



**Diego Hernandez
La Pana - Louisville, KY**

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Interviewer: Rosie Moosnick

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0:00:00

[unrelated conversation]

Rosie Moosnick: I'm Rosie Moosnick, and today is August 22nd, 2023, and we are in Louisville, Kentucky, in Logan Street Market.

Sarah Jane Webb: Sarah Jane Webb.

Tori Cruz-Falk (interpreter): Tori Cruz-Falk

Diego Hernandez: I'm Diego Hernandez. My [laughter] date of birth is November 13, 1984.

Rosie Moosnick: Okay. Thank you. Thank you for doing this, Diego. I know you've had-- what time did you come in today?

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Diego Hernandez: Today I start at 3:20 something, because we have orders to do.

Rosie Moosnick: 3:20 in the morning?

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Sí. Yes.

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: It's early. Well, I've been doing this for 20 years, so I'm used to it.

Rosie Moosnick: You're used to it. When do you go to bed?

Diego Hernandez: Around 8:00, 9:00. It depends.

Rosie Moosnick: Well, if you wanna start, tell us about your background. Tell us about the community from where you came from.

Diego Hernandez: So basically I was born in a bakery. My parents have been doing this in Oaxaca for 50 years. So I always were playing around the bakery with the dough and all of that.

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And when I start in the high school, I was just like-- not like a bad boy, but I just decided to leave my home when I was like 16 or 17 for about two years and a half or three. And then I just came back when I was 20. And then I start baking with my parents, and I just realized that I really like to bake, as a living, like, start working with the dough. It was like very peaceful for me, and meditation, and using my hands. And I start working at my parents' bakery for like two years, and then I start moving around the city.

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And then I just was curious to know a little bit more about the like European pastries, and mixing like the recipes. So I just decided to, well, I met my wife, and then I moved to Wisconsin for four months to study abroad. And then we went to San Diego, and then I start working there in a Mexican bakery. And then I was more curious about baking and pastries and croissants and all of that, so I just went to Europe on a backpacking trip. I rented a motorcycle there, and I start traveling around, and work, well, watching the people, and asking questions, how they were doing this process.

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And they were very friendly, and tell me about this. So after like one month and a half trip, doing like research, I just came back to Oaxaca in my city. And my parents shut down one of the bakeries they have in downtown. So once I came back, I just decided to start working with the mixers and the oven and the dough sheeter, and all of that stuff, and put everything together, and start working there, and apply the process in the other bakeries to make more like different type of pastries, but mixing the pastry creams.

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And all of that, I learned from my parents. I didn't have any job, so I just start working there, and I start selling on the streets. Starting walking there, and then I got a bicycle, and I start delivering on the bicycle. And then I got a moped, and I started delivering on the moped.

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Sí. [Laughter] And then it was my friends and the people who was in the neighborhood, they start telling me that I should open the bakery there again, so I did.

Sarah Jane Webb: In the same spot?

Diego Hernandez: In the same spot where my--

Sarah Jane Webb: Really?

Diego Hernandez: Sí, they bought that place like 30 years ago.

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But it was like a huge protest there in 2006, which it was hard for the tourists. Tourism came again because it was between the teachers and the government and the people who works in the hospitals. So it was a huge protest. It was, I think, worldwide. So the government were like

warning the state to close the business in downtown and around there for months. So there was no business there for like a year or two, and the tourism didn't come, didn't come there. So that's why they just decided to close that bakery for like four years, and then--

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Sarah Jane Webb: How many bakeries did they have in that area?

Diego Hernandez: Like in 2004 to 2008, it was like three of them.

Sarah Jane Webb: Oh wow.

Diego Hernandez: And then they closed one at first, and then they closed the other one, and they just have one there. But the one I opened again is still there. My brother and my nephew and my cousin, they're running that bakery again.

Rosie Moosnick: Were your grandparents bakers too?

Diego Hernandez: My grandparents and my grand-grandparents, they start doing this kind of pastries traditionally from Oaxaca.

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So my dad start doing the same pastries there. And after like 20 years, he start doing like sweet brioche, and then start learning from the other bakers, who they were asking for work to my dad. And my dad and my mom, when they met, they just start working together. And my dad was doing the pastries during the night, and my mom were delivering in the mornings, and selling on the streets too. They didn't have a place to sell at the beginning, so they just start delivering and knocking the doors. And they were doing this for like 20 years until they opened their first bakery.

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And once they opened, they start selling a lot. It was like a few bakeries 50 years ago. So it was a lot of people just coming, and he had to buy more equipment and hire more people. And that's how they started growing. [Laughter] Sí.

Sarah Jane Webb: Wow.

Rosie Moosnick: So what were your memories of being in the bakery growing up?

Diego Hernandez: Well, I'm the sixth. We are nine siblings, and I'm the sixth of them. And I was very lucky when I was born because they already start with the business. But I remember still a little bit of my parents, like, they didn't have like the roof where they were baking.

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They have an oven, a clay oven outside of the spotlight where they were doing the pastries, and they had to go out. And when it was raining, my mom was covering to my dad with like a big umbrella to bring the pastries, and bake outside. And that was like when I was five years old, maybe eight, between that. And I start just like thinking how important is the family being together and helping each other.

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Rosie Moosnick: Did you grow up working in the bakery?

Diego Hernandez: Working?

Rosie Moosnick: In the bakery. You said in some--

Diego Hernandez: No, I wasn't working. I was going to the school, and playing around with all the kids, because we were living in front of like a huge market. So a lot of people who were selling, like, local business, all of them were-- we were playing around. It was like very safe. But, yeah, I wasn't. My older brothers, they were helping my parents at the beginning too, to sell the-- like, when they start baking more, they were helping my parents when they were like 15 or 12 years old, selling in front of the house before they opened the bakery.

