

**Sal LoGiudice**  
**United Bakery (Closed) – New Orleans, LA**

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Date: May 24, 2015

Location: Mr. Darenbourg's home, Pearl River, LA

Interviewer: Dana Logsdon

Sound Engineer: Thomas Walsh

Transcription: Debbie Mitchum

Length: One hour, twenty-three

Project: The Lives and Loaves of New Orleans

START OF INTERVIEW

[*Transcript begins at 00:00:07*]

Dana Logsdon: This is Dana Logsdon for the Southern Foodways Alliance. Today is Sunday, May 24, 2015. We're with Mr. Sal LoGiudice in his home in Pearl River, Louisiana. Hi, Mr. Sal.

[00:00:19]

Sal LoGiudice: Hello, Dana.

[00:00:19]

DL: Can you please introduce—

[00:00:20]

SL: Good to see you again.

[00:00:20]

DL: —yourself — you too — and give your name and occupation, and your date of birth?

[00:00:26]

SL: Well, my current occupation is retired, but I was a baker in a family of bakers. I came from people who had their own bakery and did a lot of their own work. My name is Sal LoGiudice and we were the owners of United Bakery, and also, a little further back, about seventy years ago, it was Ruffino's Bakery, which was my grandmother on my mother's side's people, the Ruffinos. Giuseppe Ruffino had opened a bakery here, in I guess probably 1898 or somewhere at that time. That part I don't know. The only reason I know when he was in the French Quarter with his place, because the date is still on the—. At 630 St. Philip Street it says "Ruffino's Bakery 1902-1927," and my grandfather, who came from Italy, Nick Evola, and married a Ruffino girl, he was in the business with the Ruffinos and they were getting along

great, but from what I can understand he sent for his brother, Jake, and when his brother Jake got here he didn't get along with the Ruffinos. So my grandpa left them and set out on his own, and he wound up in Evola's Bakery on Elysian Fields and Royal, and you gave me the information about the fire,–

[00:01:53]

DL: Right.

[00:01:54]

SL: –which I'd completely forgot about. I was probably told about it but I forgot about it. My grandpa Evola had Evola's Bakery pretty much all during the Depression and he was doing well. That was a good business to be in because people needed bread and that was a thing that they could eat. They couldn't afford steak so they ate a lot of bread, and I guess–.

[00:02:15]

DL: Especially Sicilians.

[00:02:16]

SL: Sicilians, and a lot of people. A lot of people ate a lot of bread at that time. Things didn't work out too good at the end of the Depression and he kind of went bad and was out of the business for a couple of years at the time.

[00:02:34]

DL: The Evola Bakery?

[00:02:35]

SL: The Evola Bakery was out, and then he got the wherewithal to get a little business started – he didn't have a whole lot of money – and he moved on St. Bernard Avenue in 1943, I think, from what I–.

[00:02:46]

DL: And what was the address?

[00:02:47]

SL: It was 1325 St. Bernard Avenue, and he opened up, I think, there in 1943, which he was fairly prosperous in, and I think one of the big things was, I think in 1947 – I was about five years old but I do kind of remember it – they had a bakers' strike. It was citywide and most of the big bakeries couldn't function because they didn't have people to put to work, but my grandfather had three son-in-laws and between my grandfather and his three son-in-laws and his daughters–

[00:03:21]

DL: The family.

[00:03:22]

SL: –and family they kept the business going and that's when my grandfather really got his foothold in the business, and I guess after 1947 started doing fairly well. He passed away in '58. My dad ran the business for a couple of years for the estate and saw where he was capable of making a go of it and he actually purchased it in 1960, using the down payment from my mother's inheritance.

[00:03:50]

DL: And what was your dad's name?

[00:03:51]

SL: Dominick LoGiudice. So it would seem like it was–. I don't know if this is quite correct, but it seemed like it was always the son-in-law, like the Ruffino, and the Evola married into the Ruffino family and he got a bakery, and then my daddy married into the Evola family

and he took the bakery over. I was probably the first one that had the same last name as the prior owner, because there I was the son, not the son-in-law.

[00:04:22]

DL: Right.

[00:04:23]

SL: I guess you better start asking some questions because I'm running out of thoughts.

