

Jesús Martínez and Izmene Peredo
Con Huevos—Louisville, KY

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[00:00:00]

Gustavo Arellano: Okay, now let's begin. Today is the 10th February. I'm Gustavo Arellano, with the Southern Foodways Alliance. We are at Con Huevos in Louisville, Kentucky.

Tell me your name, and in what do you work.

[00:00:14]

Jesús Martínez: I'm Jesús Martínez, owner and co-owner of Con Huevos. And currently, I work and labor at Brown-Forman.

[00:00:24]

GA: And you?

[00:00:25]

Izmene Peredo: How are you? My name is Izmene Peredo. And well, I work here and am owner, no? In Con Huevos, and in charge of the kitchen.

[00:00:33]

And what is your date of birth?

JM: February 24, '71.

[00:00:39]

GA: And you?

IP: October 21, 1976.

[00:00:43]

GA: And you. Where were you born?

[00:00:45]

IP: In Guadalajara, Jalisco.

[00:00:47]

GA: In the city, or in a village? Colony? Where?

[00:00:51]

IP: In the city of Guadalajara, yes.

[00:00:53]

GA: And you?

[00:00:54]

JM: In the beautiful city of Mexico, in the *Distrito Federal* [Federal District] (*Laughs*)

[00:00:58]

GA: In which colony?

[00:01:00]

JM: In...well, I was born in—well, let's not say. Born in Mexico City, and raised in what is called Satélite, which is the northern part of the city.

[00:01:10]

GA: And...how did the both of you, how did the two of you meet?

[00:01:14]

JM: Okay, this is a long story. We met at work. I have worked for Brown-Forman, and Tequila Herradura, owned by Brown-Forman, for the last nine years. And exactly about six, seven years we met at work, and interestingly enough, we were married a year ago. And we are celebrating today one year.

[00:01:38]

GA: Today, it's your anniversary.

[00:01:40]

IP: Exactly. It's the anniversary, and we celebrate it, well, here, opening this project together.

[00:01:46]

GA: No, no, no congratulations, congratulations. How did you enter Brown-Forman?

[00:01:52]

JM: Well, in Brown-Forman, I started working in marketing for quite some years. Working, controlling tequilas. I started working with [Jose] Cuervo, for about fifteen, sixteen years. And in my story in—it was practically in the area of marketing. And so at some point, Tequila Herradura invited me to work with them. They made me move from Mexico City to Guadalajara, where you can imagine, no? It's a major change, going from twenty million inhabitants to four million people. With the great benefit of...uh, being a good place to live in the city that is the birthplace of tequila. The cradle of many of ours, this, culinary culture in Mexico. Of the most important festivals—cradle of mariachi. And, of course, home of the most beautiful women that there are, no?

[00:02:54]

GA: You as a *tapatía* [nickname for someone from Guadalajara] can you tell me it means to be *tapatía*, especially for Americans who will hear this and not understand? For them, what does Guadalajara, the culture of Guadalajara mean?

[00:03:08]

IP: Well, as my husband told you, Guadalajara is where tequila, mariachi is born. Well, I think they the most important icons representing our country, Mexico. In Guadalajara, in Jalisco in general, too, there are many villages around Guadalajara from which arise

many immigrants who are now working here in America, right?

[00:03:39]

GA: And growing in Guadalajara, what are your first memories of food? From the kitchen of your mother, the street food? How do you say? What do you remember of the food from a girl—from being a young girl?

[00:03:52]

IP: Well, life in Mexico takes place day by day in the kitchen. I think everyone who had the good fortune to grow up in Mexico know that it's there where the family converges all the time. Since childhood, I also was fortunate to be born into a family that has a great passion for, for food, for cooking—my father, my grandfather, my brothers are chefs. Or rather, all of them, they were always in the kitchen. Then, well, I saved my memories of smells from a young age. The smell of chile, the smell of chocolate, this. Fresh food every day, this. Fresh tortillas. I have them memory, and, and I continue sharing them here in America.

[00:04:48]

GA: And yourself, as being from the capital of Mexico, can you explain what it means to be—I don't know what you call yourself: *chilango*, *defeño*, *capitaleño* [all nicknames for people from Mexico City]? What do you call yourself?

[00:05:00]

JM: Yes, they call us *chilangos*. *Chilangos*. That's the reality. No, well obviously you can only imagine the fortune of I have of having living in Mexico City, having been born in Mexico City, and have — having been able to live the experience of different, eh, the culinary cultures around Mexico, right? All of them converge in the city of Mexico, and

you have the possibility of only having food of the northern part of the country and the south—Veracruz. It, it, it's a very large city, obviously. And it's very easy to have the influence of all these places, right? I feel very fortunate in that feeling, and, and, and well: obviously proud of being Mexican, right? Proud—I think, I think the most important part of feeling *chilango*, in feeling Mexican, is to value how difficult it's for Mexicans to succeed daily.

