



Southern Foodways Alliance

Lamec Rosas

Papa Rollo's Pizza - Waco, TX

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Subminimum Wage

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Angelica Mazé: OK. We are recording. OK. This is Angelica Mazé. I am working on my Waco Restaurant Server Oral History project for the Southern Foodways Alliance out of University of Mississippi in cooperation with Baylor University's Institute for Oral History. The date is Thursday, April 23rd, and I am here with Lamec. Lamec, welcome.

Lamec Rosas: Hi. Good to be here.

Angelica Mazé: Cool. Thank you, thank you. Would you mind stating your full name?

Lamec Rosas: It is Lamec Macario Rosas. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: Wonderful. Welcome. And what is your date of birth, if you don't mind sharing?

Lamec Rosas: It is July 12th, 1994.

Angelica Mazé: OK. Cool. So, let's start at the very beginning, Lamec. Where were you born?

Lamec Rosas: Here, actually, in Waco, Texas. Born and raised here, yeah.

Angelica Mazé: Born and raised.

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Lamec Rosas: It's kinda hard to find nowadays. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: It is, yeah. You're becoming a rarer breed of people.

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter]

Angelica Mazé: If that makes sense.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: So you were born and raised here. I actually will state now that you are brothers with another narrator that I have already spoken with, named Enoch. And I don't think I asked him, where did y'all grow up in Waco?

Lamec Rosas: More towards the south side. We grew up there maybe—I was probably around 7 years old before we moved from South Terrace, which was like a little bit more south in Waco. And then we moved to North Waco, near Cameron Park, about whenever I was like eight years old, and just been living there since.

Angelica Mazé: Well, what led you to working in restaurants? Let's talk about how you got there.

Lamec Rosas: Well, honestly, it was almost as a necessity slash opportunity, 'cause I actually started working there in the eighth grade.

Angelica Mazé: Oh wow.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. So there was this opportunity to go to an overnight field trip in the eighth grade.

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And one of the teachers also owned a restaurant. And she offered the students, "Hey, if you just wanted to work for like a weekend, then that would fully cover your trip."

Angelica Mazé: Oh. Interesting.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, already. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: Huh. That's interesting.

Lamec Rosas: So they did that and then, eventually, if we enjoyed it enough, then they offered us a job.

Angelica Mazé: Wow. OK. So, backtracking a little bit, what school was this at?

Lamec Rosas: This was at Carver.

Angelica Mazé: Carver, okay. And you were in eighth grade, so you were probably how old? How old is that?

Lamec Rosas: Thirteen.

Angelica Mazé: Thirteen, okay.

Lamec Rosas: Thirteen, I would say.

Angelica Mazé: Are you comfortable naming that restaurant? Is it still around?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, yeah, it was Poppa Rollo's Pizza.

Angelica Mazé: Oh, it was? OK.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: And so the owner of Poppa Rollo's was one of your teachers?

Lamec Rosas: The owner's wife was one of my teachers. She was my social studies teacher in the eighth grade.

Angelica Mazé: Wow. OK. So this— what was this school trip that you wanted to go on?

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Lamec Rosas: So there was like two teams. In the eighth grade, they split us up into two teams, half and half. So one team got to go to the Lexington in Corpus Christi? I believe so. And it was this cool military battleship or whatnot, and it was said to be haunted. That was a cool—that would've been a cool experience. The other team went to another trip, and that was the one that I went to. And we actually went to NASA. And so we went, got a whole tour of the whole place, spent the night there, and then, yeah, just an awesome experience just to venture off into NASA. It was a very, like, academic school, and so all the stuff that we were learning at that time was more catered towards that side. And so I was excited for that. And so we got to do that.

Angelica Mazé: And so would you have had to—or all of the students had to pay for this trip out of pocket? It wasn't covered by tuition?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, it was not covered by tuition. We had to pay I think it was either eighty or a hundred bucks, and that was like for everything.

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Angelica Mazé: And so the owner of Poppa Rollo's, or the wife of the owner of Poppa Rollo's, gave y'all the option to work for two weekend days, for like a Saturday or Sunday or something—

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: —to pay, and that would pay for your trip?

Lamec Rosas: Yes.

Angelica Mazé: That's interesting. That's very interesting.

Lamec Rosas: It was a very weird thing. I think my—'cause—

Angelica Mazé: It's a little strange, yeah. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: —my brother did it, and he was a year older than me. Yeah, I don't know— I'm not sure how [laughter] all that went around. But, I mean, it gave us that opportunity to do that and then, after that, I kind of just started workin' there for a while.

Angelica Mazé: Before we get to that, do you remember anything about your experience working that weekend to pay for the trip?

Lamec Rosas: Just very new, just kind of basic stuff. At that time, I was working in the back of house. I wasn't serving or anything like that. So, I was making all the appetizers and everything. That was the restaurant's whole thing. It was a little messy, a little chaotic. And so that was like my first experience into the food industry. It was very chaotic.

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Angelica Mazé: So you had not prior to that like—

Lamec Rosas: Ever, no.

Angelica Mazé: —eighth-grade weekend, you'd never worked in a restaurant before.

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter] No, no.

Angelica Mazé: Had you had any other kinds of jobs before?

Lamec Rosas: Before that? No, no.

Angelica Mazé: OK, wow. Yeah, that's sort of outta the frying pan and into the fire.

[laughter]

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter] Before 13 years old.

Angelica Mazé: Yeah. Wow. OK. You were doing prep in the back?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, pretty much, that and then just making salads and nachos, yeah, that kinda stuff.

Angelica Mazé: So then take us through a little bit. You had that experience. Did you go on to work through the rest of middle school and into high school, or when did you end up—

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, pretty much, 'cause the thing about me was I was kinda scared to work front of house, so I stayed in the back of house for a lot. So I definitely worked my way through almost every single rank through the restaurant. And it was the same restaurant throughout the entire time. I think I worked there from 2008 to pretty much whenever they let me go two years ago, so 2022.

Angelica Mazé: Oh wow. Wow.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. [laughter]

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So there was quite a bit of time in that industry and in that specific restaurant. I did work in a couple other different restaurants as well. It was just kind of like back and forth to that same one though. But, yeah, what was the question? [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: Oh, that's okay. We'll get into that.

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter]

Angelica Mazé: So eighth grade, you're like thirteen. I'm just slowly building the picture. So you said, through high school, all of it, you were working in the back of house?

Lamec Rosas: Yes. It wasn't until I think a little bit into college that I started working the front of house, started taking tables, being a server at that time.

Angelica Mazé: And in the back of house, you were, like, you said you did all the stations, so I'm assuming, but I want to—it was dishwashing crap?

Lamec Rosas: Yes, dishwashing was the longest one I did stuff for, just because I was super comfortable back there. No one bothered me or anything. I let everything else chaotic be happening, and I'd be just doing my stuff.

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: But then, I mean, everything else started going well. Management was going well, so I started venturing off.

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I was a cook for a while. I started making the dough, since it was a pizza place. I made all the dough there, and then managed as well back of house and whatnot. And then from there, once I started a little bit after— throughout college, I started taking some front of house shifts, and then just going back and forth from being a manager to a server.

Angelica Mazé: When you were working back of house, were they pay—obviously—were you getting tips at all? Were you making minimum wage? How were they—?

Lamec Rosas: It was minimum wage, almost the whole time, actually. [Laughter] I'm a little embarrassed to say I did not get a raise until maybe like six years into—

Angelica Mazé: Wow.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, yeah.

Angelica Mazé: Was that common for them, for folks? Let's just focus on back of the house, since that's where you were. Was that normal?

Lamec Rosas: Kinda. It was just like I had been there for so long, and I was just doing the job, and I just kept to myself, so I guess they didn't bother to ask me like, "Hey."

Angelica Mazé: And you didn't say anything?

Lamec Rosas: And I didn't say anything 'cause I was just like, just at that point, 'cause I knew some of the better cooks were getting paid a little bit more, just 'cause of their status.

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They went from, like, green apron was the beginner. No, white apron is the beginner, green is the middle, and then red is the top, and so at whichever one of those, you'd get a raise based on how experienced or how well you did the job. But other than that, if you weren't either one of those, then you just get paid minimum wage, really.

Angelica Mazé: Was there a review process? I'm assuming—you said you went for six years without. But was there a yearly check-in where they're like, "Now you've got the white apron. You're a beginner. You get"—?

Lamec Rosas: No [laughter], not at all.

Angelica Mazé: So you sort of just stayed until—

Lamec Rosas: Kinda, yeah, until I had to speak up or say something, or until I started making dough, 'cause I knew 'cause my brother did that. My other brother did that for a while, and I knew he was getting paid more for that job. And so it's like, "OK, well, if I'm doing this, I should be paid more." And they were like, "Oh yeah." And then they ended up just paying me that, and I was like, "OK, I would hope so."

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

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Lamec Rosas: I mean, it felt like they were just gonna forget. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: So eventually, you had to speak up, basically, to get that.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, I had to, yeah.

Angelica Mazé: And that minimum wage, I'm assuming, was basically the same as it is now, right? It's seven—

Lamec Rosas: twenty-five.

Angelica Mazé: —twenty-five, right?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: It hasn't—it's been the—

Lamec Rosas: I don't think—yeah, it's—

Angelica Mazé: —same for quite a long time.

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter] Well, then, yeah.

Angelica Mazé: I'm just making sure.

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter]

Angelica Mazé: Wow. OK. Yeah, that's a long time. And then before we get into the bit where you got into front of house, you said that you preferred working in the back of house when you were obviously quite young to start with.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, it was 'cause—

Angelica Mazé: Because you were afraid of the work?

Lamec Rosas: It would've been overwhelming, for sure, 'cause that kinda clientele, it was a little more, you know, kinda crazy people. Not crazy people but a little more older, and just a little more out there. So they were very intimidating for a little ole me. Even though I was like a bigger guy—

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas:—they were still intimidating to me. And so, yeah, that definitely scared me off a little bit.

