think at the time when you're younger, you don't know what classism is, really. I mean, for me, I didn't. I don't know about anybody else, because everybody in my community, we pretty much had the

same thing. But it was a mixed– more Black and white communities. I'm not gonna say a mix because, you know, we know it's more people than just Black and white. But I grew up in a community where there was a lot of Black and white families, and it was– we had– it was family so, you know, the mom and dad was a lot of times in the home with the children, the community that we grew up in, and it was– now that I'm older, I would say it was a lower socioeconomic community. But we didn't want for anything. We didn't know. Well, I didn't know, so.

Rosie Moosnick:       And what did your household look like?

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Dawn Urrutia: So my household, I grew up with my mom and my dad, and then my sister. So me and my sister were seven years apart. So by the time I got to like middle school, she was already grown and had her own home. And so when I talk about like growing up in South Louisville, like I said, in South Louisville, by that time my sister was already grown, having her own home, so pretty much my mom– me and my mom and my dad.

Rosie Moosnick:       And what work did your parents do?

Dawn Urrutia: So my mom was a– so she was a su...she worked for the state, so she was a supervisor over a, I guess like, a rehab. Well, I don't even know if it was a rehab facility. It was a center for the state that worked with people with like mental and physical challenges. And so she did like class...she was a supervisor for classroom instructions. So the people that worked up under her, they would go into what they call modules, and they would work with different people on just basic living skills.

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Now my dad, on the other hand, what did my dad do? So it's so funny because when I was younger, my dad used to work for the railroad, and then, my dad was never– let me first say this. He was never a hard worker.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: But he was a great father. So he never was a hard worker. So when I was real little, I remember him working for the railroad. But then he ended up getting hurt. Then after that, my dad just worked– he was a security guard, working like, I think, like six hours a day at this place called the Medical Society here. And he did that until– I would say he would've probably done it the rest of his life, but I think that something happened with that job. And then he bounced around, maybe, and did factory work. That's what he did.

Rosie Moosnick: So who was home more with you?

Dawn Urrutia: My dad. My dad. So it's weird because, now that I'm grown, and I look back, and I be like, he was an excellent father. He might not have been the great provider, but he was an excellent father.

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So he was the one to w...like, my mom, so my mom was always trying to disconnect. Like, my mom's probably one of the people that God gave her children, but she probably didn't need children. I mean, we're just having a real conversation. She probably didn't need children, but God gave her two daughters, but my dad was the nurturer. So my dad, he used to work from, you know, especially I can remember from 6:00 to 12:00. And so I went– so he worked right at I think it was like 1st and Chestnut. So I used to go to Central High School, which is like 9th and Chestnut. So I remember being in high school, you know, we would walk down to his job or

stuff, like, on break or stuff like that. And so he was the one that actually was always there. He was, yeah, it was my father. He was the one. But my mom said because he didn't work [laughter], so that's why he was there. So, I mean, you know, but that's who shaped me, my dad.

and my mom played some factor in it, I guess.

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Rosie Moosnick: And how so? How did your dad shape you?

Dawn Urrutia: Because he showed me love at a young age. He showed– he nurtured me. He protected me. So here's the thing I tell people. A lot of times, it's not always about money. He provided what he had, which was his time and attention, and so for, I mean, don't get me wrong, you need money for housing and clothes and stuff like that. But I still feel like I am the person I am today because of the love and nurture. And my dad let me know that I am okay. I have a voice, and your voice is gonna be heard and respected. And it can be good or bad, because growing up, before I became older, and became sensitive to how my words can hurt people, my dad kind of was like, you know, "You have a right to say whatever's on your mind, and nobody's going to say anything to you."

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So especially growing up through my teen years, through my even early 20s, and probably early 30s, I always felt that I have a right, so I'm going to say it. And if it hurts you, that's just your problem, and you have to deal with it. But it didn't– so I started pushing a lot of people away, because I wasn't sensitive. I wasn't sensitive. And then as I started getting older, I started realizing your words have power, and you're hurting people. And so even though you might think something, for one, that's your opinion. Your opinion– I have learned this later in life. Your

opinion is your opinion. So I had realized that my opinion shouldn't matter to nobody else, so keep it to yourself, and that came later in life with growth. So my dad shaped that, but he gave me my voice. So now when people try to come and try to change what I already know to be true, you can't shake me because I'm confident in myself.

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And that came from having a father to say, "Hey, you are important. You are beautiful. You are loved. Your opinion and your voice matter." So he gave me that, and that came from just him being present. That's where it came from, him allowing me to be me, good, bad, or ugly.

Rosie Moosnick: He showed you a lot of love.

Dawn Urrutia: Oh yes. Yes. I didn't realize, it's so crazy, but I didn't realize until probably about six or seven years ago. I used to work for a university here in the state, and we did a homeless training, or a houseless training, I think that's probably what they call it now, and didn't realize, even at one point in my life, I was homeless. Didn't realize it. Like, I just didn't realize it, until I started looking at all these criteria, and I'm like, oh, we lived in somebody's basement [laughter]. We had kerosene heaters.

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You know, we didn't have these things. We started looking at it, and I'm like, at one point in my life as a child, I was homeless. Did not realize it, because I had so much love. Did not realize it until I became a mom, and I said, oh, okay [laughter], I was homeless. Yeah.

Sarah Jane Webb: What defines home for you?

Dawn Urrutia: Family, peace, a spiritual place, a space where it's sacred, you know? This is home. Georgia's is home. This is family, you know? Yes, we have our home, our house, and that's home too. But this is home, and not only my blood family. I tell people when they walk in these doors, so you walk in as a customer, but you leave as family. So when people come back, I say, "Hey, welcome home."

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And that's how we greet people. So it is a sacred, safe space, and where it just feels good. You feel the love. So that's what home is to me, because you can have a place that you just lay your head in, and sleep every night. But if it's chaos, if it's not sacred, it's not peace, or you might not feel like you belong or are welcome. That's not home for me. Home is a place where I feel safe. I feel loved. It's got some kind of spiritual connection, whatever that is for each individual person. But it's just a vibe. It's a vibe, and you know it when you walk in, and you feel it. If I can come in and take my shoes off, and I'm this– and not because it's your tradition; just because this is where I want to be. I will take my shoes off, I'm gonna sit on this floor, and have a good time. That's home.

Rosie Moosnick:       And where did your spiritual connection come from?

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Dawn Urrutia: Ooh. Okay. So, for me, spiritual– being spiritual and religion is two totally different things. So the religion piece came early in life, and it came from my grandmother, Georgia, who I named the company after. My grandmother was really religious that I know now. I remember every summer, especially when we was younger, we would go there. She lived in Paducah, Kentucky (western KY city). And so every summer, my aunt and my mom would ship

their kids off down there. It was like six or seven cousins, we'd all get on a Greyhound bus, and we went down there every summer. And so I remember, for some reason, it was always the girls. The girls went to church, it seemed like, every day. So it was myself and my cousin. Her name is Letitia.. And then my sister was a little older, so she didn't have to go as much as us. But me and Tisha had to go to church with my grandmother almost every day. It probably was like four days a week.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: But it seemed like we went on Tuesdays for something, I don't know, prayer study or something. It seemed like we went for Wednesdays for Bible studies.