[*Laughs*]

[00:04:27]

DL: [*Laughs*] Did you all live next door to the bakery, when you were growing up?

[00:04:29]

SL: We lived above the bakery. Well, actually, yeah; it was next door really, because I mean it wasn't above the bakery. It was in the back of the building on the side. As a matter of fact, I didn't know it was two separate addresses the whole time I was there, and the Road Home people, after Katrina, they said I didn't qualify for Road Home because my house was connected to the business and they disqualified me, and then when I sold the property I found out that I shouldn't have been disqualified. It was two separate addresses.

[00:05:01]

DL: Wow.

[00:05:02]

SL: That's another story.

[00:05:03]

DL: So I had heard that you descended from two families of bakers, the Evolas and the Ruffinos.

[00:05:11]

SL: Correct.

[00:05:12]

DL: Did any of the women ever bake in the family? I know your mother–

[00:05:15]

SL: Well, they all–

[00:05:16]

DL: –was an Evola.

[00:05:17]

SL: –pitched in and, you know, I mean, like I said, during the strike everybody–

[00:05:20]

DL: Everybody did.

[00:05:21]

SL: –did whatever they could. But I mean, the women never really got on the work bench and pounded out the dough.

[00:05:26]

DL: Right.

[00:05:27]

SL: In those days they used to kind of [*Banging sound*] bang it on the table. Excuse me.

[*Laughs*]

[00:05:33]

DL: [*Laughs*]

[00:05:33]

SL: They used to bang the dough on the table and it was kind of a masculine approach to rolling out the dough, you know. But the women did participate.

[00:05:42]

DL: So in doing some of the other oral histories on bakers, across the board everybody – your name always came up as making–

[00:05:52]

SL: Well that sounds good.

[00:05:53]

DL: –the best Italian bread in the city and you’re really a celebrity amongst bakers and amongst New Orleanians. Can you talk a little bit about what is Italian bread and if it’s still around in New Orleans, the way you used to make it?

[00:06:09]

SL: Well, I’m not real familiar with the product they have in Italy, but from what I can understand it’s pretty much different than what we make here and it was something that, you made it, and it held up for weeks, months – I don’t know, from what I heard – and it was just real hard. I think they called it hard tack, something like that.

[00:06:31]

DL: In Italy?

[00:06:31]

SL: In Italy, I think, and they just kept it in piles, I mean it wasn’t refrigerated or frozen or anything. They baked maybe once a month and they ate on it the whole month, from what I was told. I don’t really know because I’ve never been there. But what we made was a product

that had very tight texture, and normally I probably, you know, wouldn't have even said this publicly because I'm always trying to keep my secrets, you know.

[00:06:57]

DL: Yes. Just reveal what you feel comfortable with. *[Laughs]*

[00:07:00]

SL: No, no, no; I don't have—. They had a machine called a dough break and it was like really a press, and you ran the dough through this press and it compacted the product real tight and it gave you a very tight texture and, besides the ingredients, that function was something that really produced the product that we had that made it different than everybody else. The fact that it had a very tight texture, almost cottony or velvety inside with a hard, delicious crust on the outside, and it was very popular—

[00:07:43]

DL: I remember it.

[00:07:44]

SL: —and people liked it. Some of the customers we had were very attached to our product.

[00:07:52]

DL: So what kind of shapes did you do it in?

[00:07:54]

SL: Well mostly, other than for the specialty breads, we [what people called a] twist bread, but it's really not a twist bread: it's a plait or a braid, just like they plait hair. They actually do it the same way you braid somebody's hair. But I think years ago some of the order forms that we had for the products said "large plait, small plait." Then all of a sudden it became

“twist.” I don’t know when that [happened] but, like the muffuletta and the muffulatta, I don’t when that switched over, but it’s muffuletta and not muffulatta.

[00:08:36]

DL: Right. [*Laughs*]

[00:08:37]

SL: And it’s a plait, not a twist. A twist is like a twist donut: you just take two pieces of dough and you twist them. This you have to braid, so it’s really, like I said, it’s a plait.

[00:08:47]

DL: And did it always have the sesame seeds?

[00:08:49]

SL: We did. As far as I know we always had sesame seeds. It gave it a little bit of—. Actually I think the sesame seeds gave it a little more flavor and did something to it that was just the finishing touch.