[00:06:02]

GA: Why do you say that?

[00:06:04]

JM: Eh — I think it's part of, of, of the philosophy that Izmene and I are trying to project precisely in this business. Latino culture in general and the Latino population has been a population that has cost them a lot to work in succeeding. In general, we know that we're developing countries, right? And that most people live for the day, right? And live for the day involves getting up very early and go out to sweat to earn their pennies, to make a living and to eat, right? Put a lot of effort, try hard, and as we Mexicans say, do it with balls.

Precisely, from that philosophy, from that idea, is what we're looking to uh, celebrate.

Celebrate our Mexican culture, Latin culture. And precisely, from that idea comes the Con Huevos. The restaurant that we are now, this, debuting to market. We are launching our first child in our first year of marriage, right?

[00:07:20]

GA: Have you always had that... wish to be a chef like your brothers? Or did you want to do something else when you were a girl?

[00:07:29]

IP: Well, yeah, I totally believe that the passion for cooking is inherited. I mean, it's a type of, of inheritance that you get from a family that has always decided to be in the kitchen. I've worked in marketing. I also worked for Tequila Herradura. For other brands of wines and spirits. And I was always surrounded by restaurateurs, by bars, by “On Premise” by the “On Premise” Channel. So, um, I was always with this restlessness, helping friends that opened restaurants, participating. And well, also participating in the business of my family. They were dedicated to, uh, banquets, in Guadalajara, right?

[00:08:10]

GA: They, they had restaurants in Guadalajara, too? Or just banquets?

[00:08:15]

IP: No, only banquets. No brick-and-mortar restaurant; they only made meals for special events.

[00:08:22]

And what types of food did they make for someone—for a *tapatio*, your weddings and quinceañeras. What kind of food did they offer?

[00:08:31]

IP: Well, of course Mexican food. Typical food of Guadalajara. However, there is something for everyone, right? Some intend to serve more elegant, more formal meals, but yes: the base of the kitchen that I learned, and that my grandfather and my father practiced, are one hundred percent Mexican food. Moles, um, pozole, enchiladas, all that kind of meals, right? That's good enough, because if I start to, start listing dishes one by one, I think we'll be here all night teasing each other, right? (*Laughs*)

[00:09:09]

GA: And how did you get into a career of being a tequila man?

[00:09:12]

JM: Well, um, I think, I think, uh, the influence comes from childhood, right? My family, my family also had a lot of, uh, culinary influence. And since then, I remember very well that my grandfathers, especially after dinner, or lunch always took him, their tequila shot, right? From there, obviously, the Mexican begins to have some passion for, drinking in general, and be proud of it. It wasn't difficult, uh, obviously, when the opportunity to work in a, a tequila company, saying yes, no? That, I immediately was interested. And from day one, I felt passionate about, for tequila, and well, it has since then I've been working for tequilas for approximately sixteen years, no? So it's thrilling. You learn a lot about this industry. Well, to date, to date, what I want is, alongside Brown-Forman, right? The promotion of this great drink throughout Latin America, which is where I develop my work.

[00:10:30]

GA: And when did you start—when was the first time that you came here to Brown-Forman? Because Brown-Forman is located here in Louisville. So, when it was the first time that you came to Louisville?

[00:10:40]

JM: Okay, I arrived in Louisville three years and a half ago, right? I started working for Brown-Forman from Mexico, nine years ago. And they asked me to move the corporate site three years and a half ago, exactly.

[00:10:53]

GA: So how, how...I don't know how to say it in English, but...I'll tell you in Spanish.

How did he court you. In English, but I don't want to ask that, yet. Better, I mean: "How did the two of you meet?"

[00:11:07]

IP: (*Laughing*) Well, then. Now we have tapatío-style. We'd tease him a lot because he was the *chilango* en the office. And I told him that in Guadalajara, when someone courts you, the man had take you a mariachi and dress the part. Well: he did! (*Laughs*) He did. And that's when I thought, "Well, I think he's a very lively suitor. Very brave. (*Laughs*)"

[00:11:32]

GA: Is that true?

[00:11:33]

JM: Oh yeah, definitely. (*Laughs*).

[00:11:36]

GA: With which song did the serenade—did you serenade her with?

[00:11:41]

JM: The song that, that—"If You Want," it's called. By Juan Gabriel. Juan Gabriel sings it. And that was the song that I serenaded her with the first time. (*Laughs*)

[00:11:54]

GA: And before moving, before getting married, you never lived in the United States?