Angelica Mazé: Like demanding, like they had, sort of, they were demanding expectations?

Lamec Rosas: Actually, it might've just been like the social aspect of it.

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It was just more like, I'm not prepared to be as engaging 'cause, like I said, I'm used to just sitting in the back, washing dishes, playing my music, and just in my own world. And then to go from that to just engaging in people and all that kind of stuff, it would be quite a change.

Angelica Mazé: So you got a little bit more money, finally, when you spoke up after six years, and you were taking on more responsibility in the back. And then you said when you got to college— so where did you go to college?

Lamec Rosas: I went to McLennan Community College. I went there for a few years. I had scholarships to go there, so I went there for four or maybe almost five years 'cause I was taking— I was swapping. I did all my basics, finished all that out, and then kind of like explored it a little bit more since I had the scholarship money to venture off and see what I really liked. So I did theater, I did biology 'cause I really— those were the two main things. I either wanted to go do science or the arts.

Angelica Mazé: I love that. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: It is very opposite of the spectrum, but I loved both of 'em.

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Angelica Mazé: Cool.

Lamec Rosas: And it was just exciting to just have those experiences at college.

Angelica Mazé: I love that. I love that contrast.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: You got science and theater. That's a really good combo. Were you going to MCC full time and working full time, or what did your schedule look like for you?

Lamec Rosas: I was doing full time on both. But, luckily, the place was being ran really, really well at that time, and I managed to work it out really well. I might've been a little bit less than full-time actually while I was going to school.

Angelica Mazé: You mean the restaurant was run really well?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: OK.

Lamec Rosas: So they were very, like, "Oh, you're going to school?" That took almost priority. I loved that about it. And then I'd just be able to pick up shifts or whatnot whenever I wanted to, because there was always people who either were ready to drop 'em or just do all that kind of stuff. So it was a really nice [laughter] schedule, I guess.

Angelica Mazé: It sounds like it was flexible enough that you—

Lamec Rosas: Very much so.

Angelica Mazé: Did it feel doable, it sounds like, to manage the school load and the workload at the same time?

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Lamec Rosas: For sure. And if it was a heavy school week, then I'd be like, "I just can't work. I gotta focus all on this here." And then I'd be broke for a little bit. But, thankfully, all the main—as long as the school was paid off for with my scholarships, I'd be okay. I'd just be broke out here [laughter] in the real world.

Angelica Mazé: So while you were doing that, and you were supporting yourself— because I know your brother, Enoch, he chose to live at home. He was like, "I could have moved

out a long time ago, but we were all close, and I wanted to stay." Were you paying rent at that time while you were putting yourself through school?

Lamec Rosas: I was not. We were lucky enough that we both stayed, the majority of us stayed with our parents, and then just kind of was there. And we'd help out wherever we could, I mean, at least I tried. I always put school first, and so whenever I wasn't working, it was more of like I just don't have any money for anything. And so that was a little tough for me. Enoch was always more work-oriented, and so he had a little bit more to be able to help out, do all this kind of stuff with my parents, and all that.

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Angelica Mazé: How many of you are there in the family? How many siblings do you have?

Lamec Rosas: Total, there was five total.

Angelica Mazé: And, sorry, five siblings or that includes your folks, your parents?

Lamec Rosas: Five siblings, and then two parents.

Angelica Mazé: And were y'all together for some of that time?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, pretty much, up until— there was just one brother that passed away in 2011.

Angelica Mazé: Oh, I'm sorry.

Lamec Rosas: But the rest of us, yeah, we're still pretty much there. All of us pretty much ventured off as soon as we turned thirty. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: OK, as soon as you turned thirty. That was the [laughter]—

Lamec Rosas: As soon we turned— that's the cutoff point, really. And I'm the second-to-last one, so now I'm moving out too.

Angelica Mazé: Are you moving out right now?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, like, next— 'cause I did live in Austin for a little bit, and then I had to come back. So I have lived out of there, but this will be the first time I'm moving out indefinitely.

Angelica Mazé: Oh, exciting. Well, we'll talk—we'll get to that.

Lamec Rosas: OK. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: We'll bring up to the present when we get to the present.

Lamec Rosas: OK. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: But that's cool.

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So you didn't have a ton of your own expenses while you were serving in college. But if you could contribute to the family household, you did. But otherwise you had money to spend on the things that college kids spend money on, or you didn't if you had to do school?

Lamec Rosas: You pretty much didn't, no. [laughter] It was very much like I just went to school and then came home, and I just focused on that. I didn't really have a huge, crazy, fun college life or whatnot. None of that was really for me, so I straight up just stayed home, did nothing. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: I was very much a homebody [laughter] at that time.

Angelica Mazé: That's interesting, too, in terms of being a homebody, and wanting to be in back of house, and not have to talk to people—relatable. How were those first few years serving for you? What was your experience getting your feet wet in that very, as you say, very different culture from back of house?

Lamec Rosas: It was definitely, I think, it just had to come as a necessity, because I knew that there was more money to be made front of house than there was in back of house.

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And you could work half the amount of time, and then just make double what you could in the back of house. So it saves a lot of time, and makes you a lot more money. But then I started that whenever they opened up a new location. Poppa Rollo's opened a new location in Hewitt area. And so I ventured off over there, dishwashed there for a little bit, and I was like, no, you know what? I wanna make some money. I wanna work front of house. So they started training me, doing all this kind of stuff. And I would say that that clientele's way different from the other one, the Waco, to the point where it was a little—I definitely felt a little—I dunno. How do I say this? [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: However you wanna say it. [laughter] It's a safe space—

Lamec Rosas:[Laughter]

Angelica Mazé: However you [laughter]—

Lamec Rosas: I did not feel welcome there. Let's just say that.

Angelica Mazé: Interesting. In Hewitt?

Lamec Rosas: Yes, with that clientele. They definitely treated me a little bit less than, yeah, and there's a few examples.

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I definitely took notice. Why am I not getting as much money as these people, even though I'm either doing the exact same or working harder than them, working longer hours, giving better service? And, yeah, there was an obvious reason why.

Angelica Mazé: Do you want to state the obvious reason?

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter]

Angelica Mazé: It's totally up to you. I don't wanna—

Lamec Rosas: It was definitely because of the color of my skin, for sure, because all of my other coworkers were one tone, and I was the complete opposite, darker. And then just it was very noticeable. And so that was tougher 'cause even then I struggled a lot 'cause I still had to put in so many more hours just to break even with what I was paying off my bills at the time, while the other people still were making good money. They were just doing half of that. And so it didn't feel like a huge change, work-wise at least. Money-wise, it was better.

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But the amount of effort I still had to put in, compared to others, definitely felt unfair. There's a lot of other stuff that happened there. But eventually I did go back to the original store, and give that one a shot, and that one was way, way better for me, way more comfortable, way more welcoming, and just—I dunno. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: So you had start—'cause you had been in that other— you had been in the original, the Waco location for like—what are we up to now? Six years or something?

Lamec Rosas: I'm not—

Angelica Mazé: It doesn't—

Lamec Rosas: I would have to read whenever the new one opened up, 'cause that's actually— it might've been longer than six years, actually. It might've been closer to four or five, six, maybe seven years before I did all that.

Angelica Mazé: So you had been there for a while, and you had been serving there. Oh no, sorry, you had not been serving there. So then, right, I'm just getting the timeline straight. So then you went to Hewitt, and you did training there to serve?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, I served there for about almost a year, I would say. I was there for a total of a year and a half to two years. And I wanna say a good year that was me serving.

Angelica Mazé: Wow. OK. And that whole time, you felt like you were—

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Lamec Rosas: Yeah, it was—

Angelica Mazé: —having to work harder than your coworkers?

Lamec Rosas: Oh, for sure, for sure.

Angelica Mazé: Is there any other examples that you wanna share? And you don't have to, but if there's anything in particular or anything that you remember thinking at the time about that situation?

Lamec Rosas: I just kind of had to accept it, I guess. I mean, I didn't know, 'cause I'd been with this company for a whole minute, and I already just know the ins and outs of it. I had already almost tested with managing at that point in time, and I just knew everything too well. It was just way too comfortable for me to just up and leave to another place. That's what gave me that option. I'll just try it out at the other place and, if not, then I'll just look for something else. But out there, it was definitely a lot tougher too.

Angelica Mazé: So you're saying, I think, that most or all of your other coworkers who were serving in the Hewitt location were Caucasian in some way?

Lamec Rosas: Yes.

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Angelica Mazé: Did you ever talk to them? Did they know that you were making less or that you had to work harder? Was that something you talked about, or not so much?

Lamec Rosas: I spoke to, actually, I did make it—[laughter] I made it really well known to my coworkers.

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: 'Cause me and my coworkers were for sure like so cool and whatnot. I got my friend Jake a job there, my friend Dakota, a couple other friends, and they were making good money. And there was just some instances where there would be this table or these regulars that would always come in, and I'd always greet 'em the same way, just be so courteous to them, get their stuff, and make sure all of it was no mistakes or anything like that. And the guy would just never look at me or nothing. He was just like, "Yeah, I'll just do this and this. I'll just do a

half-pitcher of this." And I'm like, "OK, cool." I mean, it's not gonna change me nothin'. As soon as my friend Jake goes over there, and he's Caucasian, that guy looks him straight in the eye, shakes his hand, and just like, "Hey, buddy, how's it going?" "Yeah, we're doing great over here." And I see this. I witness this. It's the only table in the place. Then I talked to my friend Jake. "Hey, do you know that guy?" He's like, "No. That's first time I ever met him."

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I was like, "What? How?"

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: "No, there's no way. This guy acts like he's known you for so, so, so, so long." And I'm like, "That's insane." And then as soon as he leaves, he gets his tip, and he's like, "Yeah, he tipped me this amount." And I'm like, "That's like triple what he usually tips me."

Angelica Mazé: Ouch.