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It seemed like maybe Thursday might have been choir or youth or something. Then you was in church all day on Sundays. So it started there with my grandmother. I remember my grandmother, as long as I can remember, you know, she was a praying woman. She always pleaded the blood in Jesus. But I knew there was something bigger than me when– and it goes back to my grandma being in Paducah, Kentucky. I hated being in Paducah because I was a daddy's girl. I hated going to Paducah because I wanted to be with my dad here in Louisville. And so I remember one time, I just hated being down there, and I started praying. I'm like, "God, please, let them come get me, please." And it's so crazy, I don't know what happened, but my parents the next day, they showed up. They showed up to pick us up, for whatever reason, don't know. But then I knew it is something bigger than me, because they came to pick us up, to take us back home. And it wasn't even time to go home. It was just something that happened, and they came in the middle of the summer, and picked us up.

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My grandmother probably was tired of us, but who knows?

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: I mean, who knows, you know? Who knows?

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: And I'm glad–

Rosie Moosnick: Grandma was ready.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: Yeah, she was ready, yes, and I'm glad she was ready. And so I knew then, at a young age, I said, okay, there is something. So I always believed in Jesus, you know, God, but I always struggled with– to me, it was so– I didn't realize till later on in life. But as I got older, and I started– and this probably happened, like, as about I started going through this transition about seven years ago. And I was sitting in church, and it first started with, you know, you sit, and you hear these preachers just, you know, bashing homosexuality, homosexuality, homosexuality. And I have a niece that's a lesbian. And so I just kept thinking she is one of the godliest people I know. Like, I struggled with that. And I kept saying to myself, you can't tell me that she's going to hell and she's bad and she's this, because this is what she desires.

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Like, I struggled, and so I started questioning things. And then also I went to the Spalding University. So Spalding was another eye-opener. Spaulding's a liberal arts school. I got my degree in interdisciplinary social science. And so I started taking classes. So I took an

anthropology class. And I remember at the time, I was in there, and I was sitting next to a young lady. And she said, "Oh, me and my family, we worship the moon, stars, and sun." And that was like the first day. And I was like, "You are crazy."

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: Because I was raised like, oh no, you are crazy. You are going to hell. You are crazy. I just didn't– I was so– I call it brainwashed. I was so brainwashed. And so by the end of that class, I'm like, "Girl, I'm so happy for you."

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: I said, "I worship the moon, sun, and stars," 'cause my mind opened up. Like, oh, there is so much more than what I have been taught all these years.

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And I remember telling my grandmother, Georgia, and I called her Ma. I said, "Ma, I learned about evolution." And as soon as I said it, "Shut up, no, we didn't come from monkeys. I don't want to hear. God created us. We didn't come from monkeys." And I'm like, "No. Evolution just me...it's just a change over time. That's all it means. It doesn't mean we come from monkeys." But it was like, "Shut up. I don't want to hear anything else about it." But, for me, that opened my eyes to something bigger. So then I started questioning what the preacher was saying, and then I started questioning, like, my niece is one of the godliest people I know, and I don't agree with that. And so then I started– so I just felt like something was missing. So I was still going to church. I was still real active. I was like over in the youth department. I was like doing Vacation Bible school. I started a women's group, 'cause I was searching, looking for something. And so I

started, like, 'cause I felt something was still missing. So I stopped going, just stopped going. I stopped going to church.

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I stopped going, I would say, probably about, well, about four or five years ago, I stopped going. I stopped going to church about four or five years ago. And it was like the windows of heaven opened, and blessings just started falling out. My family thought I was crazy. People in church would be like, "Well, when you're coming back? You know, we miss you." And I'm just like but here's what happened. Then I removed Jesus, and I started having a relationship with my Creator directly, and the windows opened up for me, and I realized there's so much more out here than what I have been taught. I'm only speaking for me. I feel like I had been conditioned to believe a certain way. It is so much more. And my God is a God of love, and my God loves everybody. And how can I say that you are wrong, that you are wrong? I might be wrong. I don't know. That's personal. And so once I left church, and then I became spiritual, and then I just started doing my own work.

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And so now I meditate. I burn my incense. I talk to my ancestors, I do. I know I got spirit guides. I go do, like, I go get Reiki. I go get Reiki done. My Reiki healer is like a Reiki [inaudible] slash medium. But I have another medium I go to. When I do go to some of my medium sessions, sometimes, like, you know, my ancestors would come and speak. And God gives me visions. And so we were talking about, well, I was talking about earlier how I told you I got that download for my keynote, my spirit, 'cause I'm attuned now. I'm attuned. And so my spirit told me, "I need you to go out west." This is before I did my keynote presentation. It told me I needed

to go out west. I didn't know where I was going. I just started getting on the internet, and I was like, I don't know where I'm going. But it said, "You need to go out west." And this was just a couple of months ago. Went out west until we ended up in Denver. So I'm thinking, oh, maybe I need to go to the Rocky Mountains.

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Maybe I need to touch the Rocky Mountains. I don't know. I just need to go out there. And so we went out in Denver. Just had an amazing time. Just really got some clarity. Came back. I still didn't have a speech. And I was like, "God?" But God's like, "I'm gonna give it to you. I'm gonna give it to you." A couple days later, I got in the shower. I instantly download. I had to get outta shower. I grabbed my recorder, and just started speaking, and it just all came out. It all came out. But that's being connected. I am connected with my source. So what I real...I thank my grandmother for that foundation, and I understand that religion serves a point. It serves a purpose, and it serves a point, and so I do understand. You gotta think so, like, especially for people of color. I mean, honestly, at one point in time, especially during slavery, that's all we had. But what I try to tell my people of color, when we was over in Africa, we was not Christians. We were not. We were not. So let's think about it.

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Our religion was taken from us because they looked at us as savages, because people didn't understand it. We are people that are connected with the spirit side. That's who we are. We are. We understand that we come from a creator. We come from a god, so that makes us God. We are creators. But what happens is when you have this conversation with people, it scares 'em. But I tell people, my father was a Dillard. That was his name: Herman Dillard. My father was a

Dillard. How can I not be a Dillard? I'm part of him. So if you come from a god, if you truly believe you come from a god, and our god created us, how can we not be a god? And how can we not be a creator if we come from a creator? But that was taken from us once we came here. And in Christianity, a lot of times, it preaches fear, fear, fear, fear and division.

Sarah Jane Webb: That is–

Dawn Urrutia: Fear and division, and those are low vibrations, and that's what I try to explain to people.

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Anytime you stay in a fearful state, that is a low vibration, and you cannot thrive. I mean, that's–

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: No, that's real.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: No, that's real.

Rosie Moosnick: I know. We're with you.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: Yes, that's real. So, you know, but I tell people, what's for you is for you. But for me, I always try to vibrate at a higher level, so I knew what I had to do. So that's what my spirituality look like. It looks like, I guess, I listen. I listen. I listen to my body. I listen to my spirit, and my spirit said a couple days ago– I just kept feeling like something was just getting on me, and I said to my husband, I tell him, I'm like, "You know what? Something is just really

trying to get on me, just put these negative thoughts in my head, put me in a low vibrational state." And so I have a little sanctuary I have with all the different stones and stuff on it. So my spirit said, "You know what? You need to go grab your lab– Yeah. You need to go grab it."

Rosie Moosnick: I wondered what the significance of that–

Dawn Urrutia: Yes. And this is a labradorite? I believe that's the name of the stone. And my spirit says, "What you need to go grab." Put it on [snaps fingers], that feeling left.

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Rosie Moosnick: Did you get that in Denver?