[00:11:59]

IP: No, it's the first time that I live here. I have a year here, and well, I've been in the process of adapting to life in America. And really, very happy that I've been well received in Louisville. It's a very amazing city, and this, we, we are very well received by

the Latino community.

[00:12:19]

GA: And you, then you, you, you moved here three years ago. How do, how do you like Louisville? As a Mexican coming to the South, how—how does it seem?

[00:12:28]

JM: It's an interesting question. Let me tell you... Since I arrived, the reality is that I felt very well received by the, the population here, right? By the people of Louisville.

Generally, people are very friendly. It's... and I think it has to do a bit with that the city turned into a city of immigrants. A city that also receives, uh... what they call people from other countries... therefore... is probably a city. It's probably a small city, but it's also a city with diversity. And that, I like that.

The experience has been very good. It's an easy city to live in. And I think the most, what has actually surprised me the most and what I've liked most about Louisville is its culinary culture. Uh, you can find a wide variety of very good food in Louisville. And, and, and it has also been much of our inspiration.

[00:13:34]

GA: When you came here, what did you think of the Mexican food?

[00:13:38]

JM: Look, I think there's all types of Mexican food all—for all tastes. And that's a good question. Uh, we can go to different places—there are many places for Mexican food in Louisville. And you can find good food. Obviously, it will always depend on the chef. Who is cooking. But... we found that... the ideal was trying to offer consumers not only traditional typical food, don't you think? True, traditional food of Mexico. But offer a bit

of what the other restaurants don't offer. Which is precisely breakfasts, right? Breakfast is... we believe it's the most important, the most important food of the day, right? And in precisely breakfasts, Mexico also has a great, great breadth and range of dishes.

Most restaurants that you'll find here in Louisville, Mexican, open at noon, right? And they close late. And they offer what, well, what American usually know about Mexican food. But few have heard of Mexican breakfasts, which is what the Mexican wakes up to every day at Grandma's house, in. at Mom's house, and begins his day, and starts his day with desire, and begins his day with balls.

[00:15:12]

GA: How did Tex-Mex food seem to you the first time you tried it here?

[00:15:18]

IP: (*laughs*) It's a difficult question, right? I barely have a year here, I haven't quite gotten used to these flavors. I like—honestly, they're not my favorites. But I acknowledge the efforts made by the Latino community and restaurants, to get ahead here in Louisville. And I think it's a good flavor, good food, good quality. I think it meets expectations, of the market here in Louisville, right?

[00:15:54]

GA: And why did... Why did you agree to move to the United States?

[00:16:00]

JM: Eh, well, obviously to progress, right? To progress, to progress the...the...the opportunity that they offered me to work here in the United States was to handle, uh, Latin America. Yes, above all focus on the part of innovation of marketing, innovation for Latin America. I couldn't miss that opportunity. Even a little sacrifice to have to stop

seeing my fiancée at the time. But, well: I was a little late...and soon after I ask her to marry me, and well, I brought her here. So, I'm calmer. (*Laughs*). And happier working here in the United States.

[00:16:41]

GA: At, at your wedding, what type of food did you had?

[00:16:46]

IP: Our wedding had a taco caterer. A Mexican-style taco caterer with various stews. For dessert, we had *jericallas*, which is a very traditional dish of Guadalajara. We also had rice pudding and, well, for drinking, we obviously gave Tequila Herradura (*laughs*). Yes.

[00:17:10]

GA: Um, and where did you get the idea to have a restaurant here in the United States, here in Louisville?

[00:17:17]

IP: Well, I think both, right? Outside of having devoted ourselves in recent years to "marketing" in the wine and spirits industry, we had always been restless since both families, well, we have that part of the culinary heritage. When I moved to America, then, my first option was to apply to work in a company. But then, we talked. Suddenly, it so happened that one night, during dinner, while we were planning what was going to be our future here in the United States, we decided—the idea came. Why not a business on our own? Thus taking advantage of the subject that I already had the experience of cooking in my family. Well, we loved the idea, we were given the opportunity. We developed the concept, and here we are.

[00:18:16]

GA: Where did you get the idea for the name of Con Huevos?

[00:18:20]

JM: It's....we were talking about it a lot, my wife and I. As she mentioned, the influence of both families helped. And our culture as such, also helped, right? Mexican culture.

Why the name Con Huevos? Because we are Mexicans. Precisely for that. And as Mexicans, we want to celebrate, honor all those who have done a lot of hard work to get ahead. To all those who have to get up very early, right? To start the day and earn the daily bread. And who gets up with eagerness and has to do it with a lot of balls. It's precisely why we took the decision to acquire that name. Without fear, saying it openly, that's how we Mexicans say it—"¡Con huevos!" And that's precisely why we adopted that name.