[00:09:02]

DL: I think it adds a lot.

[00:09:03]

SL: The coup de grâce, the icing on the cake.

[00:09:04]

DL: [*Laughs*]

[00:09:05]

SL: Or the seeds on the bread; whatever. [*Laughs*]

[00:09:06]

DL: So you also mentioned muffuletta. Am I saying it correctly? [*Laughs*]

[00:09:10]

SL: Oh, yeah. You know, I'm a stickler for that.

[00:09:12]

DL: What's the difference between Italian bread and muffuletta?

[00:09:17]

SL: The muffuletta is a little bit different than the Italian bread because the Italian bread has a real heavy texture and to cut that down the middle and put all the meats on that you got to have some serious teeth. You can't have false teeth. As a matter of fact, muffulettas, I guess you need real teeth for all of it. But the plait, really I enjoyed the muffuletta on the plait bread as opposed to the round muffuletta bread, but the muffuletta bread is more of a soft sandwich bread and it seems like it made a— I don't know if it made a better presentation but it was more acceptable as a sandwich, as opposed to—. But one thing, when you would cut the plait, if it wasn't a perfect plait and you tried to cut it down the center to make the sandwich it would fall apart, because the braids weren't really tight like they should have been, and that's normal.

[00:10:13]

DL: So did some of the stores, like Central, used to use the plait bread ever to make sandwiches on?

[00:10:20]

SL: There was a lot of old Italian people that used to go in there and say, "I want my sandwich on the twist bread." They would say the twist bread. I can't remember anybody—. It's been a long time since people called it a plait.

[00:10:32]

DL: And I've heard that the sandwich got the name from the bread.

[00:10:39]

SL: That's my understanding. Now, I don't know. I'm sure Larry Tusa and Sal at Central Grocery, and Frank, would have their story, but from what I can understand back in the turn of the century, or maybe when Central Grocery was getting started—. I think Central Grocery and Mr. Montalbano on St. Philip Street were some of the first people, and I think Central Grocery because Central Grocery had a date of 1906, so I kind of feel like they probably were the first one.

[00:11:11]

But the sandwich was not actually known, because, what happened, people would go in there and the Italian bread or the muffuletta bread was just sitting on the shelf, and they'd go in there and say, "Oh, look, give me a little bit of that capicola, give me a little ham, give me a little provolone, give me some prosciutto, and give me the bread." They'd cut the bread, and what they used to do, they would just have a set price for a certain way, like fifteen cents a pound, or maybe twenty cents. I don't know what the pounds were back in those days. They put the whole loaf on the scale and the bread would be included in the weight, and they would just like put the meat and everything and they would charge you whatever you put on there. But that's complicated when you're trying to be busy for lunch and you got people coming in and you're trying to hurry up, so you can't be all, "Give me some of this. Give me [some of that.]" So Central, I think probably Central Grocery, starts saying like, "You know what? We're going to put ham, we're going to put provolone cheese, we're going to put mortadella, we're going to put salami, and we're going to put our delicious olive salad, and that's going to be the muffuletta sandwich." Now, I guess when they weren't busy, if somebody wanted a little capicola or prosciutto or some other Italian cold cut on there it was no problem, but generally they tried to

just kind of get something consistent that they didn't have to just go and have ten different people getting ten different ways to make the same sandwich, or make a similar sandwich.

[00:12:37]

DL: I've heard that story about the scale and the weight of the bread.

[00:12:40]

SL: Right, right.

[00:12:41]

DL: I had always heard it about Montalbano's. I didn't realize Central did it also.

[00:12:45]

SL: I'm pretty sure Central-. I think Central started it, because I don't know if Montalbano was even in yet. I mean I remember Mr. Montalbano and I'm only-. Let's see. I was born in '42 and I can remember in the '50s and, I don't know, Mr. Montalbano might have been there in the '30s or the '40s. I don't know. But I know Central Grocery has on their sign "1906" and I don't think that Mr.-. Mr. Montalbano, he didn't have anybody prior to him running that store, from what I heard.

[00:13:15]

DL: Right, a later generation.

[00:13:16]

SL: So I would have to think that he came in the '30s or the '40s and Central was already in progress.

[00:13:22]

DL: Can you talk a little bit about Montalbano's, where it was?