Dawn Urrutia: I did not. I did get some really cool stones in Denver, but I didn't get this one. So at my home, I have like an altar where I have like some affirmation books. I have all my stones. I have different stones that have spoken to me all my life. I have just different– I have my incense. I have different things. So that's what my spiritual journey looks like. So I get up in the morning and, you know, I give my gratitudes, and I say, okay, 'cause every day is different. Some days I meditate. Some days, God said, "You know, you just need to sit here and be still, and don't cut on nothing, and listen." Some days, I pray. Some days, I read an affirmation book. So, for me, that's what spirituality look like. It's just being connected with the source, being connected, and I'm connected. I don't– and I just– that's–

Rosie Moosnick: It's godly and earthly, isn't it–

Dawn Urrutia: Yes.

Rosie Moosnick: –with the stones?

Dawn Urrutia: Yes.

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So spirituality is an internal thing, but you should be able to reflect that. So that's what it was for me [laughter].

Sarah Jane Webb: Beautiful.

[Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: We're down for it, aren't we, Sarah?

Sarah Jane Webb: Yes.

Rosie Moosnick: How does your spirituality tap into this, into this business?

Dawn Urrutia: And so what I do, ooh, so, okay, so I can say this to you guys y'all don't think I'm crazy.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: But I say this all the time, and people look at me like I'm crazy, okay. So, honestly, so God did tell me, don't say what I'm not. So at first, I used to say I am not a chef. I'm not a baker. I'm an early childhood educator by trade. That's what I always, you know, tell people. But God told me I need to stop saying it. So I am a chef. I am a baker. I'm everything in between. But I don't like to cook, I don't. I cook because I have to. I want to eat. I like food. I'm a big girl. I like to eat. I don't like to bake, but I love sweet stuff. So how this all started was, it started because, like I said, I was working for somewhere.

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I felt like I wasn't doing enough. I wanted to do more. God spoke to me. He said– here's what God said. God spoke to my spirit, and said, "You're going to have children." Didn't know what it was gonna look like. God just said, "You're gonna have children." And I said, okay. And God said, "I'm gonna to give you the rest when you're ready for it." So I knew enough. So, you know, I said, maybe God want me to start a nonprofit. So that's why I thought we was going to do sort of this nonprofit thing. But God was like, "No. You'll help children. You need to start doing the legwork." But the pie came in because like I think y'all heard in the keynote. I was just good at making sweet potato pies, had just made it for friends. But God had started preparing me for that a couple years prior. Everything you do in life is preparing you for the next. So a couple years prior, then God telling me to help. I need to do more, because I've always helped children since I was little. I've always, always helped kids. Babysitting. I always had somebody's kids. But before that, God had placed on my heart, for some rea...I don't even c...I'm not even a fan of sweet potato pie, if I can be honest. I'm really not, I'm not.

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I mean, if I–

Rosie Moosnick: I know what you're saying.

Dawn Urrutia: Yeah, if I had to choose, if I had to choose from any kind of pie, my favorite pie is a pecan pie, I love nuts, if I had to choose a pie. But, anyway, God's told me several years prior, yeah, God has started preparing me for this. God put on my heart, "Make a sweet potato pie." So I started, like, looking at different recipes, and I didn't find anything I liked. So then I said, you know what? I'm just gonna call some family and friends. So I started calling around, and this process took a couple years. I was calling around, saying, "Hey, how do you

make your pie?" "Oh, how do you make your pie?" "How do you make your pie?" So this took a couple years. So what I did was, from all of these people, on top of Pinterest and, at the time, you know, you could do like google recipes and stuff, I started just actually taking different things. So this person might have said, "Oh, I like brown sugar." This person might have said, "Oh, I use condensed milk." This person might have said, "Oh, roast your sweet potatoes." So what I did was I just started taking each piece of their recipes that I liked, and I just sort of, well, I put them together.

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So a couple years later, my pie was created, and then everybody started liking the pie. So I became the person who made the sweet potato pies for the holidays. So that's how that spiritual piece started right there. And then, like I said, then God– so we started– so we went– so I'm making these pies. So then I was like, okay, I wanted to start this nonprofit, so we gotta fund it. So that's how we started selling the pies, was that way. We just started helping the children, you know, so we started selling our pies, and we started giving our money away. But I tell people that I truly believe this in my spirit that I have an ancestor somewhere, or multiple ancestors, and I say this, and I truly mean this, that we're somewhere on the– and I can feel it, I do. I feel like one of my ancestors is living through me as it relates to baking, baking pies, because you– and people, as I say, they laugh, but this is true. You put a sweet potato in my hand and, I promise you, it becomes magical. It's a zone.

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Now, if you say, "Dawn, go in here, and bake a cake, just a chocolate cake," I cannot. It's gonna fall. It's gonna be flat. Probably gonna be hard. I tried to bake some chocolate chip cookies from scratch the other day, and they were the bricks.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: They ended up being bricks, like. And I said, well, they have good flavor, but we ended up throwing them away because they was too hard. And that was just a regular homemade chocolate chip cookie. But you put a sweet potato in my hand, that's how I know it's bigger than me. I know I have someone that came before me, that believed for me, and I'm living out some of their purpose. So that's how my spirituality to be able to understand that and honor that and respect that, so that's why I take what I do serious. This is not a game. I don't play when it comes to this, because this is bigger than me, and I have to make sure I honor it.

Rosie Moosnick: Have any of the mediums helped you with who that ancestor is?

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Dawn Urrutia: So here's the funny thing, okay. So, yes, it's– and I don't know–

Rosie Moosnick: We wanna know who that ancestor is.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: Well, let me tell you. This is the funny piece. Okay. So in one of my sessions, a lady came forward. It ended up being– we called her Granny Aunt, which was Georgia's mother. Okay? So she came forward, and she was taking credit for everything. She kept telling my medium, she kept saying, "Tell her I'm the reason, I'm the reason, I'm the reason, I'm the reason." And she kept saying, "Oh, I need her to make this recipe, and it has raisins and chocolate chips in

it." I haven't found the recipe yet, but I'm waiting for it to be revealed to me. And she was like, "That's gonna be the gamechanger, this raisin and recipe– this raisin and chocolate chip recipe." But she came forward, and her name was Granny Aunt's, but I didn't find this out till later. So I thought, and that's what I said, I thought I named my company after my grandmother, which is my mother's mother, Georgia.

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I found out later that Granny Aunt's first name was Georgia.

Sarah Jane Webb: Ooh.

Dawn Urrutia: So then I always questioned, did I name it after my great-grandmother, and didn't realize it? Her name was Georgia Ann.

Rosie Moosnick: Was she from Paducah?

Dawn Urrutia: She was. So she lived in Paducah but, you know, a lot of them, like, came up from places like Browder and Greenville and stuff, like, in Kentucky. So I'm not exactly sure where she was born. But I remember when I was little, she lived in Paducah also, yes.

Rosie Moosnick: And her parents were slaves, or–?

Dawn Urrutia: I don't know a lot about my mom's, like, with her, like, her great-grandparents and stuff. Then on my dad's side, 'cause my dad is from Mississippi, a little town outside of, like, Holly Springs, Potts Camp, Mississippi.

Rosie Moosnick: Delta?

Dawn Urrutia: Yeah, so– well, no, he's more in the middle.

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So he's gonna be close to the Memphis, like, yeah, closer to Memphis.

Rosie Moosnick: The border, right there?

Dawn Urrutia: Yeah, the border of Memphis, yep. But I do know, like, my grandmother was a sharecropper, and her and my grandfather were sharecroppers. And then I believe like their parents were sharecroppers, and I'm pretty sure their grandparents probably was from slavery. But here so that's how I know. So I have a little bit of both my grandparent...all of my grandparents in it, because my grandmother was an educator. So this is my dad's. Her name was Essie Dillard. And so she ended up having nine children. She did not go back to school until after she had her last child, and I believe she was in her 40s. Not only did she finish her high school diploma, she ended up going to college, ended up becoming a teacher and a principal. She taught Headstart till she was, I believe, in her 80s, I believe.

