



**Huong Tran**

**Dong Phuong Bakery - New Orleans East, LA**

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Interviewer: Phillip Norman Reid

Interpreter: Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn

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0:00:00

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Today is Thursday April 28th, 2022. We're here at Dong Phuong Bakery in New Orleans East. I'm Phillip Norman, and today I'm speaking with Ms. Huong Tran. Ms. Tran, could you introduce yourself for the recording?

Huong Tran: My name is Huong Tran.

Phillip Norman Reid: And what do you do?

Huong Tran: Currently, I do have a family-run bakery.

Phillip Norman Reid: Perfect. Great. Well, wonderful. And just to get started, Ms. Tran, could you tell me a little bit about where you grew up and what your upbringing was like?

0:01:00

Huong Tran: I was born in Vietnam, a province called Sóc Trăng.

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Do you want me to spell that for you?

Phillip Norman Reid: That'd be helpful, yes.

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Sóc Trăng is spelled as S-O-C T-R-A-N-G.

Phillip Norman Reid: And what was it like growing up there?

Huong Tran: I grew up with my family. I lived with my family, and I went to school there. I went to school at that province.

0:02:01

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay, and what did your parents do?

Huong Tran: My parents also had a bakery.

Phillip Norman Reid: Oh, okay. So, it's in the family, right?

Huong Tran: Yes, it does rise in the family.

Phillip Norman Reid: Great. Wonderful. And what kind of things were sold at that bakery that your parents had?

Huong Tran: The main baked goods is called *bánh pía*. It's a type of baked goods, and the name of it is called *bánh pía*, B-A-N-H P-I-A. My parents originated from China.

0:03:00

And that was the recipe or that was the formula that they brought with them when they relocate or immigrate to Vietnam.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Great. Interesting. So, your parents were from China originally. I didn't know that.

Huong Tran: That's right.

Phillip Norman Reid: Interesting. Okay. Great. And what was your connection to the bakery as a kid? Did you work at the bakery or did you do something else?

0:04:20

Huong Tran: When I was younger, when I was little, I saw that the bakery was really busy. It was really busy, especially around mooncake time, the Fall Festival. I mean, at that time, the number of their employees would increase over to 100. And the bakery was really busy. When I was growing up, I also wanted to learn— I wanted to go to school so that I could work in a different profession, a profession that allows me to wear something nice to go to work—

Phillip Norman Reid: [laughter]

Huong Tran: [laughter]

Huong Tran: —something nice and I wouldn't have to work so hard.

0:05:01

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. [laughter]

Huong Tran: I did help out. I did help out in the back. I did not learn how to bake or learn the secrets of baking, but I did help out in the back by wrapping up the cakes or the baked goods once they are baked.

Phillip Norman Reid: So, it sounds like mooncake season was similar to King Cake season in the sense—

Huong Tran: Yeah, similar like that.

Phillip Norman Reid: —that there was a lot more customers, right, during that time of year.

Huong Tran: That is correct.

Phillip Norman Reid: Interesting. Okay. So, you wanted to have a profession where you could wear something nice.

Huong Tran: [laughter]

Phillip Norman Reid: Did you have an idea of what that profession would be?

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Actually, I should've used the word— that I could wear something pretty. [laughter]

Phillip Norman Reid: Pretty? Okay. Right. So, who gets to wear [laughter] pretty clothes at work? [laughter]

0:06:17

Huong Tran: One of the professions would be like a teacher, teaching. It would not be the type of jobs or profession that you have to work physically, that you have to use your hands, you know, not too heavy, not heavy work.

Phillip Norman Reid: Interesting. [laughter] What did you like to do as a kid, besides working in the bakery, when you didn't have to do that? [laughter]

0:07:03

Huong Tran: As a kid, I learned how to sew, how to knit, and also how to embroid, and I liked that kind of professions, that type of professions.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right, so sort of working with your hands, artistic things?

Huong Tran: Yeah. [laughter] You won't get your hand dirty. [laughter]

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. I hear you. [laughter]

Huong Tran: No, oil. It's not greasy. No fat. No lard. Not greasy.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. [laughter] So, your life really took a turn from what you envisioned as a child. [laughter]

0:08:01

Huong Tran: That was the reason why I didn't learn all the recipes, all the formula of it. I just helped out, helped them with wrapping up the cakes or the baked goods.

Phillip Norman Reid: You said, "I'm not interested. I don't want anything to do with that"?