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[Laughter] Sí.

Sarah Jane Webb: I'm curious to know what was it about the European style baking that you were curious about? What was it that drew you to that specific kind of thinking?

Diego Hernandez: When I was in Oaxaca, I used to do the traditional pastries, more like sweet brioche. It was like the dough, it was just like our base dough, it was just like sweet brioche. So we can make most of the pastries with the same dough.

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And once I start traveling around Europe, I just realized that most of them were like puff pastries and filling with different type of pastry creams or fruit or on top. And the base dough, it was like laminated with butter and dough and butter, and that's how they were doing those layers. And in Oaxaca, we used to use kind of like butter, but it was like-- how you call?

Rosie Moosnick: You can say it to Tori--if you ever want to use Spanish.

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Leche de cabra.

Tori Cruz-Falk (interpreter): Like goat?

Diego Hernandez: Goat, sí, like goat butter, between goat butter, and vegetable oil.

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So it was solid. And I used to use this in Oaxaca to make a fill...kind of pastries filling with pineapple jelly or something like that. But it wasn't good. Well, it was good but it wasn't good as on butter, like, with whole milk, like, that whole like, well, butter [laughter].

Sarah Jane Webb: Yeah [laughter].

Diego Hernandez: So talking with a woman in Spain, she start telling me how to do this process, and how many folds, and put it in the fridge, which it was almost the same process in Oaxaca. But once I start talking with her, I just start learning more about this kind of dough.

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And then in Belgium, I started looking at the people who were doing the strudel, apple strudel, and looking them how we-- I could go into the bakery, and see how they were working while the baker was talking with the other customers, which I like that type of like--

Sarah Jane Webb: Like communication back and forth?

Diego Hernandez: Yes, see the neighbor who were coming and talking with them. So I just [laughter] start doing this with the window.

Sarah Jane Webb: Will you tell a story of how you eventually had the window cut into the building?

Diego Hernandez: Sí. So I was working in this room like one year and a half.

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And I was starting at like 3 a.m. 4 a.m., and doing the deliveries at 7:00 to two coffee shops. We start delivering to them. And I start by myself here. I was doing everything, and going to buy the flour and all that stuff. So I start very early, and sometimes I finish around 6:00 or 7:00. So after one year and a few months, I noticed that I was like not very sad all the time, but I didn't see, well, I didn't have like conversations with people, and I didn't see the sun. So one day, I just decided to open like a window in front.

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And I said, I just wanna open a window, and see the street or the people walking there. So I met two guys who were working here for the owner of the building, and I asked them if they could-- they were from Mexico-- if they could help me to open a window there. And they said, "Just go and buy the window, and then we can open a hole there." So I went to Home Depot, and ordered the window. And after 15 days, I just come with the window, and I talk with the guys. So we just start breaking the bricks over there, and like in five hours or eight hours, we just finish, and put the window, and the next day it was just like that. And then the people start walking there, and they start knocking the window, and looking inside.

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And they say-- they were asking me what I was doing. And so they noticed that I was doing pastries and bread, and they started asking me if I could sell them. And I say, "Well, like I don't have that permission, but I want give you for free." And I start giving to them and giving to them [laughter]. And I told Josh and Paco we should start selling [laughter] the pastries in front, and put the espresso machine there, which we already had that, but we weren't thinking at the

beginning to start doing that yet, because I just was just fed up about not seeing the sun or not talking with anybody [laughter]. So after that, we just start with the permissions to sell to the public.

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So everything was like--

Sarah Jane Webb: Like organically happened?

Diego Hernandez: Uh-huh.

Sarah Jane Webb: Like organically happened, authentically happened?

Diego Hernandez: Yes. So it was good. That's how we start selling [laughter]. And I like it a lot now [laughter] the regulars, so the people are coming, and chat a little bit. And it's very convenient for people also. They're walking with the dogs or just they don't wanna-- or they're just gonna stop or just walking around in the neighborhoods, the community, and they bring like something for us or food.

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And then I just like to share like the culture [laughter] more than selling, or I like to give them the trade. Sí. That's how we open the window.

[Laughter]

Sarah Jane Webb: That's so cool.

Diego Hernandez: Sí, it's so good.

Rosie Moosnick: I'm curious how you develop. You said you went away for two years when you were in Oaxaca. Where did you go?

Diego Hernandez: Oh, well [laughter], I start using drugs. So for the first six months, I just start being more like addicted to that. And then my parents put me in a rehab, and then I escape.

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And then I went home, and they put me again in the rehab. And then I was in the rehab for three months, and then I just didn't want to come back to my house. And then I just left, and I start just, like, start with people like doing sandals, or like on the beach with people who were playing with the fire or like--

Rosie Moosnick: Like juggling?

Diego Hernandez: Sí, or playing with the drums.

Rosie Moosnick: How do you say that in Spanish?

Diego Hernandez: Malabares.

Rosie Moosnick: Malabares.

Diego Hernandez: Sí, doing malabares.

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: And then I just learned a little bit how to make sandals, selling those, but always just to buy or drugs or alcohol with the guys who I was knowing or meeting in Mexico City or Puebla

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I was going on a ride with a tent or, if I was lucky, I could rent a place more on the beach. It was cheaper for like a month or so. But any time when I was coming back to Oaxaca, my parents were so sad about my situation, how it was, but it was hard to start living this type of life. But after like two or three years, no, like after three years in the early 20s, I just decided to quit, and I went to my parents' house.