[00:13:24]

SL: It was—. I imagine some of the people would be familiar with McDonogh 15 School because *King Creole* was made in that school, with Elvis Presley, and that's right across the street from where Mr. Montalbano had his little shop, and it looked like a church from the outside. He had saint statues and candles—

[00:13:43]

DL: I've heard that.

[00:13:44]

SL: —[*Laughs*] and, I mean, you sure didn't think it was a delicatessen. It looked more like a little church, a little chapel, but it was a delicatessen and it was right there—. My great-grandfather's place was the 600 block of St. Philip, so that would have to be like the 700 block of St. Philip, right about maybe a quarter of a block off the corner of St. Philip and Royal, right across the street from the McDonogh 15 School, and I remember him being there when I was living on the corner of Chartres and St. Philip, back in 1947. That's when we moved — no. We moved there in '49. We left Elysian Fields and Royal, where the Evola Bakery was, we lived there, and I remember Mr. Montalbano being there back at that time. But, like I said, as far as I know he didn't have any—. Like his daddy wasn't there before him.

[00:14:35]

DL: Right.

[00:14:35]

SL: Whereas the people at Central Grocery, their grandpa and daddy, they were there before the kids that are there now, you know. Kids, I mean they're old men now. [*Laughs*]

[00:14:45]

DL: I heard he called it the Roma sandwich. Do you—

[00:14:47]

SL: That I don't–.

[00:14:48]

DL: –remember that, or just the Italian sandwich?

[00:14:49]

SL: I can't vouch for that because I don't know.

[00:14:52]

DL: Speaking of the Ruffinos and St. Philip Street, I've heard that the Ruffino family owned a lot of property in that area.

[00:15:02]

SL: In 1949-50 when I moved there, if I'm not mistaken, on both sides of the 600 block of St. Philip was either a Ruffino or an Evola, and they had maybe three pieces of property that weren't in the Ruffino or the Evola family at that time. Unfortunately I think the last piece was sold about two or three years ago. My cousin, Earl Fraissard, his mother had–. She was an Evola and they had the corner of St. Philip and Chartres, which is like catty-corner from Irene's, that little bitty place there. That was the last piece that was in the family. In fact, he had invited the family, it was a Mardi Gras, and we got invited to like a last hurrah at their place on Mardi Gras day. That's the only reason I'd have went down to the French Quarter on Mardi Gras day, because it was for the family, you know. Other than that I stay away from it. *[Laughs]*

[00:16:03]

DL: Can you talk a little bit about, is it your uncle, Frank Ruffino, who had the Gaiety Theatre–

[00:16:09]

SL: The Gaiety Theatre–.

[00:16:09]

DL: –and about that business?

[00:16:12]

SL: I don't know enough about it to really give you a good history, but I know my Grandpa Evola was a partner of his up until 1937 or '38, and they had a fire in a show and my grandpa got out and went and did something else. At some point in time my grandfather, Nick Evola, my daddy, Dominick LoGiudice, and my uncle, Vincent Bruno, went to work at Higgins making Higgins crafts for World War II. That was one of the things that–. My daddy was able to get like a–. What do you call it when you – not a dispensation but, you know, when you don't have to go to war. I forget the terminology. Anyway, he got a reprieve,–

[00:16:51]

DL: Yeah. [*Laughs*]

[00:16:52]

SL: –[*Laughs*] and he was making Higgins crafts, back during the war, and according to President Eisenhower he gave Andrew Higgins a lot of credit for winning World War II because of the Higgins craft. But my dad and my grandpa and my uncle, they had a little something to do with it. [*Laughs*]

[00:17:12]

DL: And just a side,–

[00:17:13]

SL: In between the bakery business.

[00:17:14]

DL: –a sidetrack from the bakery business, I remember you telling a story about one of your family members who was a cabinetmaker.

[00:17:21]

SL: That was my dad.

[00:17:21]

DL: That was your dad.

[00:17:22]

SL: He had–. The corner of Royal and Elysian Fields, which is currently the Teamster Building, that was my grandfather’s cabinet shop back in the ’50s, in the ’40s and the ’50s, and prior to that he was in the French Quarter on Royal Street in about the twelve or eleven hundred block of Royal. No, he was–. Yeah, he was on the corner of Royal and Governor Nicholls, and then he moved to Elysian Fields and Royal and he had that three-story building, and they convinced my dad’s sisters that they were going to have to tear the building down and they tried to get it as cheap as they could, but they never did tear that–. The iron work on that building was worth more than what they paid my people for it.