[00:19:18]

GA: So, your mom didn't think it was rude? None of that?

[00:19:21]

IP: (*Laughs*) No, no. Unlike. I think she thought it was funny (*laughs*). She found very funny. And more, I think it's made an impact on Mexicans, Latinos, and Americans in general. Although they have no clear idea what it means. The has name aroused much unease. We've read some thoughts on the—it became controversial if "con huevo" was, "Con Huevos" was, whether I was lazy, or if it was "Con Huevos" because the ingredient was eggs. Then, we explained a bit, too. The idea is that all our American guests who don't speak Spanish, learn a little more about the Mexican culture, talking stories about Mexicans that we do things with balls.

[00:20:14]

GA: What is this...this neighborhood? The name of this neighborhood, and why did you decide to place Con Huevos here?

[00:20:22]

JM: This neighborhood is Crescent Hill. And it was the best location we could have found. It's a—Frankfort Avenue is an street that's growing a lot, which has several restaurants and shops and are full, hot growth. Many people go through here. Most people who eat here are American. It's American about, but Latinos also pass by here. It's a entry is that, which leads south to downtown, right? It's very busy. And the reality of things is that in our search, we found this great opportunity. We found the—ideal location, and well, it's simple as that, no?

[00:21:08]

GA: Why do you think that, as your husband said before, not many [Mexican] restaurants here serve breakfast? Why do you think—why do you think that's the case?

[00:21:20]

IP: Well, look: in fact, I've talked to them because we have the fortune to meet various restaurateurs. And they, very kindly, have offered their help and advice for us. So, the subject is that when they have a business, and it's the only source of income, well, for them they think much about profitability, and it's very difficult to handle three shifts in a restaurant, because you have to be rolling over the shifts of all staff and well, paying, salaries go up. So, uh, probably to them, they hadn't found the way to make it profitable. Eh, that, that, that's the talk, right? What they have told us, however, is they recognize an excellent opportunity. And since they're not taking it, they told me, "That's good. Because you will be specializing in breakfast, no? "

[00:22:15]

GA: Tell me about some of the menu items that y'all will have here, for breakfast.

[00:22:20]

JM: Of course. Look, of course we will have—most of our dishes are based with eggs, no? We'll have delicious, eh, chilaquiles. We'll have enchiladas. We'll have huevos rancheros. We'll have Veracruz-style eggs, right? Bathed with beans. We'll have tacos, uh, tacos de guisados [stews]. With chicken mole, with chicharrónn in green sauce. Everything you can imagine. We will have chilaquiles with chicken and eggs on top.. We'll have—all our ingredients in the dishes will be, um, fresh, which is the most important thing. Made from scratch. We'll have fresh orange juice. You were able to see the machine to make orange juice. We want to create an environment for the Mexican who knows Mexico...he feels and experience a bit anew, and feels as if transported to Mexico. And also give the opportunity to the American who knows a little bit of Mexican culture, no? Even, if you can see the chairs. They are a bit like those used in Mexico's small businesses, etcetera.

[00:23:35]

GA: How do you prepare your chilaquiles? Like, how are you going to prepare, from start to when you—offer them to your "customers"?

[00:23:45]

IP: Well, the—the chilaquiles, it's a dish that does require a little time. What I do is leave—I don't know the word in English and if I understand—but I leave tortillas out in the open. That is, to let them air out from the day before. So that they harden a bit. Subsequently, they get fried, and then they get put for a bit in oven to remove some of the

grease. That is, the tortillas must be pre-cut. Later, when the time comes to almost serve them, I prepare the sauce, which was made of green tomatillo, chile, a bit of cilantro, onion and, well, condiments, no? That is, the sauce is fried in a little oil. So that the flavors will better blend in. Subsequently, the tortillas are added. And well, you leave it for a bit. This is—this is very important, right? If you leave them too long, the chilaquiles are left soggy. And if not, they are too hard. Then, for some awesome chilaquiles, they should be cooked two, three minutes only. Add cheese, add cream. Heavy cream, Mexican cream. Well, if they want them chicken, if they're going to want them with egg—a bit of onion, and they're ready to serve.

[00:25:08]

What are going to be some of the special dishes that you have created? No, not like chilaquiles. What are going to be your specials?

[00:25:18]

IP: Well, there's a dish that is very, very much from my family, right? They are what we call eggs Veracruzanos. It's a type of enfrijolada—is, is something like an enchilada, filled with, with, stewed egg, scrambled egg with tomato and onion. It's bathed in a sauce of beans. It's topped with sausage, cheese, avocado, and a bit of jalapeño.

[00:25:47]

GA: And you...you've tried this?