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And just by that time, I wasn't-- nobody saw me. Nobody was-- I didn't see nobody for like nine months, and my mom was so, so sad, like, telling me that was looking for me everywhere, everywhere. So I just decided to go, to come back home, and saying that I just want to quit this. [Laughter] I don't want to keep living like that. And so I just went by myself to a place where I didn't have to be there. It was like volunteer?

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Well, I just went into there because I wanted to.

Sarah Jane Webb: Like a rehab?

Rosie Moosnick: Oh, you volunteer, right?

Diego Hernandez: Sí. So I was there for like one month and a half, and then I just decided to go out. And for the first week at home, at my parents' house, they-- because they have the bakery down there, and upstairs they have like the house. So every morning, I was just thinking what to do, and I was like anxious. And then I just start talking with the bakers, and start helping them with the trays, and cleaning, and all of that. And I said, I just gonna start working with them.

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So I just start working with them in the mornings. I wake up at 4:00 in the morning every day. And that's how I just realized that I really like this, playing with the dough [laughter], and being gentle with my brain, and a lot of meditation. And I just realized that I had to use my hands and my time in being productive [laughter]. And that's how quit. And since then, I just-- I think after that, after like four years, I thought I think [laughter] I can use drugs without being addictive.

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And, no, I went again, and I just noticed that no, this is not good after four years. So now I'm 38. When I was 35, I try again. But I just didn't keep doing that. So I'm like 15 years, 14 years sober. Well, not using drugs. I like wine and that but, no, not like every day; just occasionally.

Rosie Moosnick: Congratulations.

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter] Thank you. So that's how-- and I keep traveling on my motorcycle because I like it but in a good way [laughter].

Sarah Jane Webb: It's like meditative in its own way, being on the motorcycle?

Diego Hernandez: What did you say, sorry?

Sarah Jane Webb: Does it feel meditative--

Diego Hernandez: Oh, sí.

Sarah Jane Webb: --riding?

Diego Hernandez: Sí, a lot. Also, it's like wind therapy [laughter].

Rosie Moosnick: Wind therapy [laughter]?

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Diego Hernandez: Sí. And always when I'm traveling on the bike, I just like to put my tent everywhere, and being in the mountains, on the beach, on the road. Every year, I take a trip from here to my town for 10 days, and then another 10 days, which it took me that 10 days to come back, and just going there, and going to the desert, and going everywhere by bike [laughter].

Rosie Moosnick: Where did the motivation to travel come from?

Diego Hernandez: Since I was-- when I was 12 years old, I start being curious about how my oldest brother was taking his bicycle into the mountains, which it was close to the beach.

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It took-- it was like a Virgin like saints to visit like for miracles, a lot of that stuff. So the people were doing this--

Sarah Jane Webb: Pilgrims?

Diego Hernandez: --pilgrims, uh-huh. So they took bicycles and all of that. And I always was looking at all those people, but I always was interested in like just taking my bicycle, and start, and being outside of the house, of my house. So when I was 13, I start using my bicycle more often and more often. And one day, I just went to this place for like four days.

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It took me into the mountains. And I was a kid, and my parents were like-- they didn't know where I was. It was in the-- but I know the telephone number there. So me and another friend, we just took the bicycles, and we were by ourselves. And it was the time when the pilgrims were doing this, so they were-- we just have a backpack with us, and we didn't have food with no money. We 15 years old, and it was like a three-day trip. So the people with the trucks, they

noticed that we were just by ourself, and they start helping us with the food. But we wanted to go and get to that place by ourselves. And that's how I realized that I really like to do that.

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And after talking, well, after that, I just called to my parents, and I told them that-- they were very angry with me but, at the same time, they were happy I was okay there. And so I just came back home, and I stopped for those three years. But then when I start using drugs [laughter], I start just going to place to place, another place, and moving around. So that's-- and no-- all of these people were talking me about the trips they were taking with some-- like a lot of times with no money or just with a tent, with nothing but a tent, and working for a few days.

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They just start just like trading for food or for a place to stay. So I just start doing this. And after that, like when I was 20, I just bought like a big motorcycle, which when I was 15 also, I had a small motorcy...bike. So I start doing this in the city, and in the beach, and going around. But once I quit using drugs, I just start also with the motorcycle and traveling.

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And it was another thing that I knew that it was helping me too with [laughter] my thoughts or the spirit, and looking for another lifestyle. And then I met my wife in Oaxaca, and she liked to travel too. So we met each other, and I start talking with her about the motorcycle. And it was like a very good company. So she want to also able to go everywhere on the motorcycle. But, yeah, I think the first time when I start, when I saw my oldest brother doing this with a bicycle, that's how I was interested in taking those trips.

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And after 20, I just talking with a lot of people where they were riding the motorcycles into Oaxaca, because it's the only way they have to go to Oaxaca to keep going down the south. So a lot of people I met all the time, and I was offering my house. It wasn't my house, but I was offering [laughter] my parents' house to stay there because I liked to talk with them. So it was like nice to hear all of the stories, and start doing by myself.

Rosie Moosnick: Did any of your siblings leave the country too? Did they--?

Diego Hernandez: I have one of my brothers who was living in France, in Montpellier, studying business there for one year.

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But then he came back after that year, and he's not outside. And also my oldest brother, now, well, he doesn't live in another country, but he's doing these like triathlons around the world.

Rosie Moosnick: So you're the only one living outside of--?

Diego Hernandez: Sí, I'm the only one [laughter]. I'm the only one.

Rosie Moosnick: And so how did you all start coming to the US?

Diego Hernandez: How?

Rosie Moosnick: Yeah.