[laughter]

0:08:59

Huong Tran: That was the reason why I didn't bother to learn the recipes or the formula. But I do help out, even I do help with the wrapping of the cakes or baked goods that haven't been baked.

They are still being prepared. But they have already been taken shape or at the last stage. The last

stage would be to wrap them up before cooking. And the main ones is *bánh pía* and then *bánh bao*, like buns.

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): I don't know how to describe them *bánh pía* but I do know how to describe *bánh bao*. This is the interpreter talking. *Bánh bao* is like steamed buns or buns with fillings.

Huong Tran: I mean, I helped with everything. I helped with everything, and that was the reason why I did not bother to learn the recipe or the formulas.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. Okay. Interesting. Just one more question about childhood. Did you have any siblings?

0:10:04

Huong Tran: Yes, I do. There are seven of us altogether in the family.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Wow. That's a big family. [laughter] Okay. Wonderful. Well, tell me just a little bit about when and why you came to the United States, and what that journey was like for you.

Huong Tran: When we first left Vietnam, it was around 1978. We reached the United States around 1980.

0:11:28

In terms of why we came here, we came to New Orleans. There were many reasons as to why we came to New Orleans. But the main reason was that we wanted to look for freedom. We went in search of freedom. My husband was ex-Navy. He was in the Navy, and once he was released from prison, it was hard for him to find jobs.

0:11:58

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Oh, I'm sorry. It's not *hải quân*, Navy. Yeah, it's not *hải quân*; *không quân*, in the Air Force. [laughter] Yeah, I wrote "Air Force" but somehow I said *không quân*, yeah, Air Force.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. So, your husband was like a prisoner of war for a period of time?

Okay.

Huong Tran: Yes, a prisoner of war.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. So, the war was the primary motivation to leave to come to the United States?

Huong Tran: That is correct.

Phillip Norman Reid: What did the impacts of the war look like in the place you're from, in the province you're from?

0:13:03

Huong Tran: The place or the town where I grew up, or the province where I grew up, it was total devastation. It was hugely devastated. The last day was April the 30th.

Phillip Norman Reid: That your family was there or that the town still existed?

Huong Tran: No, on that day, April the 30th, we were still there. And even though there were quite a bit, numerous, countless collapses of buildings, and also many deaths, but we were lucky to have escaped.

0:14:09

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Right. Yeah, I imagine that was really difficult and scary.

Huong Tran: Oh [laughter] no need [inaudible 0:14:24]

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. How old were you when you left, and did the whole family leave to the United States, or who did you go with?

0:14:55

Huong Tran: No, that wasn't the case. I mean, I left Vietnam with my husband and his families. My own family did not want to leave. It's because that my father remembered his journey from China to here, how difficult and how challenging it was. And not only that but once you get settled, you have to revive or you have to recreate your identity, recreate another life, and that was really difficult and challenging. That's how he remembered of his own journey, so that's why he didn't want any one of us to leave. But when my husband and his side left, I also left.

0:16:01

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Right. So, since he had already immigrated once, he didn't want to sort of go through that again. Right.

Huong Tran: Right, immigrate. Right, that's right, since he's already immigrated, he didn't want to re-immigrate.

Phillip Norman Reid: [laughter] I understand. Right. So, I mean, sort of speaking of that, what was it like for you to sort of recreate your identity, your life when you got here to the US? What was that like initially when you first got to New Orleans?

Huong Tran: Yeah, you're talking about restarting from the very beginning. Yeah, you have to restart from the very beginning.

0:17:02

Yeah, we came with our bare hands.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. Who were the first people you met, and how did you kind of get settled? Where did you move to initially?

0:17:53

Huong Tran: The initial place that we stopped was also New Orleans because we were sponsored by one of my husband's friends who was also in the military with him, and that person left

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Vietnam in 1975, and that person sponsored us. And since then, we have lived here up until now, to the present. I forgot to talk about the journey from Vietnam to Malaysia.

0:19:02

Once we left the boat that took off from Vietnam, we saw two pirate ships, who stole everything from us, including water. They emptied the water, thinking that there was valuable things in the water, so they emptied the water, and wasted the water. At that time, it was really difficult and challenging.

Phillip Norman Reid: Oh, my goodness. [laughter] You don't hear about pirates as much [laughter] with an immigration story, at least the ones I've heard from Vietnam. So, yeah, that's totally unknown to me. That must've been terrible.