[00:25:49]

JM: (*laughs*) Of course I've tried it! Everything I've tried. Imagine, from a year ago to today that we've live together, that's from where the idea arose. Like I said, she: great expert in the kitchen. And me, every day trying her, great flavors. That's where the idea

arose for this business. But yes: almost all the stews that she will, will be here on business, I've tried. (*Laughs*)

[00:26:16]

GA: And did you get to work at Brown-Forman? That's a very prestigious job. So, why are you also interested in the idea of being part of a restaurant?

[00:26:27]

JM: Look, the idea of being part of a restaurant, it arose precisely with the intention of, my wife...that is, dedicated one hundred percent on something that she desired and wanted and loved to do. The only thing I did was to help realize the idea, right? Between the two of us, to generate an idea. Between us, put the business. And, and, and to help her accomplish that dream, basically. My work, in this business, will be limited to owning only, no? One of the owners. I'm well established at my job in Brown-Forman, and, and I plan to devote myself to Brown-Forman for a long time and, if possible, retire within Brown-Forman. But hey, that doesn't mean that the intellectual part can't share itself from time to time, right? With alternative businesses and family businesses.

[00:27:30]

GA: And for you, what did, what interested about coming here in the United States and open a restaurant? Because opening a restaurant is very difficult. So for you, what is the passion that you've got to have a restaurant?

[00:27:44]

IP: Well, the passion is mainly the work in general, no? It's not just having a source of income but, but really the love for work. I've always been independent. I've always dedicated myself to work. I've never been a housewife. And, well, when I got here, I

decided to work on what I like, which is to cook. So this, regardless of what—well, there was the opportunity we had, uh, luckily to easily resolve all the issues involved in putting the restaurant: legal, permits, and many complications, no? That have risen up throughout this process. But hey, that is, here we are, and happy and very happy, and now if that gladly, believe me: I get up every day making breakfast, making meals, and do them with all the love possible that I can, this, put in the food, right?

[00:28:50]

GA: A Mexican breakfast is not just the food. But also, but also beverages. So can you tell me a bit about your café con leche, or I'm not sure if you'll offer cinnamon tea. What kind of drinks are going to have for breakfast?

[00:29:06]

IP: That's right. Well, we'll have café de olla, coffee that, precisely, brings a touch of cinnamon and is sweetened with unrefined brown sugar. We have regular coffee, which is what everyone around here, the Americans also accustomed to drink. However, we're bringing the coffee beans from Chiapas. It's Mexican coffee—that is, we get to import Mexican coffee. We have chocolate, that we're bringing from Oaxaca. We will have also, well, soft drinks, aguas frescas for the lunch hour. Aguas frescas of hibiscus or horchata. We will be changing the flavors so they can learn, like this, we can also provide aguas frescas. We also have....café con leche, Veracruz style. That's to say, Café de la Parroquia [a famous coffee shop in Veracruz]. We bought our special pitchers to be able pour hot milk from up top. And to serve, this, this particular cup of coffee with milk being, is widely used in Veracruz.

[00:30:14]

GA: No, really tasty, everything (*laughs*). A question about tequila. Why do you think that—being in Brown-Forman and a Mexican, why do you think that...the American has loved tequila so much?

[00:30:32]

JM: I think, I think that tequila, uh...the advantage that tequila has today is that it's a very different—that drink has a wide range of applications. Unlike other spirits like rum, for example, tequila has the ease that you can drink it neat, or straight, as we call it. Or you can take mixed. You can take it hot. You can take it cold. You can take it frozen. You can take in a variety of varieties, no? You can take with mineral water. Cola drink. It's, it has a great capacity—uses, the tequila. I think that's one of the main reasons.

The other reason that I think, why the American, in general, has widely accepted tequila is, is precisely, its history and where it comes from? Being able to make a liter of tequila takes a lot of time. And it takes a lot of people getting up very early to go *jimar* [a specific term used to describe the harvesting of the agave plant] agave. Wait for the agave to grow at least seven to ten years. It's a very long wait before it can be harvested and then carried by donkey, many times in trucks to, to—the mason ovens. Split them, peel, cook them for two days. Then, extract the juice, squeeze them. And then wait for some time until the, the, the...what we call the wort, the liquid, begins to ferment. After it ferments, be able to extract it, be able to warm it and put it in...in the distillation to remove and, well, take out the lambics to get the alcohol, no? The process is very long. The process—and I think that in general, the consumer appreciates it. And the taste, of course, that's another great benefit that tequila has, right? It can be smooth, it can be

strong. All depending on the drinker. We can let it *reposar* [tequila aged less than a year but more than two months]. We can *añejar* [tequila aged for more than a year but less than three]. We can take it direct, *blanco* [unaged tequila], just like that. As it's, as was originally imbibed tequila, right? Tequila that great ability of being able to take on different forms. I think it's one of the main benefits.