Diego Hernandez: Because my wife is from Wisconsin, from Green Bay. So she first start visiting in Oaxaca, and I was-- that was when I was 24 when I met her-- no, 25.

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And then she still was studying here in the university in Wisconsin. And it was easier for me to leave Oaxaca than her to leave her study. So I say, "Well, I really wanna be with you, so I wanna move there." Well, not move but I just started applying for a student visa, because it was one of the easiest way to get a visa for me. As a young man, like 25, sometimes it's difficult to get a tourist visa because it's like suspicious, like, you wanna stay in the country and live.

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So it was a little bit difficult to get a student visa, but I got it. And then I just start studying there for four months, for the whole winter in Wisconsin [laughter]. So it was heavy. It's so cold up there.

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: And then I spent all my money I have, because the university was very expensive, and I didn't have work. So I was talking with my wife, and I said, "Well, I don't have any more money to keep paying this, and I don't have a work here. So I think either even I move or we move to Oaxaca or move to another state where I can work," because in the university there, they said that at least I had to talk-- I had to know like 40% of English to work.

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So I didn't-- I couldn't talk any English at that time. So, well, after four months, I was starting learning there more and more and more. But after four months, we just decided to move to San Diego once Lisa, my wife, finished her studies. So we moved to San Diego, and there is when I start working in a bakery in another-- but the only way which I could stay was that I have to keep studying.

Rosie Moosnick: Were you married at that time?

Diego Hernandez: No. No, we didn't marry. We just married four years ago.

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But I've been with Lisa for 13 years, so almost 14.

Rosie Moosnick: And how long were you in San Diego for?

Diego Hernandez: We--

Rosie Moosnick: [Laughter] Josh, you can join the conversation too.

Josh Gonzalez: I appreciate that.

Rosie Moosnick: Yeah, come on over.

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: We'll make room on the couch.

Diego Hernandez: Oh, what did you say, sorry?

Rosie Moosnick: How long were you in San Diego?

Diego Hernandez: Ah, one year. Sí, one year.

Sarah Jane Webb: And you were also studying?

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Sarah Jane Webb: What were you studying?

Diego Hernandez: Like an ESL program.

Sarah Jane Webb: Wow.

Diego Hernandez: It was the cheapest.

Rosie Moosnick: Oh, I like your chair.

[Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: I'll figure it out.

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Josh Gonzalez: Find a way.

Rosie Moosnick: We're grilling Diego [laughter]. So how did you-- you were in San Di...how'd you get here? How'd you all get to Louisville?

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: Did Josh go to Oaxaca, and recruit you?

[Laughter]

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Josh Gonzalez: I wish it was that easy.

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter] No, I think, well, in 2017, I broke up with my wife [laughter]. And I was so sad, which I just took the next week, and buy a ticket flight, and go to Wisconsin, and ask her [laughter] like why we broke up and all of that stuff. She didn't want to [laughter] come back to Oaxaca.

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: So the year before that, I met a-- not that year.

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She was-- three years before, I met a philosophy professor from the JCTC (Jefferson County Technical and Community College) which he was bringing students to study abroad to Oaxaca for like Spanish classes. And on his way to the, like, to the school, the languages school, there was the bakery. So it was one block after that, it was the bakery, and it was the students there. So he was walking every morning, and he was coming every morning to the bakery for coffee and a pastry there. So he start telling me about Louisville. And I have like an old car there who he was interested in. Then, you know, the car, he calls it a thing.

Sarah Jane Webb: The thing? Is that your old VW?

Diego Hernandez: Uh-huh, with no doors and no roof.

Rosie Moosnick: Yeah, I do know.

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Diego Hernandez: So I have that car in Oaxaca, and he say, "If you come to Louisville, I have like 50 of those BMW convertibles, and I'm gonna give you one."

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Sí. So once I was in Chicago in 2017, I just remember him, and I call him, and he say, "Ah, so you're in Chicago? Why don't you come to Louisville, and visit me, and I'll give you a car, and you can bring it back to Oaxaca?" I was so sad then, and I say, "I don't wanna [laughter] come back to Oaxaca. Maybe Lisa gonna tell me [laughter] come back to Wisconsin."

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: So [laughter] I just decided to come down and visit Wes. Wesley is his name, the professor. So once I get there, then the next morning he told me, "Come on, I'm gonna introduce you to two of my friends who works at Con Huevos!"

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It's a restaurant in Frankfort Avenue. So Josh and Paco were working there. So that's how I met them in 2017.

Josh Gonzalez: I knew Wes because in 2012, he was my philosophy professor at JCTC.

Sarah Jane Webb: Oh really?

Josh Gonzalez: And I stayed connected to him. He's a big thrifter. He has the Goodwill here on Broadway. And I'd run into him like two or three times a week. And he used to come into Con Huevos! all the time for his coffee and chilaquiles and whatever he ordered.

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter] Sí.

Josh Gonzalez: I think he was only supposed to be here for like a few days. But how long? Did he stay for like a month?

Diego Hernandez: For like a month.

[Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: Did you end up living with Wes?

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter] No, with Wes, and then I was spending time with them dancing, and I met a few people, and I was around, and it was the eclipse [laughter].

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Sarah Jane Webb: Oh really?

Diego Hernandez: We went to Nashville.

Diego Hernandez: Nashville?

Josh Gonzalez: Nashville, uh-huh.

Sarah Jane Webb: Wow.

Rosie Moosnick: Was that 2016?

Diego Hernandez: 2017.

Sarah Jane Webb: '17.

Josh Gonzalez: '17.

Rosie Moosnick: The fall of 20...?

Diego Hernandez: Uh-huh.