Rosie Moosnick: Wow.

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Dawn Urrutia: Yes. Yes. This is a woman that was at one time in her life a sharecropper. When she, my grandmother, she passed away at 96, just a year and a half ago, she was able to leave money to every of her, all of her living children, plus the descendants of– 'cause she has two deceased children. So my dad is deceased, and then I have an aunt that's deceased. And was able to leave money to their kids. And she started as a sharecropper in the state of Mississippi.

Rosie Moosnick: Wow.

Dawn Urrutia: Yeah. So I tell people there's nothing I cannot do, if you look at that. Because you look at that situation, growing up in– we know the history of Mississippi, being Black folks, growing up in Mississippi, and you grew up, you know, grew up in this era that you still made enough money to own la...she owned land, and she started as a sharecropper. Did not go back to school to afford it after her latest child was born.

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Rosie Moosnick: Wow. Did you feel like you tapped into her before? Were you conscious? When did you become conscious of her story?

Dawn Urrutia: So I became closer to my grandmother after my– so my dad died in– he had a massive heart attack in 2011, I believe it was. So we always would go down there off and on and stuff, but I really didn't have a really close relationship. I became closer to her once he died, 'cause I was trying to hold on to him. And the great thing, I'm glad that I ended up having a relationship with her once I became grown 'cause I think I sort of appreciated it, so I was able to ask questions. And so we ended up having a different relationship maybe compared to maybe some of her other grandkids, because I was able to have a relationship as a grown person, seeking, wanting that information from some– a piece that I felt I had lost from my dad. So once I started talking to her, just hearing her stories, and she's just so inspiring.

0:31:01

And I'm just like, you know, I see a lot of me in her, especially with the education piece, and the hard-working piece. And then just like after she passed, and then n...'cause, you know, 'cause my grandmother was one that, you know, she never wanted for anything. She just didn't. She was so content just being in her house, and watching her game shows. She did crossword puzzles and

doodled, and she did puzzles, like, up until almost when she passed. So she kept– she believed in keeping her mind sharp. So she was so okay with watching her game shows and doing her crossword puzzles. She loved it. But it wasn't until, I think, after she died, and just seeing the impact, like, man, she was even thinking about us even after her death. So I think, yeah, so for me, my connection with her, like, started, like I said, my dad died when I was 36. He was 63. It started around that time.

Rosie Moosnick:       And resilience.

Dawn Urrutia: Yes. So that's like nobody, no one can tell me what I can do.

0:31:59

If I put my mind to it, I can do it, 'cause I know what I come from. And that's what I tell people, like, well, you know what you come, well, you know what you know what you know.

[Laughter]

Can't nobody shake you.

Rosie Moosnick:       So where's the sweet potato in all that?

Dawn Urrutia: My ancestors [laughter], that's where it come from. I'm being honest to you. No, I mean, honestly, the sweet potato is coming from somebody before me.

Rosie Moosnick:       From Georgia?

Dawn Urrutia: She said it's coming from her.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: She hasn't tied that piece together. She's talking about chocolate chips and raisins.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: She hasn't tied the sweet potato in yet. So Georgia Ann is actually saying it's coming from her, and it might be 'cause I don't know a lot about her, I really don't.

Rosie Moosnick: We'll have to check how much sweet potatoes are grown in Mississippi.

Dawn Urrutia: A lot. So sweet potato, you know, between sweet potato in North Carolina, they kind of debate, like, being the sweet potato capital of the world.

Sarah Jane Webb: Oh, interesting.

Dawn Urrutia: So sweet potato in North Carolina, yes, I think it's like Vardaman, Mississippi, I believe, they grow a lot of sweet potatoes.

0:33:01

So, yes, so there's a lot of sweet potatoes grown in Mississippi. I know, like, my Uncle would say that they can be driving down the street, and people just have piles of sweet potatoes on the side of the road that you can have and stuff. So, yes, those sweet potatoes are grown a lot in Mississippi, they are. So it's a connection there. I just don't know exactly, like, which si...I just know it's an ancestor. I don't know, like, which side they're coming or how far back. I just know that it's just somebody beyond me that had a connection with sweet potatoes in some kind of way.

Rosie Moosnick: Ooh, I just got chills because this is going to the University of Mississippi.

Dawn Urrutia: See? So good, maybe they can find out.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: Like, who knows, right? It'll come full circle.

Rosie Moosnick: Yeah.

Dawn Urrutia: We seriously become– yeah.

Rosie Moosnick: Supposed to strengthen those ties with Mississippi.

Dawn Urrutia: I believe that.

Rosie Moosnick: I believe it, too.

Dawn Urrutia: And, I mean, it's funny that you said that because my dad, he lived– so my dad was from Mississippi, went to Vietnam, came back a changed man after Vietnam.

0:34:00

But when he was in the Army, he was stationed here in Fort Knox. And so once he got out, he went back home for a little bit, just couldn't– he was different. He was different. So he came to Louisville, 'cause he was familiar with Louisville from Fort Knox, and that's where he lived the rest of his life. But, you know, I believe in spirit, everything, how everything works. So a week before my dad died, we were sitting at the kitchen table, and so he was telling me, he said, "I just want to let you know." Now we didn't know my dad was sick or anything. He had a heart attack when he was 49. But you know, Daddy had been, you know, trying to take care of himself and, you know, trying to do good, I mean. And so he was 63 at the time. He said, "I just want to let you know I paid for my plot. So when I pass, I want to go home, back to Mississippi." And I'm sitting here looking at this table. I didn't understand. I'm like, "You want to go back to Mississippi? Like, what do you mean?" I'm like, "We're here. Your family's here. Your grandkids are here. What do you mean you want to go back to Mississippi?" And I was really upset. He

said, "That's where I wanna go." He said, "My mom is there, and I want to go home. I want to be with my mom."

0:35:01

Still not knowing, my granny's still living. Keep in mind, my granny just passed away last year, a year and a half ago. And so I said, "Okay." But I wasn't happy. But I'm like okay, 'cause I'm thinking we don't have to worry about it. I better talk him out of this.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: My dad died almost a week later. We had this conversation on a Sunday. He passed away the next Saturday of that week. And we flew him home, and buried him in Mississippi.

Sarah Jane Webb: Really?

Dawn Urrutia: So my dad is buried in Mississippi. So when you talk about full circle, I believe there's something there.

Sarah Jane Webb: And is your mother buried in—?

Dawn Urrutia: My mother's still living.

Sarah Jane Webb: Oh, sorry, your grandmother.

Dawn Urrutia: Yes. So she's buried there also. So actually—

Rosie Moosnick: Where in Mississippi?

Dawn Urrutia: So it's a little town called Bethlehem, Mississippi. So the bigger, you know they all have big towns—

Rosie Moosnick: We'll have to look at the map.

Dawn Urrutia: Yeah. So it's a little town. So you got Holly–

[unrelated conversation]

0:36:00

Dawn Urrutia: So when you go to Mississippi, so you got Memphis, and then, you know, you got Holly Springs, where Rust College is–

Rosie Moosnick: I know Holly Springs.

Dawn Urrutia: Okay, in Holly Springs. Then probably about, what, 30 miles, maybe down or maybe not even that far down, about 20 miles down, you got a town called Potts Camp. So when you get off a little road, and go through Potts Camp, then you go to another little road, and up a little round the thing, and then there's a little town called Bethlehem, Mississippi. That is where my dad is from. That's where he's buried. That's where my grandmother's buried.