And the third benefit, I think is what it means emotionally to the consumer of tequila. Not only for the US; to the public, the general consumer worldwide. Every time you get to a meeting, a party, and the party is relatively good, taken care of, and someone shows up with a bottle of tequila—puts it on the table. Tell me: What's the feeling that everyone has? The party's gonna get great, right? That energy, that feeling is exact—that emotional part is what really connects with the consumer, right? And with the Americans, too.

[00:33:47]

GA: Tell me a bit about the history of Herradura brand. Because I, as a Mexican, I know what that means. But for the American who does not know, tell us a little history. What does Herradura mean? Everything, everything.

[00:34:01]

JM: Well, that's a *very* long story (*laughs*).

[00:34:03]

GA: In a few minutes.

[00:34:04]

JM: (*laughs*) In a few minutes. Well, interestingly, Tequila Herradura is the first tequila in the world. Born in 1870. Well, 1870 it's when the brand Tequila Herradura in Mexico

is first registered. But the history of tequila comes from much further back. It comes from the 1500s, the arrival of the, of the Spanish in...New Spain, they called it back then, right? From there, we—learned from them what is the process of distillation. From there comes, really, the story of Tequila Herradura. It passes from generations to generations until interestingly a priest—long ago in those times, it was in that region of Jalisco that...in those—he devoted, obviously, to the priesthood. He understood that he could make money with what they then called mezcal wine. And curiously, he left the priesthood to put his distillery. And that—and there begins the great history of Tequila Herradura, because he starts producing. Starts generating business. Some kids inherited...this kids that this priest had...accepted. He had them adopted, specifically. And from there begins the story of Tequila Herradura.

Tequila Herradura, interestingly, is the first registered tequila, right? Like, like...it's born precisely in the Tequila area, next to the zone of Tequila, which is Amatitán, Jalisco.

Well: the history of Herradura, for example, arises during a time when a landowner of the time, Felix, Felix...I don't remember his name, but oh well. At some point, he was riding in his horse, no?? Throughout all of the agave plants. And one day, one day in the distance, he saw a reflection on the floor. In the sun was, the sun was at sunset. He approached that reflection. He thought at the time—it was like a place to hide gold and jewelry, right? In the ground. And he found that it was a horseshoe that was polished and reflecting, reflected the sun. And interestingly, from the center of the horseshoe was being born a, an agave pup. He was so emotional—so happy, that was the reason why he made the decision, to call his tequila, Tequila Herradura.

From there comes the story of Tequila Herradura. Shortly after, after continuing through generations, they register it in Mexico. And that starts all this great history of Tequila Herradura. Interestingly, Herradura tequila is also the first reposado tequila...we invented tequila reposada. Or rather, Herradura at that time was only blanco tequila. And in general, all tequilas were tequilas, blanco tequilas. The Spaniards taught us to age the tequila, and after having blanco tequila, some small companies started aging them. But, Tequila Herradura was the first who invented the process of resting it, right? It's an intermediate step. And it registered the first reposado tequila, which was precisely Tequila Herradura Reposado. And, interestingly, today in Mexico it means seventy-five percent of the volume of all the tequilas in Mexico, right? This, then—it's a great story. It's very interesting. And very, very thrilling.

[00:38:07]

GA: You, as a cook, you have experimented with tequila in your dishes?

[00:38:12]

IP: Of course I do. I think that tequila can not only be used to drink but as an ingredient you can use. For example, I've used it to make salsa borracha [drunk salsa, a type of salsa] for the barbacoa. I substitute the mezcal with a little Tequila Herradura in place when I make the salsa borracha for, for barbacoa. And it's exquisite. But besides that, I think that tequila is a liquor that goes perfect with many dishes of Mexican cuisine, obviously. I don't know if you have had the chance to try some mole enchiladas accompanied with a blanco tequila. It's an explosion of flavors and aromas. You can't even imagine.

[00:38:56]

GA: Explain to me some more dishes. Let's see...*sincronizadas*. How...what's a *sincronizada*, and how do you like to prepare it?

[00:39:05]

IP: Well, *sincronizadas* are a very simple meal. Really, it's something for a very light breakfast, right? It's basically a type of quesadilla. Two corn tortillas with cheese. For our quesadillas, we're using Oaxaca cheese, which is not so common here in this area, but hey: we are able to get it. And they carry also ham, ham, in the middle. And basically, it's—that's the *sincronizada*. You can get them bathed in chipotle salsa. You can get them without salsa, accompanied with only guacamole. And, well: it's something—a light dish.

[00:39:47]

GA: And *molletes*?