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah.

Diego Hernandez: Sí. [Laughter]

Sarah Jane Webb: Wow.

Diego Hernandez: And then I just bring the car.

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Josh Gonzalez: It's still running around here too.

Diego Hernandez: It's still running. Sí, I drove it to Oaxaca.

Rosie Moosnick: What color is it?

Diego Hernandez: It's black [laughter].

Rosie Moosnick: So you all just immediately hit it off?

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah, we got along pretty well.

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: We like to party and dance and do things.

Diego Hernandez: Sí [laughter].

Rosie Moosnick: So what did you do the month you were here?

Diego Hernandez: I was helping Wes.

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He has a lot of cars, so he was helping him and his partner in the shop, where he was doing these things with the cars, and as a mechanic. So I start learning a few things there, and cleaning. And we were like trading. Like, I was helping him for that, and he was helping me with a place to sleep, and feeding me [laughter].

Sarah Jane Webb: Wow.

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Sarah Jane Webb: And where did you go after that month--

Diego Hernandez: After that month?

Sarah Jane Webb: --after you stayed here for a month? Then where did you go?

Diego Hernandez: I took the car down to Oaxaca. So I just was doing a few stops there until the border.

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But at the border, I had to pay-- they were asking me for \$3,000 to import the car, because it was a European one, and it's not in the-- how do you call the tratado de libre comercio? Like, it's between Canada, US.

Josh Gonzalez: Oh, NAFTA. Trade agreement.

Rosie Moosnick: Oh, it's a NAFTA thing?

Diego Hernandez: Uh-huh. So it wasn't with the Europe, this trade.

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: So I just decided to leave it in Texas with one of my friends, and then I came back for like six months later. And then I came back but not to here; I just went to Texas, and then I just pay the money, which it worth it there. That car is very expensive down there. There's like three of those in the whole country, in Mexico. And here--

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: --there are a lot.

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

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Diego Hernandez: But there is, sí, if I gonna sell it, I can sell it for a lot.

Sarah Jane Webb: Wow.

Diego Hernandez: So I just was driving that, and [laughter] doing these trips.

Sarah Jane Webb: And this was like 2017 or something?

Diego Hernandez: No, that was 2018, sí, came back like in January or February, I think, sí, February after-- sí.

Rosie Moosnick: And so how did you end up full-time in Louisville? How'd you all end up best buds?

Josh Gonzalez: Well, 2019--

Diego Hernandez: In 2019--

Josh Gonzalez: --you and Lisa decided to move to Louisville, right?

Diego Hernandez: We decided to move to the US, but we were thinking to live in California because her brother lives there.

0:46:59

And we were there, but, oh, well, we start doing this together again. We just come back because we broke up. But after one year and a half or two years, we just decided to start being together again. So we were saving money, our goal it was buying a small house, and start living here. But we went to California. It was so [laughter] expensive, buying a, like, even in a small house there. And I told Lisa, you know. Well, she know Wes too. And I say, "You know, Wes told me that in

Louisville, it's a nice place to live, and also the economy is cheaper than here and in the rest of the US."

0:48:02

So we start looking at here, and we were finding houses for like 50,000, 70,000. So we say, compared to there, it were like 200 or 300. And I say-- and I also know Josh and Paco, and they were about to open the restaurant. So I said, "Well, let's move there." And that's how we got here in 2019.

Josh Gonzalez: Like two weeks, maybe, two weeks before we opened?

Diego Hernandez: Uh-huh.

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah, two weeks before we opened, Diego hit up Francisco.

Diego Hernandez: Uh-huh.

Josh Gonzalez: "Hey, we're gonna move to Florida. Do you have work?"

[Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: We were like "Hell yeah, come on over dude!".

Diego Hernandez: Huh?

0:48:58

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah, and he just started doing food prepping and making pastries on the weekends, little cheesecake bites, little Oaxacan treats. We did that until the pandemic hit.

Sarah Jane Webb: And when did you move into this? Is that-- this is the space you started when you moved to Louisville?

Diego Hernandez: No. I started with them working with--

Sarah Jane Webb: Over here?

Josh Gonzalez: At Foko.

Diego Hernandez: Foko.

Sarah Jane Webb: Yeah? Oh, okay. This didn't exist yet?.

Josh Gonzalez: This happened out of-- when the pandemic hit, we were a staff of like 12 part-time and full-time. And when the pandemic hit, either we had to lay off a few people, and then other people just were collecting unemployment, and they were like, "I just want to be safe." I live with a vulnerable population.

0:50:01

And we understood. So the only ones that stayed were Diego, Francisco, and myself. And, I mean, it was crazy. It was like apocalyptic here. We were like the only business that was open, us and the butcher shop, and the wine? Not until later, I think.

Diego Hernandez: Sí. No, they closed all of 'em.

Josh Gonzalez: We were trying to figure out like, all right, how are we gonna make it through this? So we started [laughter] offering free delivery to anywhere within like a five-mile radius. And you would go on your motorcycle to deliver sometimes.

Diego Hernandez: Uh-huh, on my motorcycle.

Josh Gonzalez: Or we would borrow each other's cars. And just sometimes there were no orders, so we would sit outside and play soccer.

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Josh Gonzalez: Drink a lot of champagne.

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Champagne [laughter], sí.

0:51:00

Josh Gonzalez: But pretty early on into, actually, I think like the next week, Diego started making pan dulce – traditional Mexican bread, and a few of our guys were going to like the--

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter] Sí.

Josh Gonzalez: --like where the higher concentrations of Latinos live, and they were selling door-to-door.

Sarah Jane Webb: Really?