Rosie Moosnick: There's people on–

Dawn Urrutia: Yeah. So I still have aunts and uncles there. My dad was the only one that left. Out of all nine kids, my dad was the only one that left Mississippi. All the rest of the children are either in Bethlehem or they're in Holly Springs. The ones that kind of felt like they were moving out of the– moving to the city, they moved to Holly Springs.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: But I still have several aunts and uncles that live in Bethlehem.

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So now that my dad is buried, so is my grandfather, my grandmother, and then my dad is right next to 'em. He's right next to his mama.

Rosie Moosnick: Do you know what? I just got a vision. We're going to Mississippi.

Sarah Jane Webb: Yeah.

Rosie Moosnick: I'm getting teary. Aren't we?

Sarah Jane Webb: Yeah.

[Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: Okay, where am I?

Sarah Jane Webb: I have a question.

Dawn Urrutia: Okay.

Rosie Moosnick: Sure.

Sarah Jane Webb: I'm curious to know more about what practices you've had in patience during this transition of your past career, and then given this information, and your divine calling, how did you sit and wait through the process?

Dawn Urrutia: How do I sit and wait and be patient? I'm a doer, so I don't know if I do wait [laughter], 'cause I'm a doer.

0:38:02

So I didn't leave the previous job until March of this year.

Sarah Jane Webb: Really?

Dawn Urrutia: Yes. So we actually started Georgia's in 2017. We started Georgia's, so we was doing like just pop-up stuff, you know, but we didn't open a brick and mortar until last year, 2021. But I just left the full-time job for the university on March the 3rd, '23. I just left. So I'm a doer. So I don't know about having patience. I'm a creator, too, if that makes sense. So I have to do something. If I ever get to a point where I can't do, it's time for me to transition on to my next life in the next sphere somewhere, 'cause I am a doer. And so I just have to– so my patience come from my husband.

[Laughter]

That's what I'm gonna say. I'm going to say that for real, 'cause my husband, I always tell everybody, he's the calm in my storm.

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So a lot of times, he has to bring me back to say, "Look what you've already accomplished," because a lot of times, I don't know how to sit in that, I don't. I don't know how, 'cause my brain is always thinking of what do I need to do next. And so he is the one, Deyago is the one that keeps me grounded. He grounds me. So patience, when I look at that, he keeps me grounded. But, also, I would say age, growing spiritually, knowing that God got his hand or her hand, whatever you want to say, over me and over what I'm doing, that I can't, I mean, how do I not be? I mean, it's gonna be all in God's timing, even though I wanted to move faster, I want to make more money, I want more people to come in the building.

0:40:01

But God got me, because every time I think like, oh Lord, you know, we only had two customers today, like, something else will come, and be great and amazing. Somebody will come in, and

say, "I drove all the way from Michigan just to come here to try a pie," or I'll have a child to come in and say, or a parent will tell me, "Oh, Johnny didn't want a cake for their birthday. Johnny only wanted a pie and a book for their birthday." So that outweighs it. So when I look at— 'cause I'm a doer, so just being grounded in patience. I'm in it. I don't know if that makes sense. I don't know if that makes sense.

Sarah Jane Webb: And is that where trust is born for you? Or how did you learn trust, to trust yourself?

Dawn Urrutia: I don't trust myself.

Sarah Jane Webb: Interesting.

Dawn Urrutia: I don't trust myself 'cause, I mean, I don't know. I have surrendered.

0:41:01

So here's the thing. I have a "yes, Lord" spirit. And so when I went into this build...when I went into this, I went in there with the attitude— I used to wear a shirt that say, "Well, why not?" And then I also went in there and would say, "Yes, Lord. So whatever you ask me to do, yes, Lord." So then when you call, sure, I wanna—

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: I mean, yes, let's do it.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: I'm just like, okay, my schedule's kind of tight but, yes, let's do it. So I just trust God. How can I not trust my creator? How can I not? And if I want to trust my creator, then how can I not trust the process? I struggle with being in the moment. That's where my struggle is.

Sarah Jane Webb: That's the sitting in?

Dawn Urrutia: That's the sitting in; sitting in and reflecting and enjoying the process, because I'm a doer, and my mind is, even now, my mind is always thinking about, oh, we're going to Mississippi.

Sarah Jane Webb: Yeah, we are [laughter].

Dawn Urrutia: So I need to figure out how I'mma meet y'all down there.

[Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: Oh no, I'm still there.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: You see what I'm sayin'?

Rosie Moosnick: I'm still there. I'm going.

0:42:01

Dawn Urrutia: Yeah. **That's what's on my mind.** I need to make sure I can get my cam– so I can meet y'all down there.

Rosie Moosnick: I got us on the–

[Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: Oh no, we're riding together.

Dawn Urrutia: You see what I'm saying? So that's how my brain thinks.

Rosie Moosnick: We went to Mississippi already once together.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: So, see, that's how my mind thinks. So just actually just being in the moment, that's my struggle. That's my struggle. Patience come because it's just bigger than me. I'm a doer. I just listen. I just listen and obey. And why not? But then the calm piece come, it's my husband, because I would drive me crazy–

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: –because I put a lot of pressure on myself to be great. And so he's the one to come back, and say, "Hey, I got your back, let me do what I do, you do what you do, and it's gonna be good." So, yeah, I don't know if that answered your question, but does it answer your question sort of like?

0:43:00

Sarah Jane Webb: Yeah, absolutely.

Rosie Moosnick: So what were you doing? What university? What were you doing?

Dawn Urrutia: So I used to, for 13 years, I worked for the University of Kentucky, and I was an early childhood specialist. And so what that means is, what I was doing for them, I went around to different childcare centers, and I helped the childcare centers improve quality. So our state of Kentucky actually has a quality rating system. And so my job was to go to these centers that participated in this quality rating center, and I was their TA, to kind of help them kind of navigate their system, kind of gave them ideas, provided technical support to help them become successful on their journey as they increase or maintain their rating and their quality for families and children.

Rosie Moosnick: And why did you leave that job?

Dawn Urrutia: I finally ended up leaving it. I should have left several years ago. But I think God was still using me there for some stuff. But it got to a point to where– so my husband was working the building full-time.

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And I was still kind of full-time on weekends and stuff. And it got to a point he just pulled me to the side, and said he had taken Georgia's as far as he could, and I needed to come out. Then he went to a conference. I'll show you everything divinely, everything is so divinely made. He went to a conference last year, and Steve Harvey was one of the speakers. And so 'cause I was struggling, I was fighting it, 'cause one of the reasons, not only for money but insurance. Like, insurance is so big. And I'm thinking, I got a 401k here. They're not putting too much pressure on me, 'cause we're still in COVID mode.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: They pay for my insurance, like, that was so big. And so he had already told me, "I need you to come out, so you can take it to that next level." And I was like, "Okay, okay." He went to Atlanta to this conference, and so Steve Harvey was the speaker. And he said Steve Harvey was just talking, you know, "You just gotta stay focused, and keep doing what you're doing." Steve Harvey said, "If you're baking pies, just keep baking pies."

[Laughter]

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Dawn Urrutia: "It's gonna work out." He said Steve Harvey just talked about, "I'm still saying the same jokes I said, you know, when I first started." He could not wait to get in the car, and call me. He said, "Steve said you gotta come out."