[00:39:48]

IP: Well. Look, *molletes* are made with a *bolillo* [French roll]. *Bolillo* that is, the typical bread we eat in Mexico. You cut it half. You put beans, cheese, chorizo, and put it in the oven, too, for a few minutes. After, you serve it with pico de gallo, and well: it's also is, is a dish that we eat a lot for breakfast. Chiefly in Guadalajara, it's very common, right? That we have *molletes* for breakfast, occasionally.

[00:40:25]

GA: How are you going to teach Americans, who have no experience with *sincronizadas*, with *molletes*, with chilaquiles? How are you going to teach them?

[00:40:36]

IP: That's the challenge, eh? And believe me, it's taking me a little work. We had to try to recruit personnel or waitresses who are bilingual, and help us to try to transmit in the most correct way to explain the menu. All the dishes in the menu, have a detailed explanation of what they are. However, I know that we will also have to spend time with the guests to give them a little more detail about the dishes. Have photographs, and well, then. I think that gradually, they're going to get to know us, they'll keep tasting, and they'll get to be familiar with the dishes we have.

[00:41:17]

You who have more time here in the United States, you think the Americans in Kentucky, or the South, are ready for the Mexican breakfast?

[00:41:26]

JM: Oh, yes! Very ready for Mexican food in general and especially for Mexican breakfast. And I can say now that we have been working on setting up this business, and we come to work every day in the evenings or the mornings in the weekends, people are knocking at the door all day. To ask us, the Americans ask when we will open. They are very intrigued and very interested. Of course we are ready. Of course we are ready, the...Mexican food culture has been in America for a long time. Now it's been a long time—Americans know very well Mexican flavors; they understand them, and they're open to experiment. On our part, we'll give them a small push so they can open up little bit more open, and try this other part of our Mexican culinary variety.

[00:42:24]

GA: Why do you think that American have liked Mexican food so much? Flavors?

[00:42:31]

JM: I think it's diversity. For its amplitude, flavors and...its grand variety of flavors, and the depth of it all, no? Most likely, many will say that you have to do with...with, uh, spicy dishes, right? But the reality is that it goes beyond that. It has to do with the amount of ingredients used. With patience that you have to us...with the love with things and meals that are made in Mexico, right? The passion with which the Mexican food in general is made. Everything is transmitted. All this is reflected, and all that is felt and feels, and—when tasted, you feel it, no? It's known! I think, I think that why many Americans and...have come to acquire and accept Mexican food and Latin food in general, no? It's very wide. It's very tasty. It's very "flavor," as they say here, no?
[00:43:39]

GA: Before moving here to the United States, what did you know of Kentucky?
[00:43:45]

JM: Horses (*laughs*). I think it was like, the most iconic symbol that you had in Kentucky. Horses, and barbecue, too, right?
[00:43:56]

GA: And what did you think of the state?
[00:43:59]

IP: Beautiful. Actually, you have many green areas, which have such beautiful places. Lots of history in this state. And towns where I find some similarities with the people of Mexico because you find people who still...they're farmers, and still harvest their own vegetables, and cook with—the flesh of their own animals. All such things, they're like very rural. It'll suddenly make me remember my country, too.
[00:44:37]

GA: Were you surprised when you arrived that there were many Mexicans here in Kentucky?

[00:44:41]

IP: Gosh! Actually, yes. I can say that, especially for me, it was shocking, that I have a great group of friends. We have been to many events, and we have also created a community in which you can feel so welcomed. For me, it has been surprising how everybody is saying, day by day, “Well, you don’t have your family here, but you have me and, and you can count on me. So I’ll help you, I’ll orient you.” And, well, that’s a really incredible feeling, no? It gives you tranquility, and gives you the assurance that you are doing the right thing in being here.

[00:45:25]

GA: How is the Latino or Mexican community here in Louisville? What kind of events are there? Tell me a little about that.

[00:45:35]

IP: Good. The Latino community, we—at least I have personally participated in several events. There are cultural events. There are religious events. There are also events even to promote Mexican food. We had even have organized events so we don’t appear clueless to the problems of our country. Like the day there were marches for the 43 missing students of Ayotzinapa [in the state of Guerrero, which has cause an international outrage]. We Mexicans participate well. It’s a community that, we’re like, like very well communicative, and very willing to participate in events that happen.

[00:46:22]

GA: You...why do you think that so many Mexicans have moved here to Louisville?

[00:46:28]

JM: It's an issue of opportunity. It's basically the theme that here you can find better opportunities to succeed. Unfortunately, you can't find all these opportunities across Latin America, huh? In Mexico, sad to say...there is still much poverty and lack of opportunities. And unfortunately, you have to look where is, right? Where to look for that daily bread, right? And sometimes, even if they want and have every intention of getting up early and fight for the daily bread, there isn't a chance. And to say, no? You have to move to a place that has them.