Lamec Rosas: And I'm like, "This is just crazy." I had another coworker. This was a little different. She was not meant [laughter] for the serving life.

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: Absolutely not. This was just so, so stressful, so just very much like anxiety-ridden and whatnot. It's just crazy. But she would, almost every single shift, she would just like burst into tears. It was just so overwhelming. She wasn't that great at the job. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: It was like three of us trying to help her out with stuff and whatnot, and it would be taking away from our own section, just for her to do that, almost do nothing. And then they would feel bad for her, and then they'd give her lots and lots and lots of money, and then—

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Angelica Mazé: Oh wow, her customers, like, her tables?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, her customers, yeah, they'd be like, "Oh, we didn't mean to make her cry." It's like, "It's not y'all's fault, it really isn't. It's just"—and then she would get a lot of money that way, and then we'd lose some because we had to neglect some of our tables to help her out. And so it was very much like—[sighs] yeah. It was a whole weird kind of things, learning things that we learn. If we choose not to help a server, it's not 'cause we hate 'em or nothing. It's just like, no, we gotta take care of our people first.

Angelica Mazé: Right, right. And that affects your income?

Lamec Rosas: It does. It does. And you hate that, 'cause if I can help somebody, I will. But at that point, I gotta make some money for myself too. You don't wanna do that. It's tough.

Angelica Mazé: Yeah. Well, it sounds like there's a kind of a sink or swim—

Lamec Rosas: It is, yeah.

Angelica Mazé: —thing that happens at some point, where it's like, "I have to choose between helping or making the kinds of money [laughter]—making my ends meet."

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

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Angelica Mazé: Did you, okay, so then you asked them. So you gave it a year at the Hewitt location, and it sounds like it was not the best experience.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: And so you requested to go back to the Waco location?

Lamec Rosas: I did. I was like, "I'm moving back. I wanna give this a shot." And they were like, "Yeah, we got some space." Like I said, my friend was managing at the time. She's a good friend of mine. And I moved back. She gave me a good amount of shifts. And like in a day already, I made— what I would make working a double at the other place, which would be from like 10 to 10, I would make in a morning at the other location.

Angelica Mazé: Wow.

Lamec Rosas: Just chill. Like, double to almost triple. And I don't know if that was just like the spots where they're located at, or if it was just like the whole race thing. I couldn't really understand it because I would honestly be making like \$30, like, \$60 total on a weekday, you know.

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Whereas if I go over here to the Waco location, and I just worked the morning, I'd make like 120, easy. And that's just insane to me. I could have just been doing this for half a day instead of dealing with all that other stuff. And so it just helped me out so much.

Angelica Mazé: Yeah, that's a huge difference. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter] Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: Are the numbers that you're quoting, is that your tip money or that's your total take home?

Lamec Rosas: That was, well, how do you do it?

Angelica Mazé: Well, how are you getting paid? How are they paying you?

Lamec Rosas: Oh, that was just tip.

Angelica Mazé: Just tips, okay, yeah, 'cause they still have to pay you—

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, the \$2 [laughter]—

Angelica Mazé: —\$2.13 an hour, yeah.

Lamec Rosas: —the little paycheck that I'd get.

Angelica Mazé: So, ultimately, you said, you can make more money doing that work than being in back of house, making a higher minimum wage but without the tips. And I guess the back of house, I didn't ask, they didn't get tipped out?

Lamec Rosas: No, they did not get tipped out.

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Angelica Mazé: So then you came back, and you were making more money, and that was, I assume, a relief? [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: Yes, absolutely. I was just like, why did I not do this sooner? It was the same realization as whenever I started serving, and the amount of money I was getting from serving than I was at back of house. It was just that same realization. I was like, why was I not doing this earlier? And then I came back over here. Why did I not do this earlier?

Angelica Mazé: So how long, in terms of the time, roughly how much longer were you there at that Waco location, serving?

Lamec Rosas: After?

Angelica Mazé: Yeah, 'cause you said, I think, 2022 was when you left. So this would've been—

Lamec Rosas: I wanna say maybe I left there maybe 2018 or 2019, 'cause it was definitely pre-pandemic is whenever I started working back at the Waco one, so either 2018 or 2019. I wanna say maybe 2017, actually.

Angelica Mazé: So you had a couple years before—

Lamec Rosas: It was definitely 2018.

0:24:59

It was 2018, beginning of 2018 because at the end of 2017, that's whenever I started working in Austin. I worked at Pluckers and at Wingstop. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: Oh, okay. Cool. Well, let's talk about that briefly. How did that come about?

Lamec Rosas: Well, I wanted to pursue film and whatnot, the arts. And so I found a couple friends that were living in Austin. They needed an extra roommate. And so I went over there, started working a whole lot, and started working at both those places at a time. And honestly, it was just the—that was more—Pluckers was a serving job. I got a serving job at Pluckers. But I got a back of house kind of like hourly job at Wingstop. And the thing was, Pluckers was just like right in the middle of the city. It was just a huge hassle. And so it was very

tough to get there on time, get those hours, and really understand it all, 'cause that was a huge change of pace for me.

0:26:02

So I didn't really last long there just 'cause I'm draining more money than I'm making at the moment. 'Cause their whole hiring process takes like a month and a half.

Angelica Mazé: Oh wow.

Lamec Rosas: So before I even get my starting serving shift, it'd be like a month. 'Cause you'd have to apply, and then it'd be like a week or two later, they'd be like, "Oh yeah, come to this hiring meeting," essentially, and they'll give you a brief, and all this kind of stuff. And then they'll start you off. You have to shadow somebody for a whole weekend, I think. And then you had to take a test, and they'll schedule that the week after. And they're really particular about that, 'cause if you're like two minutes late to this person giving you the test, then you're just late, and they'll be like, "You have to wait another week." And that actually did happen to me. So I was like, "I'm literally here two minutes late, and I'm here to take that test." They're like, "Well, they already started it, so you're gonna have to come back next week whenever they come back." And I'm like [sighs]—it was insane.

Angelica Mazé: Wow.

0:26:59

Lamec Rosas: Anyways, and that happened, and so all this time was like my first month in Austin. I'm already going through my savings. This is [laughter] already not good, you know. And so it wasn't until like the last couple of weeks of the month, and I was like, "OK, what's the

deal?" And even then, it was still a whole week of training, and then I'd be getting paid hourly. And I don't think I worked one single serving shift there because it really was just so time-consuming. And I was just like, I'm not making any kind of money here, not yet, at least. If I would've given it maybe a couple more weeks, or if I saved a little bit more, maybe it would've been better. But it ended up not happening, 'cause Wingstop was right across the street from my apartment, and so that was easier just to go do that. So, I ended up leaving Pluckers, and just solely working at Wingstop for a while. And then that was just hourly all the time. And then that place kind of screwed me over too because I was kind of very good at that job [laughter], and I was very bilingual.

0:27:59

Everybody there only spoke Spanish or only spoke English. And in Austin, you kinda need to learn both.

Angelica Mazé: Yeah, and in kitchens, generally, in my experience.

Lamec Rosas: Exactly. And so I can converse with everybody, back and forth. And so I was doing a good job. Corporate was like, "Yo, we wanna make you a manager at one of these places." And I was ecstatic. I was like, "Yeah." They brought in another guy to help me, teach me how to manage. And I went through one day before they absolutely stopped, and I was curious as to why. I started getting less shifts too, and I started getting half the amount of shifts that I usually do. And I'm one of the only guys that's like a real full-time there, 'cause everyone else is either going to school or just have families or whatnot. And I was just curious as to why. And I was like, "Hey, does anybody wanna drop their shifts?" And then a couple people were like, "Yeah, you can have this one. You can have this one." And then that was going on for maybe a

couple weeks. And then, finally, same stuff happened, I got another shift taken away. I was only working maybe three shifts outta the week.

0:29:00

And I'm like, I cannot afford to live here with just three shifts a week. And I was just wondering. I kept asking the same people, "Hey, do you wanna give a shift?" They were just not replying back. And it wasn't till later that this new hire, this new cook told me, "Oh yeah, Raul," the manager that was there now, I guess he had something against me, and he was just taking away my shifts, and telling all the other people, "Hey, don't give him your shifts."

Angelica Mazé: Oh my gosh. But never said anything to you?

Lamec Rosas: He never said anything to me directly, at all, and I'm assuming that's why I stopped getting trained for a manager, 'cause either he was, like, threatened for his job or something.

Angelica Mazé: So Raul was the guy who was training you for—

Lamec Rosas: No. There was another guy that was training me. Raul was the current manager at that location. So they brought this other guy, Allen. He was another manager at another Wingstop in Austin, and he was coming in to help us out and then just mediate, I guess, me going into being a manager.

0:30:00

But that one guy was just like I guess...like, that's what my coworker told me. He was just like, "Yeah, he's apparently fed up with you or something. He thinks you're lazy." I'm like, "I'm what?" [Laughter] It made no sense 'cause it was completely contradictory to everything that was

going on. I was moving up. I was only there for like a month and a half before they started offering me all this kind of stuff. And I was so ecstatic for it. I was down for it. And then now this guy just throws me under the bus like that. And he just kept scheduling me like that, until I was very much fed up. I was like, I cannot live here and do this. And so that's why I actually came back to Waco to work back at Poppa Rollo's because I was like, I can make this money easy over here. It'll be fine. I honestly just left that place because I was like, no, I'm gonna screw you. You screwed me over. I'm not giving you any kind of notice. Just not coming back. And so I don't feel bad about that.

Angelica Mazé: I wouldn't. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter] And so, came back, started working here, but then it was just a huge hassle for me to go back to my place in Austin and whatnot.

0:31:03

Angelica Mazé: Oh, so were you commuting from—?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, my lease—

Angelica Mazé: You kept your place in Austin, came back here, and were you living part-time here with your folks, and then—?