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Did I mention that she came to the United States in 1980?

Phillip Norman Reid: I don't think so, so it's good to have that. 1980, right.

Interpreter: Yeah, she did. Yeah, she came in 1980.

Phillip Norman Reid: 1980?

0:20:00

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Yeah.

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Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. [laughter] Perfect. Well, we got that all set. Great. What were your sort of initial impressions of the United States? Did you find anything familiar to where you came from, and what was different?

Huong Tran: Oh, complete difference, like 360 degree.

0:20:48

Phillip Norman Reid: Right, just in terms of how the people were or what the place was like, just everything?

Huong Tran: The interactions with the American people, they tend to help you when you need it. In terms of place and circumstances, it was really different and was really huge. It was as if we had gotten lost or went by accident into a place that was really big.

0:22:02

It was really big, when you compare where I grew up, and Vietnam itself.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. So, coming from a much smaller place to an intimidatingly larger one, right. Sure. So, I know now that you didn't want to be a baker, so tell me about when you did end up starting to sell baked goods, and baking yourself.

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Huong Tran: At that time, my husband was able to find a job at a grocery store named Schwegmann. It was the same place that my sponsor, our sponsor worked, so he recommended or he refer us to working at Schwegmann, refer my husband to work at Schwegmann. And I stayed home because I had children, small children. And I also had a chance to go to work picking tangerines, and I was transported or picked up and dropped off, and I got paid \$20 a day, and I thought, oh, you know, making money.

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But my husband— and I worked the whole day, and because of the fact that I worked the whole day, he didn't want me to do that anymore. He wanted me to stay home, so I started to write home to my parents, asking for the recipes, asking for the family formulas. I had already knew how to do it or how to bake it. I just need the recipes. Once they gave me the recipes, that was when I started this.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Interesting. So, you were looking for a job that would allow you to kind of make money but also be able to be home while raising these young kids, right.

Huong Tran: That is exactly that.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right, and how many children do you have? How many children were in the house at that time?

Huong Tran: At that time, I already had two.

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Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Right. It must have been a handful. [laughter]

0:26:02

Huong Tran: Yeah, it was.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right, starting a business and having children, yeah, I can't imagine.

Huong Tran: Yeah. But it was just only at home though. The business was still an at-home business.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right, and that's what I was going to ask next. Oh, go ahead.

Huong Tran: [laughter] Yeah, use the typical, so your standard oven. I baked the whole cake in that oven.

Phillip Norman Reid: Wow. Okay. Where would you sell the things that you baked at home?

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Huong Tran: I have to thank my neighbors, really be thankful of my neighbors. They ordered. They placed the order, and they make referrals by mouth, and that's how my— they make recommendations by mouth, and they placed the order at home, and that's how it was sold.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Right, sort of selling to friends and neighbors, and they helped spread the word. So, at one point did the business grow to the point that you needed to open a bakery? When did you get to do that?

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0:28:48

Huong Tran: Okay. So, the business started at home. I worked at home for that about a year, a little bit over— a little bit into or past 1980.

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Maybe about a year. At that time, we were given the opportunity that my husband's mom was working at Dong Phuong. There was a time that I was a waitress at Dong Phuong, and the owners— Dong Phuong was already in existence. The owner didn't want to deal with it anymore or to work with it anymore, so they gave us an opportunity to buy it.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. What year was that?

Huong Tran: It was 1982 but it was at the beginning of 1982.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay, the beginning [inaudible 0:29:45]. Great. And just a couple just general questions about baking. What do you like about baking, and what is hard about being a baker?

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Huong Tran: When I started in this business, I realized that I liked the business, and also it was an opportunity for me to take care and to raise the children at the same time.

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Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Great. And when you were learning sort of your parents' recipes, what were some of the harder ones to figure out or get right, or were there any hard ones?

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Huong Tran: Yeah, that's why I wrote home, asking my mom why was this recipe like that. At that time, you could only write home. There wasn't any phone available.

Phillip Norman Reid: So, you had to wait a while to get the answer. [laughter]

Huong Tran: That's right.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. Absolutely. So, 1983, you took over this business. How did you feel? Were you scared? Were you excited? What was that like?

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Huong Tran: At first, yeah, I was. I was scared and worried. I was worried how it would fare in the long-term. And I would question myself would I be able to sustain or to maintain the same quality that the business used to offer, or the business is offering, the quality of the products.