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: "You got to come out." He said, "Steve said if you're still baking pies, just keep baking pies. It's going to work out." And so once he came home from the conference, I told my supervisor it's in my day. And the reason I chose 3/3/23 was because, actually, it'll be my completion. I actually started on that day, 13 years ago, so it was just to me for completion, so that was the reason I chose that day. And, I will say, like, you know, it's still a struggle. It's a small business. Small businesses are still struggling right now. So I'd be lying to say that it's not a struggle. Sometimes we look out the window, like, where are people at? You know, it's still a struggle. But I will say, you know, we are self-insured now. And that was one of my biggest fears, you know, even though I hate writing that check every month for, you know, almost \$1,300. But I have insurance.

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And I think that's what God is just about the trust. That's what God is like. Here's what God has shown me. It might not always come the way you think it's gonna come. So every month, I've been able to write that check. Every month, I've been able to pay my bills, pay my employees. But it might not come always through the pies. It might come other ways, and that's what God's been revealing to me. I'm thinking, oh, it's gonna come through the pies. People come through these doors. We're gonna sell a certain amount of pies. God has been blessing us in so many other different ways that we've been able to keep our doors open.

Rosie Moosnick: What is your biggest challenge with the business?

Dawn Urrutia: I would say our biggest is foot traffic in the store. I would say that. I would say our biggest challenge is getting people to come in here, especially local people. So we have, we do have a really good, like, out-of-town following. So, you know, I think people, they google what to do in Louisville. And a lot of times, we might come up. They look for Black business, they're looking for something different, and they come, because you're not really getting this if you're looking at a lot of other places.

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I think what happens with the locals, I think, I love my city, but I think we are a trendy city. And I don't know if other cities are like that, but I think, for Louisville, it's like whatever the happening thing is, whatever's trending on Instagram and Facebook, that's where people, they tend to go to. So, you know, if something new opens, that's where everybody flock to for six to nine months, and then it's the next thing. So, for people, a lot of our customers will tell us, "Oh, we're gonna wait till you come to the farmers market. We're going to wait for you at the Flea Off or the next community event. We're gonna be at the next WorldFest." And they'll tell you, "Oh, we know you've got a brick and mortar," but they just don't come in. And a lot of times, people don't realize that that is what keeps the doors open. We can't wait till once or twice a year, or wait till once a month to do a market, you know? So that is one of our biggest struggles, honestly, it's just getting people to come in with foot traffic, you know. And then with inflation, and I understand everything that went up, you know. People are now trying to decide, "Hey, do I buy a \$6 pie?"

[unrelated conversation]

Dawn Urrutia: Do I buy a \$6 pie, or do I go buy some chicken or hamburger to feed my family?"

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You know, people have to make these decisions. Gas had went up, you know, everything has went up. So I do understand, you know, right now what we're dealing with in society, it is a struggle. So, in my mind, I always think about, okay, how do you pivot? Because I understand Georgia's cannot fail because it's bigger than me. So my next mindset, okay, if people are not coming in, I have to figure out different ways to kind of pivot, and to continue to bring in additional revenue. So one of the ideas God gave me, and we've been working on this, is so we're in the process of planning for our alcohol license. And what we're gonna do with that is we are going to offer, like, bourbon and dessert experiences inside the bakery, 'cause people still, even in inflation, people are still gonna drink.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: And people are still looking for experiences.

Rosie Moosnick: Even more [laughter].

Dawn Urrutia: They are. They are. So we've already started some of these. We had our second one a couple of weeks ago. We did our first one in July, I mean, in January. We did one last a couple of weeks ago, at the end of July.

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But what happened with those cases, when I have 'em at another location, I have to pay. They receive pretty much the majority of the money. So the majority of the money goes to the venue and the caterer. If I can start providing all of this in house, then I can keep the money. So we are

building a great following as it relates to that. So I think that's where the pivot is going to be. I'm looking into going into next year. We're still gonna have the bakery going on, and I'm actually looking into going to Thursday through Saturday, so we would like condense our days, Thursday through Saturday. But then we'd do the bakery in the morning, and then we will offer bourbon pie... the bourbon dessert experiences at night. And it's going to be a time-slotted event, so people can't just walk in. You're gonna have to be intentional about making reservations. And so it's going to truly be an experience. So that's kind of what God has given me. and for us to start implementing. So that should roll out the first of the year.

Rosie Moosnick: That would be cool if you could work with a distillery.

Dawn Urrutia: God is already making those connections, yes [laughter].

Rosie Moosnick: So what does your customer look like? Who is your customer?

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Dawn Urrutia: Our customer, what does our customer [laughter]– actually, I wasn't– and here's the thing. It's so funny because I was, you know, people, you know, you shouldn't say your customer's everybody, 'cause it's really, I mean, but our customer's gonna be– their age is gonna range from, I would say, young kids, just because we do the books, and we give out free cookies to children. So we do a summer reading program, so we give out free cookies to children. So we have, you know, we have ended up increasing our younger people, our rate as a base of customers, of the younger generation. But I would say it's going to be your– if I'm looking at an average customer, it's going to be, I would say, your late 30s to your maybe early 70s. So here's the thing. It's really good. We have a mix of race, I would say, when it comes to our Black and

white customers. I would say it's a very small piece...we have some Asian Americans but, other than that, like the other races, we really don't get a good variety of the other races.

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And I would say the majority of our customers probably are gonna be maybe Caucasian, white folks, because I think that for the white culture, a lot of them, they love pumpkin pie. And once they have had sweet potato, they realize how good it is. And a lot of 'em don't have people to make it, so they don't mind paying for it.

Sarah Jane Webb: Oh, interesting.

Dawn Urrutia: What happened in the Black culture is, well, I mean, we have a nice following of Black customers. But what happened in the Black community is if somebody in the Black community can make a sweet potato pie, it's gonna be either their auntie, their granny, their mama, the wife or, you know, cousin. Somebody can make a sweet potato pie. So when I'm telling you, hey, the 3-inch is \$6, or a 9-inch is going to cost you \$25 or higher, a lot of times people will say, "Well, I'm just gonna get my mom to make it," you know? So that's the struggle we kind of have, you know, within the Black community, is somebody can make it. Somebody can make it.

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So for our white customers, a lot of them are like, "You have a little sweet potato pie. I don't know anybody that can make it. I'm coming to you." So that's all. So I will say our primary customer base is going to look, overall, if I look at the percentage, it's gonna be from the late 30s to maybe early 70s, and it's going to be, I would probably say, 60% from the white community. And then I would say probably 35%, you know, from the Black community; 5% others.

Rosie Moosnick: What relationship do you have with other bakers in Louisville?

Dawn Urrutia: So what other bakers? I probably have, well, actually we collaborate with Kizito Cookies down the street, Elizabeth Kizito. And she's been around for a long time, making them really big cookies. So we collaborate with her, where she created us a cookie, and she actually wholesale our cookies.

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So we purchase our cookies from her. We buy them wholesale from her, and we sell 'em here. So we do work closely with her. We work closely with Louisville Cream, it's an ice cream company here, where they make our sweet cream ice cream. Then other than that, we probably work closer more with maybe some local restaurants here. So our pies are sold at Mayan Cafe, and Galaxie Bar. Those are the two restaurants that, you know, that sell our pies here. So, for us, it's really been about community, you know, so not only with bakers, but then we have good relationships, like friendships and relationships, with other bakers throughout the city. But those are the ones that we actually kind of do transactions with and do business with at those bakers and the restaurants. But, you know, for us, for Georgia's, it's about community, 'cause if one of us wins, we all win, you know? So people will go to Mayan because they know they sell our pies. And the people might go to Mayan first, and say, "Oh, I ended up getting your pie at Mayan, and so I'm coming to the store."

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Or the same thing at Galaxie, and so on, and so on.

Rosie Moosnick: What about with other minority businesses?