Lamec Rosas: I did, for a week, I did that. And then eventually, I was just like, all right, I'm just gonna stay here [laughter] 'cause I'm not— that drive just makes no sense. But it was cool 'cause I still had a place to stay in Austin in case I wanted to go back and visit or anything for at least the last six months of my lease, 'cause it was a total of six months, I believe, that I was there and then all this happened.

Angelica Mazé: OK.

Lamec Rosas: And so, yeah, that happened, and then while I still had the lease going on, I started back working over here, and serving over here.

Angelica Mazé: Let's backtrack to Pluckers really quickly, because when you were shadowing, so you—I'm just a little curious about this epic hiring process that they put you through—

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, it was crazy.

Angelica Mazé: —that was a month long. So, firstly, I'm wondering when—you had to shadow for a weekend or something, and then later on they had you on for a week's worth of training shifts or something?

0:32:03

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: Were they paying you for all of that? Did they pay you to shadow?

Lamec Rosas: They paid me to shadow, and they paid me to train, yeah.

Angelica Mazé: And they were paying you minimum wage?

Lamec Rosas: Actually, they were paying me a little bit more. They were paying me a little more. I think it was like \$8.25.

Angelica Mazé: Because, I mean, you're not getting tipped, right, if you shadowed?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, I'm not getting tipped, no.

Angelica Mazé: Interesting. So you get paid to shadow. You get paid for that training thing. And then what is this test that they make you take?

Lamec Rosas: It was just like a restaurant test, you know—

Angelica Mazé: I've never seen them.

Lamec Rosas: —make sure you know all the drinks, know all the menu and all that kind of stuff. So it was all that, but you had to really make like a hundred on it, and so you have to know everything before you even pass it.

Angelica Mazé: So, like, what does this cost, what's in the Cobb salad, and all of that, whatever?

Lamec Rosas: Yes, exactly. They'd just be like, "What is this? What kind of cheese goes on this? What things can you change?" But they were cool about it. They were just like, you know, if you needed help, they'd be like, "Yep, it's this." [laughter] And so it wasn't—

Angelica Mazé: I had not heard of that before.

Lamec Rosas: —it wasn't strict at all. It was common stuff. It was simple stuff. They just have a lot of different things that you can do to anything on that menu, really. [laughter]

0:33:01

So it was cool.

Angelica Mazé: Were the servers there making that subminimum wage, or were they making more, do you remember? You may not know.

Lamec Rosas: I'm not sure but, I mean, I'm pretty sure they were making just the minimum wage, whatever—

Angelica Mazé: The full minimum wage?

Lamec Rosas: —or the serving one.

Angelica Mazé: OK. It's fine if you don't remember.

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter] Yeah, I don't recall. But they were telling me they were making very, very good money, like, on a weekend or whatnot, and so I was excited for that. But to take a month, all the way, get there, and then just still be like, I don't know what I'm doing, like, still be new to it, I mean, these people were veterans. They'd been working there for like three years already. So, even then, there's gonna be a learning curve. I'm not gonna make that much money from the get-go. It's just gonna be a process. But it was just already nonstop with me just trying to find work and working that I got no spare time to do anything else in Austin. I didn't get any kind of like Austin experience there—

Angelica Mazé: Yeah, I was gonna ask—

Lamec Rosas: —other than the traffic [laughter]—

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: —other than the traffic, and the trouble finding a job there.

0:34:01

I think that was pretty much [laughter] that Austin thing.

Angelica Mazé: That was it?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: So you were able to pay for rent, but between, it sounds like, money and commute and this job situation, you didn't really get to like—

Lamec Rosas: At all, no.

Angelica Mazé: —have the Austin life. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: No, nothing like that, exactly.

Angelica Mazé: So you came back, and you started working at Poppa Rollo's again. You kept your place in Austin for— you had like six months left on your lease.

Lamec Rosas: Six months left, yeah.

Angelica Mazé: So maybe you got to have some weekends there, at least? [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: There was a couple of weekends, yeah, there was a couple of weeks where I was like, oh, thank goodness, I got a spot to stay.

Angelica Mazé: How did you feel about coming back home? Were you like—were you still in school at this point when you were—when you had moved to Austin, were you still—

Lamec Rosas: At this point, no. I was actually taking a break that year, 'cause I had just finished what I was doing in theater earlier, that first half through that spring semester, I finished it off, went to New Zealand for a trip and whatnot.

Angelica Mazé: Ooh.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, it was crazy. It was cool.

Angelica Mazé: Cool.

0:35:00

Lamec Rosas: And that's what made me, like, very happy-go-lucky. I was like, I'm gonna go to Austin, I'm gonna go do this stuff, after the summer, and then just made that decision.

Angelica Mazé: Cool.

Lamec Rosas: And so, yeah, that was that.

Angelica Mazé: How— did you save up money for the New Zealand trip while you were in school? Was that from Poppa Rollo's?

Lamec Rosas: That was—I managed to get a scholarship. I managed to get a scholarship for that.

Angelica Mazé: Oh, fantastic. OK, cool.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, because since I was through school, thankfully, it was just—

Angelica Mazé: Oh, was that a school like—

Lamec Rosas: That was a school, yeah, that was a school thing.

Angelica Mazé: —for a semester abroad type thing, or like a—

Lamec Rosas: Yes, ah, not a whole semester.

Angelica Mazé: —or just a trip?

Lamec Rosas: It was nineteen days, and it was right after, I think, right after the semester had ended. It happened in May, and it was a whole nineteen-day trip. And it was the last time they were gonna do this trip, and so the guy that was in charge usually just took finance majors to go experience that. But he was like, "Since it's the last year, we're gonna invite everybody

else." So he's like, "All right, them, environmental science majors, engineers, and then theater as well."

0:36:03

Angelica Mazé: Amazing. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: So we actually got to go see— we flew to Australia first, and then we got this whole tour of the Sydney Opera House, got to see a couple of shows there. And then we flew to New Zealand to go, you know, just explore, venture off and see like Hobbiton and all that kind of stuff.

Angelica Mazé: Yeah?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, all that stuff. Come back, and then we got to see Vivid Sydney, which is whenever they light up the entire whatever—[laughter] the port. And so it was this whole art spectacle, and so we were just having a blast there. Thankfully, I managed to get a scholarship to go do that [laughter]—

Angelica Mazé: That's awesome.

Lamec Rosas: —without having to worry. But even also at that same time, I that January had broken my ankle really, really badly.

Angelica Mazé: Oh snap.

Lamec Rosas: So, yeah, exactly. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter] Ouch. [Laughter] Pun not intended.

Lamec Rosas: So that happened, and I was going through physical therapy.

0:37:00

Funny enough, I couldn't work while I was out with my foot, 'cause this was the time where had no reason to do anything. I had to drop out of a few classes because I couldn't afford it. All my financial aid that I was getting that semester had to go to help me live [laughter] and pay some hospital stuff, some physical therapy stuff. And so like the ones that I couldn't—yeah, I was just—so I really had to work really, really hard that semester.

Angelica Mazé: The semester after you broke your ankle?

Lamec Rosas: The semester I was, I mean, at school, not actual—

Angelica Mazé: Because you can't walk? [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, I couldn't do anything, could not do anything while that was broken. So I was not working for maybe two, two and a half months—

Angelica Mazé: Oh wow.

Lamec Rosas: —a month and a half to two months, because I really needed to get back to work. And that whole year was pain, pain, because I was forcing myself to, like, I gotta learn how to walk again. I gotta go do this, so I can get back to work, so I can make some more money, so I can make sure I'm prepared for this trip and then also prepared if I'm gonna move to Austin in the fall.

0:38:04

So it was that whole, like, I'm trying to force my body [laughter] to move so I can, you know.

Angelica Mazé: Did you have health insurance through anything—

Lamec Rosas: No.

Angelica Mazé: —work or anything?

Lamec Rosas: No.

Angelica Mazé: OK. So that's partly why you were having to use—

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: —your school money to—wow. OK. That's tough. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: That's really tough. How did you recover, given that you were kind of like pushing it? Is your ankle okay now?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, I mean, it's been a few years now. About a year and a half after I had broken it, it was bad. I had a whole thing of bad luck with that thing. Because of it, I wasn't doing some stuff right, and so I had a huge ingrown toenail, and I had to get a little small little surgery to get that fixed and whatnot. So my left leg has been put through the wringer [laughter], for sure—

Angelica Mazé: Oh man.

0:39:00

Lamec Rosas: —and it was just rough, and walking around was tough. Serving was terrible because I would literally come home with a bleeding foot every single—

Angelica Mazé: Oh gosh.

Lamec Rosas: And I had to wrap it up because every day— I don't know if this is TMI.
[laughter]

Angelica Mazé: No, no.

Lamec Rosas: But it'd be just like pus and blood and just all that just coming out before I had to get that surgery.

Angelica Mazé: And was your ankle still messed up while it was still healing—

Lamec Rosas: My ankle was still messed up, yeah.

Angelica Mazé: —while your toe was messed up?

Lamec Rosas: It was bad.

Angelica Mazé: But you were still working?

Lamec Rosas: Oh, I had to, yeah, and so— 'cause even walking on flat surfaces, it was a weird thing where my ankle would be almost stuck, working on flat surfaces. And since I was walking all day, serving, I could barely move it, but I wouldn't be able to really rotate it. And the second I do start rotating it, my whole foot becomes dead. I don't know what happened, but I could not— once it's super flexible like that, I couldn't put any weight on it.

Angelica Mazé: Oh my gosh.

Lamec Rosas: I would just collapse.

0:39:59

And so it was either being stuck like this the whole time, and barely walking like that, or be able to move it like this, and just not walk at all.

Angelica Mazé: Oh my gosh.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: Did your doctors know that you were working through all of this?
[laughter]

Lamec Rosas: Ah yeah, I mean, they told me just like, "Just keep doing the exercises. Keep doing the physical therapy," and that was it. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: Wow. Ouch.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: That's crazy. OK. So that sounds like you said, that was a tough year.

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter] It was terrible, yeah.