[00:18:15]

DL: Yeah, it’s changed. You were born into the baking business.

[00:18:20]

SL: Well, yeah, because my grand–. I was probably one year shy of being born, because my grandfather didn’t start United Bakery until 1943, and during that period, when he lost out during the Depression, there was a lull from the baking, and I was born in ’42, so a year after I was born he got into 1325 St. Bernard Avenue, United Bakery.

[00:18:46]

DL: So pretty much as early as you can remember.

[00:18:48]

SL: Yeah. I remember being in the bakery all my life. I didn't play with clay, I played with dough. *[Laughs]*

[00:18:53]

DL: *[Laughs]* Can you talk about some of your early bakery memories, as a kid?

[00:18:57]

SL: Yeah, I remember getting run out of the bakery all the time until I got old enough to work some, and then I wanted to stay out of it *[Laughs]* and then I was forced into it.

[00:19:04]

DL: *[Laughs]*

[00:19:05]

SL: You know they used to run us out of there: "Get out of here! Get them kids inside!" you know, because we wanted to play with the dough, you know, and maybe throw seeds at each other or something.

[00:19:14]

DL: Do you remember your first overnight shift working?

[00:19:18]

SL: Well, it was all overnight. We baked at night because in those days, what was interesting, they still had a lot of corner groceries. Back in the day, before I was born, every corner in New Orleans had a grocery store, almost. Everybody served their block, so to speak, and we served—. Most of the bakers had so many grocery stores or, you know, everybody served maybe—. And you didn't sell a whole lot, you know, seven or eight loaves of bread to each store,

and then if they didn't sell them you had to pick them up and give them credit for it, and you were getting like a nickel a loaf to start with. I mean it was not exactly the most lucrative but it made a living, because it's not like, you know, if you're building fixtures or something and once somebody buys a fixture they bought it. [With this] they eat the bread and then they go buy bread again the next day, so it's a lucrative business in the sense of it's steady, but it's not a get-rich-quick deal. It's a tough business and—

[00:20:20]

DL: It's a tough business.

[00:20:21]

SL: —it's a hard, hard tough business, you work all night and then you go out and deliver during the day, and you got to keep the equipment [going]. I mean it's a tough business.

[00:20:29]

DL: And hard to have a family.

[00:20:31]

SL: Mm hmm.

[00:20:31]

DL: Can you tell the story about when you were a kid and having the bread wrappers that you would stamp the prices?

[00:20:42]

SL: Yeah. Inflation was not really too commonplace in those days and if a loaf of bread was seven cents or whatever it stayed seven cents for years. In order to get the right price on the wrapping paper to put the bread in you had to buy quite a bit of pounds of paper, and all of a sudden inflation came in a little bit and a seven-cent loaf of bread was now going to be eight

cents, and we had thousands of sheets of seven-cents paper. My grandfather wasn't going to throw away all that paper because, you know, to him it was expensive. It was. On a comparative basis, it was. So, the kids, the grandkids and the daughters, and my grandmother – you know, my grandpa didn't want to stamp paper, so all the peons stamped paper. It was very tedious kind of work because you got to get every sheet of paper and stamp it.

[00:21:43]

DL: Can you talk a little bit about after Katrina and losing the bakery and what it means to you?

[00:21:53]

SL: Well, it completely changed my life. It was devastating. I don't know how else to put it. I think some of my family members think I was remiss in the fact that I didn't go back in the business but it wasn't as easy as they would make it sound. I wanted to get back in it but the few people I had working for me were scattered, you know, all over the country, and – well, the country, some of them were in Houston, and I think some of them were in Arkansas. I only had about three or four people working for me, but still and all, I mean, to get – and these people, they were qualified, you know. They knew what they were doing. It would really be difficult to just grab people off the street and try to start the bakery again, aside from the fact that the place was a mess. It was devastated.