Phillip Norman Reid: Got you. Well, yeah, that makes sense to be scared about failing at first. But, obviously, you did the opposite, and had a lot of success. So, what has it been like to grow the business? What have been the exciting things and the challenging things to see it get so much larger?

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Huong Tran: Whenever I receive a call from the customer saying a positive review from the customers, that encouraged me. That nudged me on. That helped me to keep going.

Phillip Norman Reid: Perfect. Beautiful. And as you were getting more orders in, how did you have to change the way you did business to be able to kind of keep up with demand?

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Huong Tran: That's right. That is right. We started out with just buying a stove that cost only five grand, and then eventually we had to replace that or buy a stove or baking equipment. The cost would be like 10,000. And then also we had to change the types of equipment or materials or ingredients.

0:35:03

Like, for example, we used to be able to just use the retail mixer. Now, we had to change it to a commercial mixer.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Wow. Were you working with your husband? At what point did he just sort of become involved in the business, and it was you two working together? What was that like?

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): I was wrong. She said that her husband— yeah, I was wrong. Her husband started out with just purchasing an oven that cost only five grand. And then

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eventually, they had to move up and bought an oven that cost 10 grand. Yeah, it's because I left out the husband, so that's why you asked the question that you ask now.

Phillip Norman Reid: [laughter]

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Do you still want the question, that same question to be interpreted?

Phillip Norman Reid: Yeah. So, he was sort of involved the whole time, too? Is that correct?

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Huong Tran: When the order became numerous or increased, my husband decided to step in, and helped out. And that was also, I mean, we decided to work together side-by-side so that we can expand the business. And that was when he decided to stop working at the grocery store.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Yeah, that's what I was wondering if he kind of quit his other job, and came and helped out with this.

0:37:00

Huong Tran: Yeah, that's right.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right, and was he involved as a baker too? Did he know how to bake, and kind of help out, develop recipes?

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Huong Tran: He helped me tremendously. Because my husband, he used to work with the American soldiers, therefore his English was pretty good, and he bought some books on how to bake. He bought numerous books on how to bake, and he would explain to me what is the purpose of this flour, and what is the purpose of this ingredient that helped to improve the dough, or the ingredient that helps to make the dough raise. He had many books.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. So, he was the one who was studying and learning about sort of the technical aspects of baking, right.

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Huong Tran: That is correct.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. Well, it sounds like you two made a good team. And just while we're talking about him, could you share your husband's name for the record?

Huong Tran: His name, he also has the same last name, Tran Van De. Tran—T-R-A-N V-A-N D-E. But once we came to this country, they called him De, which is also D-E.

0:40:02

If you were to put the markings, the Vietnamese markings, the pronunciation for both D-E is very different. "Yeah" and "day"—they are very different from each other.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Got you. Thank you for including that. And is your husband still with us?

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): With us meaning living?

Phillip Norman Reid: Yeah.

Huong Tran: He passed.

Phillip Norman Reid: Oh, okay, I'm sorry to hear that. What year was that?

Huong Tran: 2004.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay, so a while back.

Huong Tran: Yeah.

Phillip: Right, right. Great. Well, let's shift to Mardi Gras. Were you familiar with Mardi Gras before you got here? What was it like to see how Mardi Gras was celebrated in New Orleans?

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Huong Tran: No, no, no.

Phillip Norman Reid: Not at all? Okay. Right. Were people living in this area, would they celebrate Mardi Gras when you got here or was it not as common?

Huong Tran: When we came, Mardi Gras was already in existence.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right, and sort of in the particular neighborhood where you were living, was it common to celebrate?

Huong Tran: That's correct.

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Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Right. So, how would you with your family sort of as you were raising your children, would you celebrate Mardi Gras with them, or was it kind of a big part of your life?

0:42:06

Huong Tran: No, we did not.

Phillip Norman Reid: Not really? Okay. Interesting.

Huong Tran: Even now we don't.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. [laughter] That's interesting. So, then, if you weren't really too into Mardi Gras, what compelled you to start baking King Cakes?

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Huong Tran: When my husband passed, I liked to eat sweet bread. There was one day that I placed an order at a store. I used to live in Slidell, and there was a store in Slidell.

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Then I placed an order at that store, and when I ate, I realized that it had sugar. I asked them to bake the cake without sugar because I have diabetes. And when I ate, I recognized the flavor that I used to like, the sweet bread.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. So, the King Cake tasted similar to the sweet bread?