Dawn Urrutia: Probably beside, well, so you said like other than in the food industry?

Rosie Moosnick: Just in general.

Dawn Urrutia: So our spice blends are made by a Black company, so we outsource that from a company called Foxx Catering. We actually have a good friend that makes nut butter, so we sell her nuts here. And then our candles are made from another small business company here. So what we do is in our honey. So what I do is I try to find my favorite things, and I try to carry some of their products here in the store. And these are some of the people that maybe don't have a brick and mortar, so I wanna give them a space to be able to sell their products.

Rosie Moosnick: And I didn't ask, when did you all open this?

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Dawn Urrutia: So we opened the brick and mortar, it was on January 23rd of '21, so National Pie Day.

Rosie Moosnick: Oh.

Dawn Urrutia: Yep, National Pie Day.

Rosie Moosnick: I know in your Better Business Bureau, you talked about books, so tell us about that.

Dawn Urrutia: So with our books, so we started the books, so, like I told you before, when we first started our company back in 2016, we would just sell our pies, and we would take their money, and we'd just give it to the grassroots organization that was doing the work in the community. And so at the end of about 2018, we started actually taking the money, and actually buying books, because I wanted to have a deeper impact in being an early childhood educator, or

understand the impact of books. And so we started just buying books about love, diversity, inclusion, acceptance, and entrepreneurship. So we started that in 2018, I believe. And so what we was doing at first, we would just take a basket of books to the farmers market. We would just take a basket of books to community events, and encourage families, "Hey, take as many as you want. Here you go."

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And so then, once we ended up getting our brick and mortar, then we was able to install our little libraries. And so now we're in the process of I'm working on a campaign with the Little Library Foundation. It's to help eliminate book deserts in the city of Louisville. And so I think when we talked last, it was like 19 book deserts. I think we already have put some in about three or four of them. And so that's my goal for right now is to eliminate book– and the way they define book deserts is based off of socioeconomic and, you know, me and Deyago, we had a, you know, discussion because we don't assume anything, you know. I understand where they're coming from because they end up getting the data. You know, some university ran the data, and they base it off of census tracks and socioeconomics, and that's where they base all the poverty levels. At this point, we assume they maybe don't have access to books. And we know that might not be true because you live in this area, it doesn't mean you don't have a library full of books, you know.

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But we do understand that if it comes down– if I only have a certain amount of money, I'm probably gonna have to pay my rent and food before I buy a book. And so we're basing it off of that census track. And so what we're doing is we're just going, and we're trying to find different

companies and community centers to partner with us to allow us to– well, we'll get the libraries and the Little Library Foundation, and then they have to install it, and then we will provide books, and we will do the maintenance and upkeep of the books. So that's our goal for the book deserts. But my ultimate goal is to have a little library in every zip code in the city of Louisville, because one of the things that I believe in is that I believe that every child should have access to diverse books, and so because you live in a zip code that maybe is an affluent zip code and, yes, you probably have a lot of books in your library. Are they diverse? And that's always– and it's a question– and I don't assume. You know, I ask these questions to a lot of my peers and people that I talk to. I say, "Yeah, you know, you have books, but have you done an audit?"

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"Like, what does your book look like?" And a lot of times, they're gonna be a representation of, you know, what they look like, what their church look like, what their school, what their community look like, their beliefs, and stuff. And so they're not really diverse books. And so what I try to explain to people, you know, we want to make sure when our children go out into the workforce, or go out to school, or go to a camp, or just go to the mall, that they have, you know, it won't be the first time they have come in contact with somebody that looks different from them, or walk different, or talk different. And, yeah, it might just be from a book, but a book actually can open those doors, can expand our minds to something different. And, you know, in the lived experience that I had, which was a confirmation for me, is when COVID– one of my coworkers, who was an older white lady, had asked me to join her book group. So I joined the book group. I was the only Black person in this group, and there was a lot of older white women. And so we read a bunch of books, but being able to hear their lived experience and coming from their perspectives.

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And one of the books we read was the *Blue People*. I think it was the Appalachian Mountains, I believe. That's the name of it.

Sarah Jane Webb: Come again?

Dawn Urrutia: *The Book Woman*. I think it's called *The Book Woman*. We read that book. But it is hearing their perspectives of it. And one of the things that stood out, you know, one of the ladies said– and we were just talking about– so we were just talking about, you know, in this book, the young lady, she had this pigmentation, where her skin would turn blue. She was mistreated, and just a lot of things that goes on, which as a person of color, you know, I can relate to, or have had, you know, just a race or just being a person of color. And so one of the ladies, you know, they made a comment, she was like– and, you know, and it wasn't in an offensive way. She was just speaking her truth. And that's one of the great things when you have a safe environment, and you know that people's intentions are right, you just listen. And it helps expand your mind. And so she said she had a biracial nephew, and they lived in a little town, I don't know, a little county somewhere.

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And she said, "One of the things we do as this young man got older," she said, "we just went to the sheriff's office, and told the sheriff such-and-such is a good kid, so they would know." And so I was just like, "Wow. You can do that?" Like, I mean, yeah, but that's real. I mean, that really happens, 'cause I've heard it from other people in other states. That really– stuff like– that's a privilege. As white Americans, that is a privilege you have, especially in small towns. That is a privilege you have, that you can let them know, "Hey, yes, he belongs to us. Even though he's a

person of color, he is safe. So if you run across him at night, please don't hurt him. He belongs to us." And being able to hear that perspective, like, man, okay, this is an option. And I didn't judge. I don't have a right to judge anything. This is just a person's truth.

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So that book club opened my eyes to so many things to say, you know what, if I can have this aha moment, we can do the same thing with books, with younger people. So we can get these diverse books, and maybe they can– so when they see these, see, you know, that they can see these people that look different from them, maybe they'll grow up to say, "You know what, this person's just like me, because we have some of the same things in common." Maybe their parents and my parents are reading it. They can read, and say, "You know, that person likes the same things you like," and it can change perspectives. So then when we come across each other in the community, we're relatable. That's all it's about. We wanna be seen, right? I don't wanna be just seen as a stereotype, and that's what it– to go back to the book, the lady, the book about the *Book Woman*, it's the same thing. All they saw was her blueness. They didn't see her as a person.

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But once you get into that story, you're able to see just how complex she was as a woman, as a mother, as a wife, as a community leader, and in serving her community. You saw all those things, and you can relate to it, and you saw beyond her blueness. It's the same thing that happened in books with young folks. So sitting in that book club, and having that moment, and listening to that woman's, you know, her statement, I'm like, "You know what, it makes sense." So that's why we need to start getting these books out. So that's why we give the books out. So not only do we give out books about love, diversity, inclusion, acceptance, then I started an

entrepreneur piece maybe last year or about a year and a half ago, because I– well, this is just my opinion. But I just feel a lot of schools, we train our students to be workers. And I just want people to know what's your option. If you want to work, you know, that's fine, and it's fine. We work for people for a lot of reasons. Every other day, I ask my husband, I say, "Is it easier just to go back and work for somebody else," you know?

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: Every other day, I think I'm asking him this question. "Oh, we got payroll again, you know."

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But there should be a choice, and I want people to know that you have an option, that you can maybe own your own, create something. Why not create? If it doesn't exist, create it. So we get these books out into children's hands to let them know you can create the next thing. You don't have to create it and give it to somebody else. You create it on yourself, and you make money off of it. That's what you choose to do. So we get those books out into the hands, because I tell people all the time, racism, prejudice, biases, that's learned behaviors. We all have certain stereotypes, and where do they come from? A lot of times, they come from your community, your church, your family, school, TV, media. But that's learned behavior. If they can be taught, we can teach love, compassion, empathy, acceptance. That's how we can teach that. We can teach that. So that's where the books– so the books just play a part. So what I tell people, so we all have a calling. And I'm not saying like what I do is perfect, 'cause it's not.