[00:47:16]

GA: For you that works in Brown-Forman, you — what do you think are the differences or similarities between tequila and bourbon?

[00:47:26]

JM: In reality, they actually two drinks that are generally similar. Similar in appearance that there is great passion behind them, no? In...however, obviously culturally, they are very, very radically different, no? To me the interesting thing is that I see the culture of the people of Kentucky—Americans, and that, when they speak of bourbon, they speak of it with pride, right? And with passion. And when you serve bourbon, they also feel that great passion like I feel when I serve tequila. And it has a true feeling of excitement and encouragement when the bourbon is served. And people specialize in making cocktails and learn how to serve it, et cetera, right? To learn more—he who knows bourbon is more a friend of yours than he who knows of other things, right?

The similarity is that tequila is the same, no? He—those who know about tequila, who are from Mexico, obviously feel that great passion. Love for tequila, and also generates in

those of us who drink it that sense of pride and warmth, and that things are going to get good, they're going to get fun. I think, I think they actually are similar in that regard. As communal drinks, the production process is radically different, no? One comes from the agave; it takes ten years to grow. The other comes from, from, this, barley and corn. Then, the process is relatively simpler than tequila, right? But, but good: there is a great art behind, each of these processes and this....and good. And, basically, no?

[00:49:32]

GA: We know that tequila or tequila is already very popular, but are you're also surprised that mezcal is also becoming popular?

[00:49:40]

JM: I'm a little surprised, yes. Also in Mexico, it's becoming, mezcal is becoming popular. Mezcal, like tequila, has been a drink that has existed for many years. And I think it just needed some major producers to take the initiative to devote a little time to mezcal and start promoting it. Just as it took much time for tequila, now for mezcal...it's in its first steps, no? It's in its infancy. Much remains for mezcal to grow, but hey: it remains, too, a traditional Mexican drink. So. We will be watching how it evolves, right? It's a rich drink, too, with a profile a bit like tequila, right? It's a little more smoky, and not everyone likes that smoky flavor. But yes, it has surprised me...that some companies in Mexico have invested large amounts of money trying to promote this drink, right?

[00:50:52]

GA: What are your hopes for Con Huevos?

[00:50:55]

IP: Well...since this project was born, we have invested much time in developing a

business model, right? And, independently, that we obviously want to put much emphasis offering Louisville fresh Mexican food, of quality, and also made with love. Also, we want to grow as a business. Our expectation is to have, um, in five years, a considerable number of branches in this area and, well, then. Gradually grow it and try, well, to maintain this, this business model we have with this branch.

[00:51:40]

GA: And for you, as a Mexican, why is it important for you to have those Mexican dishes? Not just breakfast burritos or breakfast tacos, but traditional dishes of Mexico?

[00:51:52]

IP: Well, Mexican cuisine is varied and diverse. And I think the market is already prepared to receive those flavors and dishes, right? Mainly, the people of this area...they have the ease to connect very easily with Mexico, through direct flights to Cancun, to various tourist destinations in our country. So they are now much more open to learning about other dishes that aren't those typically served in those Mexican restaurants, which are more Tex-Mex, in this area, right? So I think it's important to offer them, and let them know, promote and it's also a way to transmit our culture.

[00:52:40]

GA: And the last question. Why do you think it's important...or, as they say...what do you want Americans to grab from Con Huevos? Not, not only the food, but what part of Mexican culture? What do you want to teach them about what it means to be Mexican?

[00:52:59]

IP: Gosh! I think for me, it's important that they feel and live this experience that the taste of food depends much on the love you, on the desire, and the passion that you

transmit into it the moment that you prepare it. Then, I want them to feel that experience of feeling welcomed, like in Mom's house, or your grandma's, when you have that family breakfast. And they can live that, that experience that for us Mexicans is so honorable, right?

[00:53:34]

GA: Any last words on your part?

[00:53:36]

JM: Thanks a lot for this time. We are very enthusiastic with this project. We are convinced that Louisville is ready for this type of business, for such, food, breakfast. I think, I think they are very ready for them. Well, we are very happy and putting our all into it, putting all the effort, and putting on all the balls for this to work well, no?

[00:54:10]

GA: And you have the last word.

[00:54:13]

IP: Nothing, Gustavo. Just thank you for your time, your attention, and well, especially to recognize people like you who work for, to promote our culture here in the United States. That's admirable.

[00:54:29]

GA: Thanks for your time.

[00:54:29]

IP: Thank you.

[00:54:30]

JM: Thanks a lot.

[00:54:32]

GA: And, we're done!