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah, trying to figure it out. It lasted for a little bit.

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Josh Gonzalez: But what really hit off was when we started making loaves of bread – pan de caja.

Diego Hernandez: Yeah.

Josh Gonzalez: A little corner store over here started buying from us, and then there was another bar that turned into like a convenience store. They started buying from us, and then

people were coming to buy that bread, the more traditional bread. And I remember at that time, we were [laughter] using our neighbors' ovens, like, on both sides.

0:52:00

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

[Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: And Diego was getting here super early to bake that, and use all three ovens in the yards--

Diego Hernandez: The three ovens.

Josh Gonzalez: --of the neighbors.

Josh Gonzalez: Until I think, actually, we have pict...someone took pictures of the day that I think we were-- Diego, Francisco, and me were all sitting outside. All right, I think we need to start a bakery.

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Sarah Jane Webb: That's interesting that it's documented.

Josh Gonzalez: Frank has pictures of the day that we were outside by Paco's car.

Diego Hernandez: Uh-huh. Who has a picture?

Josh Gonzalez: Frankie.

Diego Hernandez: Ah.

Josh Gonzalez: Remember Frankie?

Diego Hernandez: Sí, we start talking all that. Let's start a bakery [laughter].

Rosie Moosnick: This was in the middle of the pandemic?

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah, it was like that summer. And then we didn't have a lot of money.

Diego Hernandez: No.

Josh Gonzalez: We had no money.

[Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: Like just a little bit that we had from bread sales.

Diego Hernandez: Uh-huh.

0:52:58

Josh Gonzalez: And then everything after that was just sort of falling into place. I mean, it was divine.

Diego Hernandez: Sí, and then--

Josh Gonzalez: [Inaudible 0:53:08]

Diego Hernandez: Sí, and suddenly, well, a lot of business were shutting down. And the Scarlet's Bakery, which was in Shelby Street and Oak Street, in that corner, they just came and they say, "Hey, we closed that bakery a few months ago, and we have equipment and all of that.

If you need something, we'll sell it very cheap." And they even give us that mixer for free. A lot of equipment, it was for free.

Josh Gonzalez: It was crazy.

Diego Hernandez: People start coming and saying, "You use this?" Sí.

Josh Gonzalez: It was amazing. We probably got like, I don't know, maybe like \$20,000 worth of stuff for like 4,000 or 5,000.

Sarah Jane Webb: Wow.

0:53:59

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah, and that stuff, that's a World War II era mixer. It was on a ship.

Sarah Jane Webb: Really?

Diego Hernandez: Sí [laughter].

Josh Gonzalez: She was like, "If you're able to haul it outta here, you can have it."

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: And we drug it out. Like, we had it on a dolly, you know or on a –

Diego Hernandez: In a--

Josh Gonzalez: --cart, like a we had it on a dolly.

Diego Hernandez: and a jack.

Josh Gonzalez: Jack. And we pushed it all the way from--

[Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: --like six blocks up the street.

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Sarah Jane Webb: Down the sidewalk?

Josh Gonzalez: No, on the road.

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Sarah Jane Webb: Is that documented? Do you have a photo of that?

Josh Gonzalez: Someone has. I think Francisco has pictures of us loading all this stuff on a pickup truck.

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah, little by little, we started off with the Hobart mixer.

Diego Hernandez: Sí. We were collecting the money from the loaves, and we found a place with a-- because everything, I was kneading by hand all the time, all the time.

0:55:02

But it was a moment, I'd say, it's hard. It's hard to do this, and more and more, and there was a little more orders and more orders. And I said, "I need a mixer." [Laughter] So I went with Paco to see a guy who had this mixer, and we found it on Marketplace. And I was so happy [laughter] once we got here with the mixer, man. And in Oaxaca, we have [laughter] like 20 mixers.

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: And I said, "Man, I wish I had one here."

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Josh Gonzalez: I have a picture of him rolling dough out with a Topo Chico bottle, 'cause we didn't even have a roller, rolling pin.

Diego Hernandez: Sí, making donuts.

Sarah Jane Webb: You said your mom used to roll out dough with a glass bottle, is that right?

Diego Hernandez: Sí. Sometimes when they didn't have like a-- well, at the beginning she was using that like a bottle, like the Coca-Cola or those.

0:56:04

And with the same what he used to cut with the same that he was doing the hole in the door. And they start rolling this. So looking at my parents, I learned a lot since I was a kid, and cooking, and always around, sí [laughter], paying attention.

Josh Gonzalez: It's amazing. I had the privilege of seeing his parents' bakery. I have a picture or a video of his dad. How old is your dad?

Diego Hernandez: He's 79 now.

Sarah Jane Webb: And he's still working?

Diego Hernandez: Sí [laughter].

Sarah Jane Webb: He's still working, yeah?

Josh Gonzalez: He still gets up at--

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: --4:00 in the morning, or I don't know how early; super early. I think at 4:30, they're already baking. They're already--

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Rosie Moosnick: So you all took a trip to Oaxaca together on motorcycle?

0:57:02

Diego Hernandez: Two years ago.

Sarah Jane Webb: That sounds--

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah it was cool. Super--

[Laughter]

Sarah Jane Webb: This is too much, you all.

[Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: That's him and his crew over there.

Rosie Moosnick: That's a big bakery.

Josh Gonzalez: Oh it's huge.

Sarah Jane Webb: Tori wants to see.

Diego Hernandez: In that bakery, we used to work like 20 people, bakers--

Rosie Moosnick: That's a big bakery.

Diego Hernandez: --before. Now it's a little slower.

Sarah Jane Webb: This is the bakery that you grew up in?