Angelica Mazé: And so that got you— but you were able to go to Australia and New Zealand, and then you had your Austin kind of mixed bag adventure, and then you're back here. So when you came back, how did you feel coming back, coming back here? Did you move back in with your folks—

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: —it sounds like, right, 'cause you said you're— oh, that's right, 'cause you're only just now spreading—

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, really, really spreading—

Angelica Mazé: That's exciting.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, I know. But, yeah, I mean, that was good. Me and my whole family dynamic is just very welcoming, very hospitable. So there was no problem [laughter] coming back in. They loved it.

Angelica Mazé: Good. They were happy to have you.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, they loved it. And so they were like, "Yeah, come on," and missed me, and all that kind of stuff.

0:41:01

Angelica Mazé: That's a good feeling. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: So back at Poppa Rollo's, we're in like 2018, I think you said, or something like that.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, around then.

Angelica Mazé: We're heading— the pandemic is kind of, we don't know it yet, but looming [laughter] in the distance.

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter] Oh God, yeah.

Angelica Mazé: So take us through those few years up into the pandemic. How did it go? How were you, you know? I guess I'm also curious. Were you being able to continue working on the things that you wanted to work on? You loved theater and film and things.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. That was a good time. All the way to the pre-pandemic was a good time because, like I said, the owners, the family that owns the place, were a little off to the side.

They were just managing some other stuff while my friend was managing, and she was just taking care of *everything*. I came back. They were great. Had plenty of freedom to do some freelance photography stuff and whatnot, 'cause I started taking photos at that time.

0:42:00

And she was super lenient, helped me out with anything and, yeah, it was actually some of the the golden years, essentially. [laughter] So it was good because the money was good, the people that were working there were fantastic, and so, yeah, that was a good time. That was a very good time.

Angelica Mazé: Were you able to save, or what were your goals at that point? You were working. You were doing photography. Were you trying to save money or were you trying to, like, what were you kind of—or were you just kind of like—?

Lamec Rosas: Kind of just living at that time.

Angelica Mazé: Just moving? OK.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, yeah, 'cause I think there was one point where I tried to go back to school for TSTC. No, not TSTC, ah, Texas Tech. But there was a whole debacle with that, and that made me stop going to [laughter]—

Angelica Mazé: OK. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: — school since then, since a lot of stuff happened. And then, no, so after that, I was just like, yeah, you know what? I'm taking a break from it, and I'm just solely working, and just gonna live life for a little bit. Take some time off. If I need to get some days off

of work, just either go do some freelance or just go travel, 'cause I'm a huge traveler. I love, love, love just seeing new places.

0:43:01

So that job definitely helped me out with like, "Hey, I need some quick money just to go on a quick trip." Enjoy that, come back, and then just be back on track, you know, just do that.

Angelica Mazé: Cool. And the customers, just reiterating—better than the Hewitt location you had?

Lamec Rosas: Oh, absolutely, way, way [laughter], way better from the Hewitt location. Got my regular count up, you know. Everybody knew me and my brother. They were like, "Hey, if one of the brothers is taking care of you, you're in good hands."

Angelica Mazé: OK. That's good. All right.

Lamec Rosas: That's kind of how like—

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: Just having a good time, just everybody— we knew how to— we knew the whole ins and outs of the whole place. So even if the manager went out or they needed to go out, we'd take care of the place, and it was just smooth running.

Angelica Mazé: Nice. That's cool. How many, like, just very roughly, how many front of house people were working at any given shift while you were there?

Lamec Rosas: Any shift?

Angelica Mazé: Yeah.

Lamec Rosas: For morning time, I would say maybe three—

Angelica Mazé: OK. Oh wow.

Lamec Rosas: —three, yeah, for the restaurant.

0:43:56

Well, it's 'cause, like, usually whenever it was the morning time, during the weekday, it would be me, this other girl named Cameron, and the manager, and they would be—and we would— since all three of us had been working there for a long, long time, so we'd already know how to handle every kind of situation. So we'd all pretty much been in the manager position at that point, and so we all knew how to either handle customers, handle anything they needed, if the cook needed help 'cause there was only one in the morning time, any of that, if they needed help, we could go back there and help 'em out real quick. It was pretty great because we all knew how the place worked, so we all knew what had to be done, and just make our money.

Angelica Mazé: And trust, it sounds like there was a fair—

Lamec Rosas: Oh yeah, absolutely.

Angelica Mazé: You had the freedom to kind of—

Lamec Rosas: All of us knew exactly what each of us were capable of doing, what we needed to do, and it was just a good, well-oiled machine kind of thing.

Angelica Mazé: Cool. Where all did you travel to while you were— or what did you get up to during those years?

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter] Well, those were like smaller trips, for sure. But I ended up doing a recurring trip every year. I love going to Colorado.

0:45:00

Angelica Mazé: Nice.

Lamec Rosas: Me and my buddy, we wanted to go to Colorado but see something different every single time. And so Colorado, went on a cruise to The Bahamas. Where else did I go? New Orleans. Honestly, it was mostly Colorado. [laughter] We kept going back to that. We went to Palo Duro Canyon, Big Bend a couple of times, yeah, smaller ones like that, I believe so, yeah.

Angelica Mazé: Ah, that's cool.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah [laughter], those were cool.

Angelica Mazé: That's really cool. And were you road-tripping or were you—?

Lamec Rosas: Road tripping, for sure. I'm a huge fan of road-tripping. Most of the trips I've been doing lately have been flying. But I'm a huge road trip fanatic.

Angelica Mazé: Cool. We'll get to that 'cause I know you took a really cool— I know from Instagram, you took a—

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter]

Angelica Mazé: —road trip recently [laughter], and I was traveling vicariously—

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter]

Angelica Mazé: —for year, like, ready to get on the road. OK. So let's talk pandemic.

0:45:56

I would preface this by saying, well, I know a little bit about Enoch, your brother's experience at the restaurant during the pandemic. But explain, yeah, just walk me through like what that experience was like for you. And I know, eventually, you did leave Poppa Rollo's. So let's get into the pandemic.

Lamec Rosas: Go on with that, okay. So that's whenever things started getting a little trickier, a little bad, you know, 'cause the family, the owners, they started being a little more involved. And whenever they do that, that's never a [laughter] good sign, 'cause I'm like, y'all, really? It's usually the daughter or one of the kids that comes, and they come.

Angelica Mazé: An adult daughter?

Lamec Rosas: Yes, yes.

Angelica Mazé: How adult, just roughly? Are we talking forties, fifties, thirties?

Lamec Rosas: Thirties.

Angelica Mazé: Thirties? OK.

Lamec Rosas: Thirties. And they would make themselves like the GM just right off the bat, like, "OK, well, I'm gonna start changing stuff up. We gotta do"— I was like, nothing was wrong [laughter], like, absolutely nothing was wrong. And then a lot of that stuff really started showing through the pandemic, 'cause we had to go strictly, like, you know, no dining in or anything.

0:47:01

We had to redo everything on the inside, and make sure we were all strictly to-go and whatnot. And they pretty much told us, they were like, "Yeah, we're gonna stay open so you don't have to do the whole unemployment thing," which, honestly, was not the right move for us—

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: —to be okay with that, because even then, throughout the whole pandemic, throughout that, I think they tested it out, 'cause they were like, "We'll test it out for a couple weeks, see how it is."

Angelica Mazé: Test out the to-go thing?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. They were just strictly just to-go thing. And apparently everybody was making good money because everybody was just super grateful, like, "Hey, y'all are so great for being out here and whatnot, and here's all this." So money was great, tipping-wise. The bad thing was the fact that the owners were like, "Oh, since y'all are making good money, we don't have to pay you more for hourly," which was kinda weird 'cause, like, but that's not kinda how this—we should be—we should be paid hourly, and then whatever we get in tips, because since this was pandemic time, and nothing's open on the inside, it's like—

0:48:02

Angelica Mazé: Right. So does that mean, just to clarify, does that mean that you are only making tips, and not the \$2.13? 'Cause the tips are supposed to make up the difference between \$2.13 and \$7.25.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: So were they not paying you that hourly rate, or what did they mean by that?

Lamec Rosas: So we were expecting to get a little bit of a boost in our hourly pay because we're not actually serving anything. We're just doing to-go. So that's never a guaranteed because we had no idea what that was gonna look like, what tipping was gonna be like. Usually to-goes don't tip a whole lot, but when they do, they do. So it was very, very, you know, it was a huge risk that they were taking if we're all doing to-goes, and we didn't get the opportunity to get unemployment as everyone else did, and just not work. But they just noticed the fact, they're like, "Oh, some of these people are getting really, really good tips, so nobody's gonna get an up in hourly pay. You're just gonna stick to the \$2.13."

0:49:00

I'm like, well, that's kind of—that's very, very—it sucks, 'cause they were hyping it up like, "Yeah, if nobody gets a whole lot of money, then we'll boost it up a little bit." And I think they did boost it up maybe like a dollar, but I can't really recall. I wanna say they didn't, 'cause I remember that being a huge ordeal, like, we're not getting paid more, and we're just still dependent on to-goes? Anyways, that was that for that whole—

Angelica Mazé: Did you feel safe? I know a lot of folks in the food industry didn't feel, you know, especially like essential workers in restaurants and stuff. Did you feel safe with your management and colleagues and customers in terms of however safe means? I mean, physically, for starters, did you feel like you were—

Lamec Rosas: At risk to get it?

Angelica Mazé: —at risk to get sick?

Lamec Rosas: I think so, yeah, absolutely, 'cause, I mean, depending on the to-goes, like, some people were very, very respectful, like, "Hey, we got our mask on, all this kind of stuff. I'll leave the door unlocked in case you wanna open it up and just put it in the back seat."

0:49:59

And then there were some that just did not care. They were just like all out and about. And that was very, very wild to us because, I mean, I was still living with my parents. And so I'm like, I'm at risk of bringing this stuff to them because they were very, you know, they were eligible to be hit hard with it, my dad especially. And so I was like, this is a huge risk. Even though we're taking all the right precautions, some people are not. So, I mean, it's just still gambling with a lot of stuff.