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I believe that our creator put us all on this planet to do something. Mine's just doing this. So it's a quilt. Like, I think I said in the statement, it's a quilt. So we all do our piece. If I put my patch up, you put your patch up, you put your patch up. We might all be doing different work, but if we're doing work to build a better humanity, it's going to come together, and the world is going to get better, if we all do our part. Because what happens is if there's more people in the world that believe what we believe, that we won't– we believe in, you know, having compassion and empathy. We believe in acceptance. You know, we might not know how to get there, but we're willing to learn. We're willing to ask questions. But what happens is, a lot of times, we are the quiet ones. We are the ones that's not whooping and hollering. The ones that's whooping and hollering are the ones that get all depressed. But it's more people truly like us that truly believe in this, we all come from the same creator. We all just look different, but it's okay.

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And when we start looking beyond, so what I tell people, I want you to see me. Don't tell me you don't see color. I want you to see this tall, Black, beautiful woman with dreads. That's what I want you to see, with this beautiful smile. That is what I want you to see, 'cause that's who I am. Don't just tell me you don't see color. You're supposed to see my beautiful Black skin. I'm supposed to see your beautiful olive skin. That's what we're supposed to see. Your curly hair, I love it.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: You know, like, yeah, I mean, we're supposed to see that, because when you say you don't see it, you say you don't see me. You don't see me. But we're the quiet ones, and I have to see you to respect you. That's it. So we have to learn how to let our voices be heard a little

more. And if we all come together, it's going to work out. It's going to work out. So that's where the books come in at, yes.

Rosie Moosnick: And how do they tie to the bakery?

Dawn Urrutia: The bakery helped fund the books.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: That's what I tell people. The books aren't– the pie was just a vehicle, that's it.

1:06:00

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: No. Because if I ever stopped helping children, I would never bake another pie again in a day of my life. I promise you, I'll be going down the street, to the bakery down the street, and getting my pies. I promise you, if I ever stopped my mission, that would go away. So that's how it ties in. The pies just get me in the door. The pies have conversation. The pies is what people first, you know, most people's first encounter with me is gonna be through the pies, and then once they find out about our mission. And we are doing better now, like, really being able to promote, like, tie in our mission. 'Cause at first, when we first started, we would just trying to focus on our business, and we were just all over the place. And people would say, "You do what?" "And you do what?" "And you do what?" But now we are doing really better. We have a wonderful social media person. We're doing better with time, everything in together. So people now are really understanding we are a mission-driven company. But the pies just open doors. The thing is that, well, here's what happens. Most people love good food. When you eat our pies, you will taste the love.

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That's it. I don't care what you believe. I don't care if you the far left, the far right, in the middle. I don't care what your beliefs are. People like good food. When you walk in here, we're going love on you. That's it. I don't care. People– somebody– I said something the other day, they was like, "You gonna love on that person, yes," 'cause I have an obligation. So we're gonna love on you, 'cause I might be the only person that looked like me that has showed you love. And I might even want to change your mind about what you believe about my race of people. So I'm gonna love you. So the pies get you in the door. Then I'll tell you the work that we're doing. And then I'll let you sit with it. And then whatever you decide to do with it, that's on you. It's not my responsibility, 'cause I have a calling. I can't tell you what to do. When y'all leave here, I can't tell y'all what to do with this information. I don't even know what I'm supposed to do with what I got. And I'm gonna tell you what we're gonna do, what we do, and then you do whatever you want with it. So the pies get people in the door. That's it. And so the pies also help fund, you know, fund buying books.

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When we first started, we was buying pretty much all the books. And then, you know, we're still having people donate. And then now we have a good relationship with our local library. They really support us. The local corporations have stepped up, and like the University of Louisville have done a book drive. I think GE donate some books. You know, Thorntons have done a really big book drive. So we have had like a lot of large corporate– Amazon, I think Amazon may have done something with us. So we did have like a lot of large corporations that really have stepped up to donate. The only difference, well, the issue a lot of them run into is that we are still a for-profit. We are not a nonprofit. So that kind of right now kind of hurt people from like writing

checks and stuff like that, and the reason we– I am gonna add a nonprofit leg to it. I just haven't done it yet. And the reason I've stayed a for-profit for this long is 'cause of that Type A personality I have. And when I first started, I was like I am working hard, and I don't want to sit around a board for somebody else to tell me what to do with the money, with money that I make, that I worked for to sell these pies.

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So that is the reason why that we have been a for-profit for this long. But as we are growing, I have had some corporations reach out, saying, "Hey, we want to write a check." And like I tell them, "Hey, if you write a check, you can't write it off, you know." So I always just tell people, "Hey, we have a wish list. Go to our website. We have a wish list with Carmichael's Book, which is a local bookstore down the street. Or if you don't mind shopping at Amazon, you can go to Amazon. Whatever works best for you, you know, it's up to you, and you can just buy 'em." And that's what a lot of the corporations have been doing, but I know it is an extra leg of work. It's easier for them to write a check.

Rosie Moosnick: So really your emphasis is less on the bakery, and more on the books?

Dawn Urrutia: Yep, it really is, it is.

Rosie Moosnick: Let me see what– I'm gonna– is there anything you wanted to ask, Sarah? 'Cause I know Sarah wants to get photos and things, and it's a Sunday morning.

1:09:59

Dawn Urrutia: Did we cover all the food stuff? I know this is a food thing. Did we cover all the food stuff?

[Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: That's okay. I mean, we had some questions about food waste. But you're more about your passion.

Sarah Jane Webb: And that's what we'd rather hear.

Rosie Moosnick: That's what matters, yeah.

Dawn Urrutia: Okay [laughter].

Sarah Jane Webb: Well then on a final note, I'm curious to know, how would you title this interview?

Dawn Urrutia: Oh.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: How would title this interview? I would say refreshing. And the reason I would say refreshing because you guys have– with this interview, I have dug deep with some stuff I haven't, like, told anybody outside my immediate family about just personal stuff. So I was able to reveal a side of me that no one else pretty much in the public knows.

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And it feels good to let that side show, because that's who I am. I'm a daddy's girl. I'm a hard worker. I'm spiritually connected. That's me. So I would say–

Sarah Jane Webb: That's beautiful.

Dawn Urrutia: –refreshing, yeah.

Sarah Jane Webb: Can I?

Dawn Urrutia: Yeah.

Sarah Jane Webb: You shine, girl, you shine.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: Yes.

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: I don't know about that. I don't know about that. But maybe don't make it all – I'm like, Lord, I hope my mom don't get offended.

[Laughter]

Dawn Urrutia: But I gotta speak my truth.

Rosie Moosnick: Mama doesn't have to hear.

Dawn Urrutia: I know. I'm like I gotta speak my truth. But what you– this is–

Rosie Moosnick: I know– yeah.

Sarah Jane Webb: This is so good.

Rosie Moosnick: Anything you want to add before I turn it off?

Dawn Urrutia: Just let me know when y'all headed to Mississippi. I'll be there [laughter].

Sarah Jane Webb: Yes.

Rosie Moosnick: We're going together.

Sarah Jane Webb: Yeah.

Rosie Moosnick: We're road tripping.

Dawn Urrutia: Yeah [laughter].

Rosie Moosnick: Thank you.

Dawn Urrutia: You're welcome.

Rosie Moosnick: Thank you.

[End]