Diego Hernandez: Uh-huh.

Sarah Jane Webb: The same space?

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Sarah Jane Webb: Wow.

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: So I wanna know when you all didn't have a good time together. It just seems like you always enjoy each other's company.

0:57:58

Josh Gonzalez: It's fun. We have a lot of fun.

Diego Hernandez: Sí, even when the motorcycles were broken.

[Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: We were stranded for five days in Texas.

Rosie Moosnick: Oh, what part of Texas?

Diego Hernandez: Anna, Texas. Anna?

Josh Gonzalez: Anna.

Rosie Moosnick: Anna.

Diego Hernandez: Anna, Texas.

Josh Gonzalez: It's a little outside of Austin? Where was it?

Diego Hernandez: Dallas, I think, sí.

Josh Gonzalez: Dallas, yeah, like 40 minutes outside of there. So we had to-- luckily, one of our friends who actually works with us now, his parents live in Anna, like close to where we broke down. And he was like, "You know, go crash at my parents'."

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: "They have an extra bed." And we were treated like kings. We were fed every day. So we had to order the part on eBay, but it was 4th of July weekend, so everything was like not in service. So we waited for five days for the piece to get there. And as soon as it came, we were off.

Sarah Jane Webb: And off you went.

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah.

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter]

Sarah Jane Webb: Was it just the two of you that traveled by motorcycle down there? Did you have more people that--

0:59:00

Diego Hernandez: No.

Sarah Jane Webb: --were traveling with you? Just the two of you?

Diego Hernandez: Just us.

Sarah Jane Webb: Wow.

Diego Hernandez: And to keep that running, we were taking out his battery on his motorcycle every 40 minutes, because the part we needed, it was helping the battery to recharge all the time. So it wasn't working while...so while his motorcycle was charging my battery, I was like chan...my motorcycle didn't work this part to recharge the battery. So it was dead every 40 minutes.

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: So his motorcycle was charging my battery. So we're exchanging the batteries every 40 minutes.

Sarah Jane Webb: Wow.

Diego Hernandez: It took a lot, but we did it [laughter].

Josh Gonzalez: Gosh, I mean... We traveled a few hundred, maybe like a few hundred miles like that.

Diego Hernandez: Sí [laughter].

1:00:00

That's good. Good to do.

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Always [laugh] with rain. He fell down in the mountain [laughter], and then in the gas station [laughter].

Josh Gonzalez: I fell like five times.

Diego Hernandez: But he didn't know how to ride. I just taught him in the park--

Josh Gonzalez: Like a month before [laughter]--

Diego Hernandez: --in the [laughter] parking lot. And then I say, "You have 2,500 [laughter] miles to learn."

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: So he just--

Sarah Jane Webb: That's a lot of trust.

[Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: Oh my God.

Josh Gonzalez: I said, "I'll be all right."

Sarah Jane Webb: Oh wow.

Josh Gonzalez: He was the best.

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter]. He did good.

[Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: Is that kind of how the bakery and everything came together too, like, just--?

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah, I mean, just having the goal there, and the rest of it, just everything falling into place or figuring it out on the fly.

1:01:02

Sarah Jane Webb: Were you always like that growing up, or did you just come up with the answers, you know, solve problems quickly? Is that something that was developed over time, or was that--?

Josh Gonzalez: I think it was probably growing up with my parents. I think it's where it started, for sure. I feel like my parents always worked two or three jobs to make ends meet. So my summers weren't like vacation. Like, I would help my mom go clean houses, or we would go sell food somewhere. I mean, I started working pretty young. I was in the Military, but being with my parents was like also being in the Military because they were like very regimented about how things needed to be done, and how things needed to be dusted.

1:02:00

My mom would love the finger test.

Rosie Moosnick: Oh wow.

Josh Gonzalez: But I think that's where that come, like, starts off. I always like I don't know, I played sports growing up too. The Military, I guess, the discipline and structure part of things. But, yeah, I mean, being with Diego, Diego makes like a good experience out of anything. So it's like--

[Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: --everything has a solution. We never like trip up about how we're going to get things done. It's just, all right, how are we gonna solve it?

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: And that makes it really easy to just be like “alright, what’s next?”.

Rosie Moosnick: What have you all enjoyed the most about all of this?

1:03:00

Diego Hernandez: What we enjoy the most?

Rosie Moosnick: Mm-hmm.

Diego Hernandez: I think sharing my time with-- we always were saying it's never too long when you have really good company. [Laughter] So time is one of the most important thing for me in life, sharing with real people [laughter].

Rosie Moosnick: That's really sweet.

[Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: We're all gonna cry here.

[Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah, I think that's it, the relationships. And like home doesn't have to be a physical place. Like, it can be the people you're with.

1:03:58

And, yeah, I think that people feel it on the other side too, people that come in this place. And at the end of the day, like, having that freedom to be like who we are where we wanna be. Like Diego was saying, we wanna be, like, in charge of our own time. And we've shared so many beautiful memories here. We married Diego upstairs.

Sarah Jane Webb: Really?

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter] Sí.

Rosie Moosnick: You got married here in Louisville?

Diego Hernandez: Sí, in the market [laughter], there is a room.

[Laughter]

Josh Gonzalez: We married off another one of our bakers and cooks. I mean, we throw a party for everything. I think that's the best part is coming in somewhere every day where you like being, enjoy being, with the people that are going to have your back. It's special.

1:05:04

Sarah Jane Webb: So how many people work here? How many do y'all have?

Josh Gonzalez: In the bakery?

Diego Hernandez: [counting] five or six. With Leia, it's six.