[00:22:47]

One of the big problems was my bakery was an old, antiquated building that was—. You know, we kept it up, we tried to keep it clean, but we were grandfathered in on a lot of code situations, like the electrical and the plumbing, the walls, floors, ceilings and all of that. We didn't have to meet the code standards. Yeah, they forced us to do some things, for example like,

you know, we had a little one-horse dressing room for the men when they'd come to work to change their clothes, and a shower for when they would finish or if they wanted to-. [They would generally] shower before they went to work and shower when they left. But the thing about it is, we didn't have handicapped facilities, and that in itself is a very expensive situation when you have to put in handicapped facilities, and we didn't even have the space. Space was a problem.

[00:23:44]

So, consequently, what people don't understand about going back into the business, I would have needed quite a bit of money. And most of my equipment was antiquated but we got by with it. It was good stuff, it was good equipment. I mean, I'm not trying to make a commercial for Century mixers, but they went out of business in 1960, and that's what we had. We had two big Century mixers in the place-.

[00:24:07]

DL: Stuff that lasts.

[00:24:08]

SL: Stuff that lasts, and that's one of the reasons probably they went out of business, because they made stuff so good that nobody needed any more once they bought one from them. Unless you expanded the business and bought a second one or a third one, you know, you just keep using the same one over and over. Like I said, that was one of the lucrative things about the bread business: people consumed the bread every day and you then make bread every day.

[00:24:30]

DL: So you lost your dough breaker too.

[00:24:32]

SL: Well, everything got kind of messed up, but when I attempted to get an SBA loan they said to me that they wanted me to buy all new equipment, and they weren't going to provide me with enough funds to buy all new equipment. That Century mixer, you couldn't even touch—. Well, like I said, they're not even in business so really to get a piece of equipment made like that, you'd probably have to go to Italy or something. The funny part about it, I don't know if I'm related to them, but there's a LoGiudice Equipment Company in Italy.

[00:25:05]

DL: Oh, interesting.

[00:25:06]

SL: If you look on the internet, they make the mixers and the makeup machines and the dividers and all that. I don't know them, but I would imagine some of that equipment would be the stuff that I'd be needing, but I couldn't have afforded to get it. They were giving me a certain amount of money and then when they came in and said, "Oh, we don't think you can pay that much back. We're going to give you half that amount," I said, "Well, I can probably do it with half the amount but I can't do it the way you're telling me to do it." Then another thing, they said that I would need all the different insurances that you could possibly think of, I mean fire and flood and wind and storm and everything, and it would have been a serious package of cost, because I had inquired as to how much it would cost and I didn't have the funds to get the insurance. So they tell me, "We can't give you any money until you get the insurance," and I said, "Well, wait. This is that kind of Catch 22, rock and a hard place." I said, "I can't get the insurance unless you give me some money, and you don't want to give me any money until I get the insurance, so this is a Mexican tie. [Where are we at?]" you know.

[00:26:19]

DL: That's right.

[00:26:20]

SL: So, anyway.

[00:26:21]

DL: Can you tell the story about–

[00:26:23]

SL: That's the story on that.

[00:26:23]

DL: –if you had anything left from the bakery? I remember was it a daughter that had some bread in the freezer?

[00:26:30]

SL: Yeah. *[Laughs]* My daughter in Texas had bread in the freezer for years, years. As a matter of fact we went to her house, I think a few years back, a few years after Katrina, and she actually served me some of my bread *[Laughs]* that she had been hoarding for years. They would take it out and it would be doled out like gold, you know. *[Laughs]*

[00:26:53]

DL: Like a fine wine.

[00:26:54]

SL: Yeah, right. Exactly.

[00:26:55]

DL: And don't you still have some of the old wrappers too, the paper wrappers?

[00:27:00]

SL: I hope I do. [*Unintelligible*] someone's warehouse and, I don't know; my stuff has been kind of messed up over there. People have been going through it and throwing it around, so I don't know if I have any wrappers left but if I do I'll certainly be glad to give you a few of them, if I can find some.

[00:27:14]

DL: Thanks. And if you could talk a little bit about the brick ovens, which were a big part of your bakery.