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Huong Tran: The sweet bread, my husband, my deceased husband used to make that, and my bakery also had that, too.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Right. Got you. Okay. Interesting. Do you remember what that place was in Slidell where you had gotten a King Cake from for the first time?

0:45:01

Huong Tran: Randazzo.

Phillip Norman Reid: Oh, okay, yeah, sure. That's a pretty famous spot. [laughter] Right.

Wonderful. So, you tried their King Cake, and did you immediately think, "I want to try to make one of these", or did you wait a while? What was your thought process?

Huong Tran: That's right. That's right. When I ate it, I realized or I felt that the dough was very similar to one of the doughs that we had, to mine, so we could base on that, and we could make it.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. So, when was the first time you tried to make one?

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Huong Tran: I can't recall exactly when but it probably was after Katrina.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Right. And did it take a while to get it right, to where you liked the way it tasted? Did you kind of experiment for a while? What was that like?

Huong Tran: Many tries.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Right, to get it perfect. Sure. I ask this to every baker. What sets your King Cake apart? What makes it special? And especially for the King Cake y'all do here, so many people love it, so why do they love this King Cake so much, do you think? [laughter]

0:47:13

Huong Tran: Instead of following— instead of maintaining or mixing with the exact ingredient for the dough, I modified to have the dough taste similar to a croissant.

Phillip Norman Reid: So, that was one of the distinct features of kind of what you made?

Huong Tran: I believe— I like to think so. [laughter]

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. Yeah, that was the first croissant-style cake. Were there any other specific aspects to the King Cake that you wanted to change to kind of just make it your own?

Huong Tran: Let's see. Of course, you have to spend more time and more labor because instead of just using the sweet bread dough, you had to modify it, so you spend more time and effort on it, first of all.

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And second of all, in terms of the frosting, at that time, not too many people wanted that type of frosting because it was too sweet. So, instead of using that type of frosting or icing, we used cream cheese.

Phillip Norman Reid: A little bit less sweet, right.

Huong Tran: Yeah, less sweet.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. So, you said around after Katrina, you first started trying to make one. When did you first start selling them, do you know?

Huong Tran: Yeah, I can't recall exactly when post-Katrina. So, it was around 2008, at the beginning of 2008.

0:49:59

Phillip Norman Reid: 2008?

Huong Tran: My husband and my daughter say that— my daughter remembered it being in the beginning of 2008.

Phillip Norman Reid: 2008? Okay. And then were they really, really popular right away, or did it take a couple years, or what was that like?

Huong Tran: No, it took a while. It didn't take off immediately. In the beginning, we could only sell 100 throughout the whole season.

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Phillip Norman Reid: Wow. Only 100. It pales in comparison to doing thousands now, I'm sure.

[laughter]

Huong Tran: Yeah.

0:51:00

Phillip Norman Reid: First of all, do you remember a year around the time when the popularity really soared, and do you know why, and what was that like?

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Asking the daughter now.

Phillip Norman Reid: [laughter]

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): They can't remember when it became popular [laughter], the year that people stood in lines.

Huong Tran: It was 2018.

Phillip Norman Reid: 2018? Okay.

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Wow, 10 years.

0:51:58

Huong Tran: The cars parked in front of the parking lot, *long* lines of cars parked.

Phillip Norman Reid: Wow. Oh, my goodness. What did you first think when you saw those long lines? [laughter] How did you feel?

Huong Tran: Oh, honestly speaking, I was *thrilled*. I was thrilled that they like our cake.

[laughter] I was thrilled.

Phillip Norman Reid: [laughter] Right. Were you a little overwhelmed too? "How are we going to make all these King Cakes?" [laughter]

Huong Tran: Yes, I was. [laughter]

Phillip Norman Reid: Well, just to get a little more context, I know the King Cake became really popular, but you also are really popular for the *bánh mì* that you all have here, and some of the other pastries, I'm sure, and the bread. So, what are some of your other most popular products?

0:53:14

Huong Tran: I think, I believe it's the *bánh mì*.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. Okay. And then so kind of 2018 onward, it just grew from there, I know, and I've read a lot of articles online about how popular the King Cake has become. And it's the first King Cake I heard of from friends when I moved to Louisiana, that I had to try it. They were very adamant about that. So, what has it been like to just see the bakery go so far, and to become so popular? How has that felt?

0:54:31

Huong Tran: I was surprised but, at the same time, extremely thrilled and pleased that the customers loved our King Cake.