Angelica Mazé: Did they provide you with masks and—

Lamec Rosas: They did, yeah—

Angelica Mazé: —and sanitizer and stuff like that?

Lamec Rosas: —all that kind of stuff, yeah. That was kind of the pandemic era.

Angelica Mazé: So you stayed. Did you stay all the way? Well, you said 2020. So, honestly, I'm having trouble. Every time I talk about the pandemic, I can't remember if [laughter]—

Lamec Rosas: Well, yeah, it was 2020, right? It was 2020.

Angelica Mazé: Yeah [laughter], it was 2020.

Lamec Rosas: OK.

Angelica Mazé: Yeah. So you managed to— you stayed all the way through the pandemic at Poppa Rollo's, and you were there for them to open back up to dining room seating again?

0:51:03

Lamec Rosas: Yes. That was a slow transition back into like, hey, first we're gonna let like only eight people max to a table. At that point, I think I was strictly just managing, but I was still front of house. And so even then, they would just pay me like \$9 an hour—

Angelica Mazé: As a manager, front of house?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: Wow.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, I know. Even then, I was just like, oh.

Angelica Mazé: Do you get tipped, as a manager?

Lamec Rosas: So one thing that I ended up doing sometimes was like, "Hey, I'll take this table," since no other server wanted to take 'em. And I'd be like, you know what? I can take 'em, and then I will take 'em, and then, you know, ended up just doing that maybe like a couple times a week.

Angelica Mazé: So you can kind of supplement your nine bucks an hour with tips—

Lamec Rosas: A table—

Angelica Mazé: —from a table or two, people would share—?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. But I never wanted to steal a table from somebody. It was only if, literally, everybody was like, "Yeah, I don't want this. I don't want this." I was like, "Fine, I'll do this."

Angelica Mazé: OK. So nine bucks, so the guys and the girls, the people in the back of house who are dishwashing are making minimum wage, \$7.25.

0:52:02

Lamec Rosas: I would say, yeah—

Angelica Mazé: And you were, as a manager—

Lamec Rosas: —at that point, \$7.25. And then even, 'cause even then, I think, the red aprons, the better cooks, I think they were getting paid like \$8. I think the highest paid person there was getting—

Angelica Mazé: I was gonna ask.

Lamec Rosas: —paid, I think—and this was later on that I found out. I think he was being paid \$16 an hour, which is still like pretty bad. One of the biggest things that I absolutely hated whenever— I think this was like either—this was like right after we started seating but like only it's like \$8 or like eight people per thing, per table, was the fact that the owners were putting signs of like, "Hey, come in. We'll start you off at \$15 an hour." And all the employees that were still there were looking, like, we don't even get paid that much.

Angelica Mazé: Wow.

Lamec Rosas: Why are you trying to get— why are you trying to lie to these people?

Angelica Mazé: Wait. When were they doing this?

0:53:00

Lamec Rosas: This was right after. I believe we started letting some people in after the pandemic because—

Angelica Mazé: Oh wow. So they were advertising?

Lamec Rosas: Yes, because they needed more employees, 'cause a lot of people did end up leaving, and so they were advertising, like, "Oh yeah, we'll start y'all off at like \$15 an hour." I was like, no one here makes that much money.

Angelica Mazé: Yeah. So you, as a manager, are making nine.

Lamec Rosas: Yes, exactly.

Angelica Mazé: But they're offering to hire just a server—

Lamec Rosas: Exactly.

Angelica Mazé: Wow.

Lamec Rosas: And none of it was true, I mean, I don't think—

Angelica Mazé: Oh, okay. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: They were not paying nobody that.

Angelica Mazé: OK, okay. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: They weren't paying me that much. They were obviously not gonna pay someone new to do that. But the fact that they offered that was mind-blowing to me. And I was like, y'all don't pay anybody that.

Angelica Mazé: So do you think that they were, I mean, just guessing, do you think that they were getting people in, and saying, "We'll get you up to \$15 at a certain point," and then just starting them at \$2.13 or \$7.25?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, absolutely, I think that happened to like two people. And then we hired two people, and they're like, "Oh yeah, I was just interested." But they were like, "Oh yeah, but you can work your way up to \$15." I was like, that's a damn fucking lie.

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: That's a damn lie.

Angelica Mazé: In thirty years. [laughter]

0:53:59

Lamec Rosas: It is. [laughter] I was like, yeah, you gotta ask for it after like 10 years and whatnot.

Angelica Mazé: Wow. OK.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. So, I mean, that was very, very shady. I was like, why would you even offer that? We know you're lying. We will tell the people. Like, I had no problem with just like telling people the truth or whatever. That's not true. They're not gonna start you at \$15.

Angelica Mazé: Wow. That's crazy. So how did you come— how did your time at Poppa Rollo's come to an end? How were you—were you getting tired of that work? Were you looking—

Lamec Rosas: No.

Angelica Mazé: —making dreams and plans, or what happened?

Lamec Rosas: No. It was very much more of the kid getting more involved and more involved. And it got to a point where, slowly but surely, a lot of people did start leaving, like, the manager that I really, really loved, that she handled everything. As soon as she left, yeah, the whole dynamic of the whole restaurant switched, because she filled in that spot. And she was like, she had no idea what she was doing, so she was like, wow, she messed everything up. And I was like—

Angelica Mazé: This kid, the kid of the owner who filled in?

0:55:00

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, the kid of the owner. And she was like, she had no idea what she was doing. So instead of trying to figure it out, and just doing all the stuff, she just blamed the other girl for not teaching nobody. And I'm like, that is messed up, because she ran this place. She legit ran that place for so, so long.

Angelica Mazé: [Sneezes] Excuse me.

Lamec Rosas: And she ended up— oh, bless you. She ended up moving to a better job, actually, a job that actually did pay like \$16, \$17 an hour.

Angelica Mazé: Good for her.

Lamec Rosas: And 'cause she was doing absolutely everything. I think she was making maybe like \$15 an hour, \$16 an hour.

Angelica Mazé: And she'd been there for a while, presumably?

Lamec Rosas: She'd been there managing for a while. Actually, she might have been paid a lot more, I think, hopefully, hopefully.

Angelica Mazé: Yes, here's hoping.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. But I do know that that one job literally that she got started her off making way more than that. [laughter] So, already, I was like, you go, girl—

Angelica Mazé: Yeah. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: —like, you know, you go, for the amount of less. And she did come back a few times, just to check up on us and whatnot.

Angelica Mazé: Oh.

0:56:00

Lamec Rosas: And not to work or anything, thankfully, 'cause it was so stressful for her. She was like, "I am loving my new job. I do not— I have like 90 percent less stress, and so much more money, and so much more time to spend with my family." And I was like, "That is perfect." We were so happy for her. And then so that's why her and them were like, "Oh yeah, she messed all these things up." I was like, "No. You just don't know how to run this place." Anyways, she definitely kept pushing it and pushing it, doing things her way, which were not the right way at all. And that's whenever I was starting my way back from a manager to a server, because managing is just not worth it, not under this kind of thing. I'd much rather do my own thing, and make my own money, 'cause I know how to do that. And so I went strictly back to serving because I don't have to deal with all that upper management. I just need to take care of the

people. Until that whole stuff started bleeding into that aspect of it, 'cause now she didn't know how to schedule new cooks or whatnot, so all the kitchen was backed up.

0:57:00

If you wanted a little small pizza, you'd have to wait two hours for it.

Angelica Mazé: Oh wow.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. And so it was bad. On our busiest days, she would hire the people that were just hired two hours ago. And I'm like, you can't expect these people to do this kind of stuff. It was just nonsense of how this place was being ran. And it was affecting my money, for sure.

Angelica Mazé: I was gonna say, if it takes two hours for a personal-sized pizza, that's gotta affect your tips, right?

Lamec Rosas: So, so badly. I mean, it ended up being to the point where I was doing everything. I was legit setting my own table, taking their order, going back, getting their drinks, getting them like, all right, cool, taking their order, going back and making my own table's food—

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: —because I was already certified. I went out there, and cleaned up everything.

Angelica Mazé: Yeah, and you'd made dough.

Lamec Rosas: Made sure—

Angelica Mazé: You've done all the—

Lamec Rosas: Exactly. And so I made it from start to finish. And by the time— and no offense to the new cooks, because they had no idea what they were getting into. But I was just like surpassing. I was like, "No. I'm sorry, man. I gotta get this stuff. My table needs this stuff." It was me and my brother having to do that—

Angelica Mazé: Oh wow.

0:58:00

Lamec Rosas: —because we both knew the ins and outs of that place, and we were just taking— we had to just take care of our own tables, because the management is not doing anything to help solve this. All they're doing is making mistake after mistake, ruining other people's nights, ruining their dinners, and then just being like, "Oh, just give 'em something free next time." I'm like, "No, because you're gonna mess it up the next time."

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: They're gonna be in the same— they could get their stuff free today, and they don't care. They just want to eat. They wanna have a good time. And so that was their whole solution to it all, like, "Oh, just give 'em something free."

Angelica Mazé: Right. That'll make it all fine.

Lamec Rosas: Exactly. You haven't given 'em the first thing. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: Yeah, not if it takes two hours [laughter]—

Lamec Rosas: Exactly.

Angelica Mazé: —if you have to wait two hours...

Lamec Rosas: And so it got to that point and, yeah, we start...it was me and my brother one night just doing that, and we were just screaming. We were mad. We were livid. We were just like, this is not how a place should be ran. And the owner, the actual owner was like, "Hey, thank y'all for helping us out." I was like this—and we screamed at him, we're like, "This is not how a place—we should not be doing this. You're in the fucking wrong."