Josh Gonzalez: We had some people that are kind of hybrid. They work at both spots.

Sarah Jane Webb: Is it mostly men?

Josh Gonzalez: No.

Diego Hernandez: Mostly women.

Josh Gonzalez: Mostly women. Well, it's half and half.

Diego Hernandez: Both, sí.

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah, Jackie, Leia, and Megan --

Diego Hernandez: Megan , you, me--

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: --and Walter now, si?

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

1:05:58

Rosie Moosnick: How do you find Louisville compared to other places you've lived?

Diego Hernandez: I like the diversity. And I feel like at home sharing the culture with all of them too. Like, in the same in Oaxaca and every place where I go to, I'm always interested in looking for the community, and sharing the time too. So it's important to have the window, and talk with people, and share your time, talking with the people a little bit.

1:07:02

And the [laughter] weather too also, it's like a four-season place where I like to enjoy. Sí, most of that is the family I found here. It feels like home [laughter].

Rosie Moosnick: I know you've had a long day. I don't want to keep you very long [laughter]. You've been up since 3:00 in the morning. I'll just, I mean, my last question is-- and you talk when we talk. You all maintain this connection to Oaxaca. You're going back and forth. You're bringing people. Do you all wanna talk any about that?

1:08:00

Josh Gonzalez: Well, Wes kind of spearheaded that initiative thinking, in part because he's also big about this mission in sharing culture and sharing experiences, opening our window of possibilities that we think-- than what we're used to thinking of, and breaking down those barriers to like resistance or doubts that people might have to visiting Mexico. And because he

was already taking those students to Oaxaca, he already had those relationships built. So it was really easy for us to do like homestays and plan trips. It was honestly-- it was a really easy trip.

1:08:57

But before that, last year, we sent one of our guys who doesn't bake with us anymore, but his name is [inaudible] we sent him to Mexico.

Sarah Jane Webb: Really?

Josh Gonzalez: Yeah. And from my personal perspective, I think that it's really-- I feel really lucky to be able to experience-- Oaxaca is a beautiful place, but experience Diego's family down there, because I think that baking and showing up every day is like one of the most selfless acts. I think one of the things that I remember Diego saying a lot was that his dad used to tell him, "It doesn't matter, like, if you're sick or you're not feeling well, this is a place where you have to show up because people are relying on you."

1:09:58

So to be able to like hear him say that, those kinds of things, and then go to the source and origin of where that started, it's inspiring for me as a person in the industry. So I think that that's where my appreciation, and I hope that other people-- my hope is that other people can experience that as well, and be inspired by it. And just, like, how the community is connected, like, I think I wrote something down in my journal about when-- I think your mom cooked like enchiladas or was it chila-- I can't remember what. But we ended up going with Felix, his brother, to the chicken stand in the market. It was like they knew each other by name, and they asked about their friends and their family.

1:11:02

And those interactions that are like stitched into everyday life is-- I think we can learn a lot from that here as we build our community, and how we can rely each other.

Sarah Jane Webb: As a witness, I've seen it happen. In just the few hours that we were here, to see the community, and the way you would converse with everyone. Like, you're already-- you've already built that community and those relationships. I can see how your inspiration has been put into action.

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter] Sí.

Josh Gonzalez: It's kinda fun

Rosie Moosnick: [Laughter]

Sarah Jane Webb: It shows.

Rosie Moosnick: Yeah, it does show.

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter]

Sarah Jane Webb: It's fun to be around.

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Sí, they call it La Pana therapy.

[Laughter]

Sarah Jane Webb: Yes.

[Laughter]

1:11:58

Diego Hernandez: Sí. See some people write letters to me sometimes, and they say, "Thank you very much. That was a hard day for me. But being in La Pana, it was like a therapy for me, and you gave me a free coffee and a [laughter] donut or a pastry, and saved my day." [Laughter]

Sarah Jane Webb: Wow.

Diego Hernandez: It is nice to read those things. So they say that. [Laughter]

Sarah Jane Webb: Wow.

Diego Hernandez: We are lucky [laughter].

Sarah Jane Webb: Yeah.

Rosie Moosnick: Yeah, you all are lucky.

Diego Hernandez: [Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: Is there anything else? As I said, I don't wanna-- when you've been up since before 3:00 in the morning--

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: --I don't want to keep you up [laughter]. Is there anything you'd like to add or you want people to know or anything?

Sarah Jane Webb: You're moving?

Josh Gonzalez: Oh yeah.

Sarah Jane Webb: That's important.

Josh Gonzalez: Definitely. Yeah, we're taking over this– where the Tim Faulkner Building was before. But, yeah, the plan is to do it in a few different phases.

1:12:59

So we'll have, like, the breakfast café opening. And then when that is up and running is then when we're gonna move the bakery over there. This is gonna stay as like a production space I think is the plan for now. But we'll have like a sit-down café, like open bakery style, so we can still interact with the bakers.

Rosie Moosnick: We'll be there.

Sarah Jane Webb: Yeah, bring the party.

Josh Gonzalez: Hell yeah

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: Oh yeah, we'll have a little party.

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: We'll be there.

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Sí.

Rosie Moosnick: You're not getting rid of us.

[Laughter]

Diego Hernandez: Oh, thank you.

Rosie Moosnick: [Laughter] Just 30 seconds. I gotta let it sit. They want the ambient noises.
Do you think that's 30 seconds?

Sarah Jane Webb: That's 30 seconds.

Rosie Moosnick: I'm not patient.

1:14:00

Sarah Jane Webb: [Laughter]

Rosie Moosnick: Thank you all.

Diego Hernandez: Gracias.

[End]