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Phillip Norman Reid: I'm sure it feels nice to put so much work into making it the best you can, then people recognizing it by I guess kind of considering it unique and one of the best King Cakes around.

0:55:15

Huong Tran: Yes, very thrilled. Very thrilled. [laughter]

Phillip Norman Reid: Right.

Huong Tran: Very thrilled. *Super* thrilled. [laughter]

Phillip Norman Reid: Right, the most thrilled you can be, right. [laughter] Well, I know, I'm sure it's incredibly exciting and, like you said earlier, it's a little overwhelming, too. So, I'm interested if you could take me into what is the environment like in the bakery during Mardi Gras? How do you get all those King Cakes out there?

0:56:25

Huong Tran: First of all, the bakery becomes very, very, very busy, and the number of employees would have to be increased twice. It would have to be doubled. The number of employees would double. And then we would have to work 24/7, divided into three shifts, 24/7.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Wow. And then—

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Oh, hang on.

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0:57:03

Huong Tran: So, we became very busy, and we work around the clock. We divided into three shifts, so it wasn't 24/7. But even though we take one day off, we still have to work at least half a day for that one day off.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Got you. What has it been like to work with your daughter, to grow this business, and what have you done— what's it been like, you two working together?

Huong Tran: It's wonderful. It's wonderful. Currently, I, myself, just focus on the bakery itself, managing the employees.

0:58:05

But anything outside of that, she's the one that takes care of it.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay. Great. If you could just share your daughter's name for the record, and we're going to interview her next because she's here with us. [laughter]

Huong Tran: Her name is Tran Tu-Linh. T-R-A-N T-U dash L-I-N-H. I say "dash" because sometimes the first name is a compound. So, Tu-Linh, T-U dash L-I-N-G.

Phillip Norman Reid: Okay.

0:59:00

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): I'm sorry, L-I-N-H.

Phillip Norman Reid: Got you. Okay. Great. Well, I just have a couple more questions. Thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it. The last two things I'll ask are— sort of ask every baker. What does a King Cake need to be a King Cake? When you were first making one, what are the rules you felt like you had to follow? [laughter]

1:00:07

Huong Tran: Well, the first is that you have to work on the dough or prepare the dough, and then from there, you change it to croissant, croissant-like. And after that, you just have to let it rise, and before baking. Let it rise before baking.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. And how many this past Mardi Gras, how many King Cakes did you all make? Do you remember?

Huong Tran: Oh, 60,000 for the whole season.

Phillip Norman Reid: For the whole season, 60,000? Oh, my goodness. [laughter]

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Wow.

Phillip Norman Reid: That's incredible. [laughter]

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Wow.

Phillip Norman Reid: Wonderful. Obviously, you've come a long way and such an impressive story. Thank you for sharing with me. I really appreciate it. Is there anything else you want to add, any other favorite memories, or anything we missed, anything at all?

1:02:03

Huong Tran: I have to say about my memories, favorite memories, and I have to attribute that to my husband. I'm very thankful that he has given me so many recipes, and not only that but also explained to me the functions, the usage for the dough, the sugar, etcetera, etcetera. And secondly would have to be with my daughter. I'm thankful of her. She has been incredible.

Phillip Norman Reid: Great. That's beautiful. Well, thank you again for sharing your story. I really appreciate it. [laughter]

Huong Tran: [laughter]

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): [laughter] Now, I confirm with you, what did I miss as an interpreter? [laughter]

Phillip Norman Reid: [laughter]

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): I'm sure there was something I missed. [laughter]

Phillip Norman Reid: Oh, my goodness. It seems like you're working very hard over here.

[laughter] So, I tried to keep it simple as much as I can. [laughter] Wonderful.

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1:02:59

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): No, it's the beast of the business. It's the nature of the beast.

Phillip Norman Reid: Right. And would you, Ms. Nguyen, introduce yourself for the recording as well, actually.

Anh-Đào Thị Nguyễn (Interpreter): Yes, my name is Anh-Dao Nguyen. I'm the interpreter for today. I also work as a real estate agent. [laughter]

Phillip Norman Reid: Great. Thank you. I appreciate it. Well, yeah, I just want to have the names of everyone who helped make this happen, and I so appreciate both of you again. Thank you.

We're going to leave 30 seconds of silence on the end of the recording for editing purposes, and then we'll be all done.

1:04:00

1:04:20

[End]