0:59:00

And so the daughter didn't like that, and so she pretty much went on this whole kind of little detective kind of thing, and just tried to find something on us, to be like, "Oh, we can fire both of them for this stuff." And both of 'em were both—all the reasons that she tried to put, she first fired my brother, very unjustifiably. Whatever she claimed, it was obviously nonsensical and not true. And so he was gone. But it was funny because, as soon as she fired him, she took me off the schedule as well. And I'm like, "What's going on? Am I fired?" No one said anything to me. And so I pretty much took a couple of my friend's shifts. She's like, "Yeah. I don't know why you're not on the schedule," and so I took a couple of my shifts back. And on one of those days, I talked to that daughter, and I was like, "Why am I not on the schedule?" And she was like, "Oh, I'm sorry. I thought if I fired your brother, you might wanna leave too."

0:59:59

I'm like, "That makes no sense. This is my job."

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter] Yeah.

Lamec Rosas: "If you need to talk to anything about that to me, then you let me know, because this is what I'm doing." She was like, "I'm sorry. You're right." And then she started saying like, "I'm just not really thinking straight. My dog died, and I'm just all over the place right now." I'm like, "You need to talk to me about that." And she's like, "OK, yeah, you're right." Literally, the next week happens, I'm not on the schedule again.

Angelica Mazé: No.

Lamec Rosas: And then, finally, I go up to her again. I'm like, "What is going on?" She's like, "Oh yeah, can I talk to you over here?" I was like, "No. You talk to me right here in front of everybody."

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: And she was just like, "Look, I just really don't want to do this." I was like, "Well, step like two steps right here. Let's go. What's going on?" And she was like, "Oh, well, we found you doing some of this and this and this." I'm like, "That's not true, and you cannot fire me over this because this is simply not true." And we just got in a huge, huge argument—

Angelica Mazé: Oh man.

Lamec Rosas: —to the point where I was bringing up some stuff that, for sure, we could make them go under in a heartbeat with the stuff they've done. But—

1:01:00

Angelica Mazé: Things that you have observed them do that is not—

Lamec Rosas: Oh my gosh, it is bad. It is bad. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: OK.

Lamec Rosas: And then why we didn't take action upon it? One, I mean, at some points, we were too young to do anything, and we didn't know what to do. And then sometimes it wasn't in our power; it was somebody else's power. And I was like, "Just do it, and we could"—no. Anyways, that's—

Angelica Mazé: And it's your livelihood, right?

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, exactly, and that's the whole thing about it. Anyways, she argued one thing. I was like, "If this was true, you would've said this literally last week whenever I had this conversation with you. No. You really just wanted me outta here 'cause you fired my brother." And so, yeah, that happened. Me and my brother filed for unemployment. We were getting it for a while. He got it all. I was getting it for a while until she contested me.

Angelica Mazé: Oh no.

Lamec Rosas: And I was just like, "Why are you contesting this?" And she actually did this while I was doing—I missed out on the first hearing for this whole thing because I was doing a wedding photoshoot in Mexico.

Angelica Mazé: Oh wow.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. Things were already looking up at this point. I was just like—

Angelica Mazé: Yeah, okay, so you had some things happening?

1:02:00

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. I was just like, look, I was like done with that place. So that's why I was surprised, like, she was trying to fight this. And so I contacted unemployment again. I was

like, "No. I wanna reschedule this, wanna make sure we go through all the facts." And so we had a couple of hearings, and you could tell that she had no idea what she was talking about. She was just pulling stuff out of her ass and whatnot, which is true because nothing ended up coming from it, like, literally nothing. I ended up just doing my own thing, and got my unemployment. That was it. And I was just like—

Angelica Mazé: Good riddance. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: —look, that place needs to just stay in my past—

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: —because it is—it was—it had its—when it was good, it was good. But when it was bad, it was beyond bad.

Angelica Mazé: So when you were— when things were bad, were you already then getting some photography work off the ground, with an eye towards leaving, or to doing that in addition, or how'd it—because it sounds like you had this wedding.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: You had stuff going on when that—.

Lamec Rosas: So it was just like in its beginning things.

1:03:00

I was just like, okay, I think I can do this on the side. It definitely took away for a lot of time, 'cause the money was just really, really good whenever things were good. And so I was just like, okay, this is a good side gig. If I ever choose to do something like this, maybe; maybe it is a thing. And my oldest brother graduated from Baylor, from the film and digital media department.

And so whenever he had some gigs lined up for him in Austin and Dallas or something like that, he'd always ask me if I wanted to help him grip or do anything like this kind of stuff. So that was great. I still had that place in Austin at that time, 'cause we got a few gigs over there. And so we were like, "Yeah, dude, we can just go there. You can crash. We can crash at the apartment, and it'll be great." And so a lot of things were still happening on the side, for sure. But it didn't really explode until after I left because, at that point, I was just like, well, I got literally nothing else. And I do not want to go back into the...

Angelica Mazé: So that's what I was gonna ask. Were you thinking, "Oh, I just need to get another serving job"? It sounds like not.

Lamec Rosas: No. I think at that point in time, I was like, no, I'm done with this.

1:03:59

And not to say that I wouldn't be good at any other serving jobs, but this lifestyle, I think it's ready—I'm ready to leave this behind, and try to do something where I'm actually growing, learning, and actually eventually help me fulfill my travels, you know. [laughter] And so, luckily enough, I did end up finding something like that.

Angelica Mazé: That's great. And so we're about to—check the time here. We're about to get up into the present. I won't keep you for too much longer. But if—a hypothetical. If you—if the stuff hadn't hit the fan at Poppa Rollo's, and you were still—let's say that old manager had stayed, do you think you would've viewed that as a career that you could have continued to do while you maybe did photography or did whatever, you know, I don't know, started a family, you know, a house, whatever your more grown-up dreams look like? Do you think that that wage, that job, that lifestyle would've supported you doing other things?

1:05:02

Lamec Rosas: Probably not, absolutely, no. I don't think so, not with that. The money was good, but it was only good for what I was doing. If I wanted to venture off, and then just actually start a family, like, try to buy a house? No, absolutely not. There's just no way, not at that place, at least. I know some other places where you could absolutely do that, but not there, no. I think it was all like a blessing in disguise for me to leave there, to actually grow as a person, and find somewhere that I could make more money doing different things rather than just being in that kind of environment.

Angelica Mazé: Well, let's talk about that. Let's talk about what you're doing, 'cause I think, well, I know a little bit about what you're doing. It sounds really cool.

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter]

Angelica Mazé: So how did you get to where you are now? Tell us about it.

Lamec Rosas: Well, it was a crazy and wild year because it was almost exactly a year, 'cause I was let go, when I left Poppa Rollo's, September of 2022.

1:06:00

And so from there, I started getting my unemployment. But almost immediately, my friend had just opened up a bar downtown in Waco, Stay Classy. And so she's like, "Yeah, I would love to have some photos of the place, you know, something like a weekly thing." And so that kept me afloat week by week 'cause like—

Angelica Mazé: Oh, I didn't know you were doing that. Was that all—

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: So you were doing all of those photos? They had a—

Lamec Rosas: This was almost like as soon as I was let go, like, the week after I had already started.

Angelica Mazé: Cool.

Lamec Rosas: She was super cool, super sweet—

Angelica Mazé: Awesome.

Lamec Rosas: —super awesome for that. And that kind of like just kick-started it, the whole— my whole photography journey, like, the rest of it or like the boom of it, you know?

Angelica Mazé: Yeah.

Lamec Rosas: There was one moment where I did get introduced into the downtown photography scene while I was still working at Poppa Rollo's. And it was later, and it was one of those days where I was like, I hate this place.

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: I cannot stand this place any longer.

1:06:59

And it was like, screw it. I was just like at my friend, "Rose, can you take my shift tonight?" And she was like, "Yeah, sure, I'll take it." I was like, "Thank Go..."

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: 'Cause I was working a double, and I was like, "Thank you," and then I immediately left. And it was one of the days that Enoch wasn't working that night either, so we were just both off. And I was just like, this is awesome. We actually have a day off.

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: We don't have to mess around with any of this kind of bullshit. We went to his apartment. We went to this nice little art, well, they painted this whole street, just freshly painted, on 7th Street, and it's super-duper cool. And so I was just like, "Dude, let's just go take some photos." He was like, "All right, but bring your bike. Cool." And, yeah, funny enough, we just went in there, stayed there for like thirty minutes, forty-five minutes, just taking a few photos. This is just me for fun. I was like, I love this day. This day's beautiful.

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: I don't have to work tonight. I don't have to deal with anything. And I did that, and I literally just did a quick edit, and then just posted it, and that photo just blew up—

1:08:00

Angelica Mazé: Wow.

Lamec Rosas: —to where even the Mayor saw it.

Angelica Mazé: Oh wow.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. And so, so many people just loved it, and they're like, "This is so cool. This is so creative." And it got the front page of some art magazine that's here, local in town.

Angelica Mazé: Oh, that's so cool. I would love to have you share that photo 'cause I would love to see it.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, absolutely. And it was of Enoch, it was actually of Enoch.

Angelica Mazé: Oh really? [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter] Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: I mean, I wanna see it, definitely.

Lamec Rosas: It was Enoch doing all that kind of stuff.

Angelica Mazé: Cool.

Lamec Rosas: And, yeah, a lot of people loved it. A lot of people started reposting it and everything. I was just like, I did not expect this. I started getting way more followers, all this kind of stuff. And it really introduced me to that downtown scene, super-duper cool. That's how I really got first introduced to Katie and—

Angelica Mazé: Katie who owned—Selman, who owns—

Lamec Rosas: Yeah, who owns—

Angelica Mazé: —Classy, Stay Classy?

Lamec Rosas: —yeah, Stay Classy. And so then, yeah, so she started—her and my friend Eric Linares, they started hooking me up with some gigs downtown.

1:08:59

I was on retainer pretty much for her, weekly, doing her shoots, and whatnot, really growing, really, really growing, really playing with lighting. And my whole like legit mood, my whole aesthetic as a photographer very much started being more dialed in because of that.

Angelica Mazé: Cool.

Lamec Rosas: And then, yeah, so many more people started coming into the bar, started meeting so many more new people, started doing some more event photography for a lot of speakers, the Day of the Dead Festival, all that kind of stuff, and just kept booming, kept meeting new people. And, honestly, just within about a year, I was already at a point where I was like, look, I need to get my LLC, I need to get this whole thing going, my whole brand, rent out a whole studio and whatnot. And it was just ready to start booming. I was already talking with some people, "Hey, I need these business cards. I need this kind of stuff." But right before that happened, I get a phone call from the creative director at Sendero.

1:09:59

And they're like, "Hey, buddy, I love your work. I don't know if you'd be interested in either a part-time or a full-time job or anything like that. I don't know if that's"—

Angelica Mazé: Wow.

Lamec Rosas: —"maybe that's in between your stuff. But I'd love to just get a sit down with you, and just start hashing some stuff out, like, just get to know you." And so, yeah, it was Will Suarez, and he hit me up. We went to Pinewood, started hanging out, drinking, and I just got to really meet him, talk ideas—

Angelica Mazé: So Cool.

Lamec Rosas: —and tell him— meet him, tell him what I'm about. And he just pretty much was like, "Yeah, we'll keep in touch then." Got a few interviews after that, and it was just amazing. Funny enough, as soon as I was let go from Rollo's, I tried to apply at Sendero as a photographer, and that was like, "Oh, we're not looking for anybody right now." And almost exactly a year later, like, my start date was actually September 11th, was my start date. And that was almost a year right after I got fired from Rollo's.

1:11:00

Angelica Mazé: Wow. That's crazy.

Lamec Rosas: And so it was just a whole year of just me just growing, improving my photography—

Angelica Mazé: Yeah, building this portfolio.

Lamec Rosas: —doing all that kind of stuff, everything, like, just taking every chance I can get; not just for money reasons but for creative reasons. Like, oh, this is something cool. This is something new. This is a place where I can meet somebody, like, all this kinda stuff. And now it is just that opportunity now too. Now I got a job at Sendero, and now that's even just like opening way more doors, and I'm just so happy where I'm at right now [laughter], honestly, 'cause—

Angelica Mazé: Yeah, I can tell. [laughter] It's amazing—

Lamec Rosas: —because, yeah, 'cause—

Angelica Mazé: —that smile.

Lamec Rosas: —it made me— they're just great people, great company. Gives me plenty of freedom there, not just within the company, within the creative process but also creative, like, to take some time off to regroup and just to be able to build more, you know, 'cause whenever you're trying to do something creative, you can't just do it day in, day out. You're gonna get burnt out. You're gonna get drained.

1:11:58

You need that escape or whatnot, which is why I usually love traveling, 'cause that is that escape for me. You just take a break, and really get to explore the world, and then that'll just inspire you to do more projects, inspire you to more ideas, and just take a breath, and just get out of this life for a second. And so, yeah, that took me to go to Alaska. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: Well, congratulations, yeah, and then you went to Alaska. I saw you saw the Northern Lights.

Lamec Rosas: I did.

Angelica Mazé: Oh my gosh. And you went alone.

Lamec Rosas: I did. I did.

Angelica Mazé: That's incredible.

Lamec Rosas: I went alone—

Angelica Mazé: That's incredible.

Lamec Rosas: —on that one. Crazy stuff, yeah, that. And then I think a week or two after for Sendero, we went to Reno and Lake Tahoe—

Angelica Mazé: Oh wow.

Lamec Rosas: —to go do a photoshoot for—

Angelica Mazé: Yeah, because Sendero is a clothing company.

Lamec Rosas: Yes, they are.

Angelica Mazé: And y'all seem to take a lot of trips as a company for photoshoots and things like that, it seems.

Lamec Rosas: They've been taking a lot more. The company is just booming right now.

Angelica Mazé: Good.

Lamec Rosas: And so these next few seasons, we're definitely gonna be taking a lot more ambitious trips. This was like the first.

1:13:00

This past one was the biggest trip and the most expensive trip we've taken. But I think it's because the stuff that's—it's for the stuff that's coming out in the fall. And so we're just so excited to be able to work on that, and showcase that in a whole new scene, in a whole new aesthetic. It'll be almost game-changing for the brand itself. So, yeah, it is—

Angelica Mazé: I'll keep my eyes peeled. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: That's exciting.

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter] Absolutely. I'm so happy to— I'm so excited to post these.

Unfortunately we have to wait till August to even—

Angelica Mazé: That's all right.

Lamec Rosas: —show 'em or anything like that—

Angelica Mazé: That's cool.

Lamec Rosas: —till all the clothing comes out.

Angelica Mazé: Oh, that's cool.

Lamec Rosas: So much good stuff.

Angelica Mazé: That's, well, congratulations 'cause that's a huge— what an incredible sort of combination of all of your loves, really, right?

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter]

Angelica Mazé: There's travel and photography, and it's creative, but it sounds like it's a good group of people to work for.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah.

Angelica Mazé: Presumably they pay you.

Lamec Rosas: Oh yeah.

Angelica Mazé: Hopefully, they pay [laughter] more than \$2.13 an hour. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter] Oh my gosh—

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter]

Lamec Rosas: —you couldn't imagine. But, yeah—

Angelica Mazé: Wow, that's awesome.

Lamec Rosas: —amazing.

1:14:00

Angelica Mazé: Any, yeah, is there anything—we'll wrap up here pretty soon, I think. Is there anything I haven't asked you that you— or things that you wanna share that we haven't talked about in terms of serving, serving for that wage, anything we haven't covered?

Lamec Rosas: I don't know. I think it is just the whole serving life is a very crazy, spontaneous, fun, for sure. But it is different, depending on where you work. And then it's a weird mentality. A lot of people will justify it like, "Oh, I can go through"—I did it for a long time at Rollo's. I was like, oh, I can justify being either controlled by or manipulated or abused, not in that kind of way but like more very much taken advantage of, just because we're so satisfied with the money aspect of it. And so I think it ends up being a little toxic, and it ends up being a little problematic for oneself.

1:14:59

'Cause I remember speaking about it to my oldest brother. We'd tell him all these stories and all this kind of stuff. And he's like, "Why are y'all still there?"

Angelica Mazé: [Laughter] OK.

Lamec Rosas: And at the end of the day, it was just money. Why is that an answer? Why do I have to say that as an answer? Why do I have to give up a lot of stuff like that? And I know not a lot of places are like that. Not all places are like that.

Angelica Mazé: Well, it takes time, right, and also if you're on the young side, you don't necessarily know better. And then even when you do, money is money, so it's hard to—

Lamec Rosas: Exactly.

Angelica Mazé: It's easy to put up with things if you feel like you're being—so would you say, generally speaking, looking back, do you feel like you were fairly compensated? How do you feel about that \$2.13 an hour?

Lamec Rosas: No, absolutely not [laughter], no. I think, especially at that place, I think that was way low. I think we absolutely needed to be paid way more for all the stuff we had to deal with, for all the stuff we had to do that was not part of our job description. Absolutely not, no. We absolutely needed to be paid more because, I mean, I just hate the idea of, like, for tips to be your living—

1:16:05

Angelica Mazé: Your wage, basically.

Lamec Rosas: Yeah. That's what you're dependent on. And, yes, while you can learn a lot of life skills, be able to talk to people, relate to people, be way more social, yeah, but that's, I mean, it's just—I don't think that's right. I don't think that—

Angelica Mazé: At what cost?

Lamec Rosas: Exactly. I am literally having to learn this just so I can live, just so I can be able to pay my bills and whatnot. It should come off more natural. This shouldn't be the main focus on me learning these skills. I mean, that was one thing. Money's a crazy thing.

Angelica Mazé: Money's a crazy thing.

Lamec Rosas: Money will make you look past terrible things.

Angelica Mazé: It will, it definitely will. One thing I haven't really asked anybody else, but it's something that I'm thinking about in this interview—it evolves every time I do it. [laughter]
A lot of people in the food industry—and this will be my last question, I promise. There's sort of some debate right now about, like, if there even is such a thing as unskilled labor.

1:17:04

We use these terms "skilled" and "unskilled" a lot to sort of justify—almost always it's meant to defend or justify how much or how little we pay people. And so I've seen a lot of food writers, in particular, saying there really is no such thing as unskilled labor, especially in terms of how we compensate people. So, I mean, from what you've told me, serving requires a great deal of skill. But what do you think about that? I'm just curious.

Lamec Rosas: As to—

Angelica Mazé: As to, like, is there such a thing of skilled and unskilled labor, and where would you say serving falls in that?

Lamec Rosas: I don't know. I mean, I would just say, like, you definitely need some skill to absolutely get the job done. Like that one girl earlier, she—

Angelica Mazé: She didn't have it.

Lamec Rosas: She didn't have it, and she just wasn't cut out for it. And I think it just takes a lot to—it's a lot of learning, yeah, like skills. [laughter]

1:17:59

Angelica Mazé: Yeah, skills. [laughter]

Lamec Rosas: You actually need skills [laughter] to be able to do the job, and to be able to learn, to be able to read people, to be able to do this stuff. You just can't learn that overnight. You gotta learn that over months, maybe years, especially with specific clientele.

Angelica Mazé: And your tips reflect that, like you said, it's your level of knowledge, and then a lot of things you're not in control of, like your race, your personality of your clients, the weather outside. All of those things affect your wages. Interesting. Cool. Anything else to add that we haven't covered?

Lamec Rosas: No. I mean, anything else you want to ask, I'm okay for it. [laughter]

Angelica Mazé: No, no. That's good. I could keep doing this forever.

Lamec Rosas: [Laughter]

Angelica Mazé: So I think I have kept you for long enough. Thank you so much for taking the time to come after your job and everything. I really appreciate it. Yeah, I think that's it. Thank you, Lamec. I appreciate you being here.

Lamec Rosas: Absolutely. Thank you so much. Thank you so much.

[End]