[00:27:20]

SL: The brick ovens, well, I'll have to tell the truth, now. We stopped using the brick ovens, probably the last one was in '88, and you showed me some stuff that you showed me on the internet where I was putting bread into the brick oven. That was probably one of the last years that I used a brick oven. But the brick ovens did produce a terrific product, but the only thing with the brick oven is we really stopped using it the proper way probably in the '70s, because the beds in the ovens became a little wavy and we used to put the bread, the actual dough or the proofed-up loaf, on a wooden blade called a peel, and it was probably about three feet long and about eighteen inches wide, and whether you were making poor boys or plaits or muffulettas you'd put it on the peel with a little bitty light corn flour sprinkling so that it would slide off the peel and be directly placed on the brick, the hot brick in the oven, and that is where you get your real good bake. I don't know if you want to call it shock, the product gets shocked or whatever, but that's what produces the crust that you really want. So then we started using pans and we were shooting pans into the oven, so then the pan's got to get hot and then the product starts to cook, so that took away from it, and then eventually the brick ovens became so

expensive to use because gas prices were so high that it became totally—. You couldn't possibly pay your utility bill and sell the product. You couldn't compete.

[00:29:21]

So, we went to the revolving ovens and we bought a couple of revolving ovens from—. We bought used revolving ovens. I bought one revolving oven, I think in 1977, from Woolworth's on Bourbon off of Canal. It was on the second floor, and I don't know if I got mesothelioma in my lungs but, man, when we took those ovens apart, the asbestos dust that came out of them ovens, it looked like a fog in there and you couldn't even see, and I know that had to be asbestos because that's what it was. Then we took it back to the bakery and put them back up. I had a fellow named Shorty Delatte, good old guy, he was one of the best, and he took it down for me and put it back up at my bakery. Then we started using the revolving oven and we pretty much got away from the brick oven completely. We originally had three brick ovens in there and we were actually down to one, in '88 I think it was.

[00:30:26]

DL: Did you take them out or just—

[00:30:27]

SL: We had to take—

[00:30:28]

DL: —not use them?

[00:30:28]

SL: —one out to make space for the revolving oven, but we still have—. Currently there's still two brick ovens at 1325 St. Bernard Avenue, and I think I was telling you one time that they're actually registered at city hall, from what I know, and I think they're the only two brick

ovens left in the city of New Orleans that—. I don't there's anybody else that has them, and the lady that bought the property, I don't think she's going to tear them down, so they'll stay there for the duration, whatever that's going to be.

[00:30:58]

DL: I heard that there's still a brick oven, maybe, in the old Ace Bakery, which is now Binder's?

[00:31:05]

SL: They're gone. As far as I know, those brick ovens, he tore them all out. Those are all gone. I'm pretty sure. I mean I couldn't swear to it but I'm pretty sure.

[00:31:15]

DL: Do you remember any of the other bread bakers that are not around anymore from when you were growing up?

[00:31:21]

SL: Well, I know Falkenstein uptown in the Garden District had a real good product. I remember hearing about his product. He made—

[00:31:30]

DL: Falkenstein?

[00:31:30]

SL: —a good—. Falkenstein, and he had a good French bread product. He was known for his French bread. I know the two Gendusas, you know one of them, you know John, and then the other one was—. The daughter was a Gendusa and I think the guy was Claude Dupuis.

[00:31:50]

DL: Yeah.

[00:31:51]

SL: Okay, you know what I'm talking about. Then there was a couple of others. There was a Weysham Bakery, but I didn't know them people, but I knew of them. I'm trying to think who else was producing the French bread, besides us, Falkenstein, Ace Bakery, Gendusa's, Binder's, Leidenheimer's, Reising's – I mean Reising was big. As a matter of fact, Leidenheimer bought the Reising name and still sells under the Reising label but it's not Reising bread, I mean it's Leidenheimer's bread.

[00:32:30]

DL: Right.

[00:32:31]

SL: Now I don't know if he's supposedly using their recipes but I don't see any difference between those, except for his wrappers. *[Laughs]* I don't know. I might be wrong.

[00:32:39]

DL: I guess certain people prefer the name.

[00:32:41]

SL: You're just used to something like that, and I mean that's something that I lost that I had that was valuable, that I can't claim as a loss as far as the taxable loss, but goodwill is valuable when you got it, and I lost it and couldn't get nothing for my loss. That was just a puredee smoke that went up in the air and is gone. But I had goodwill because I had people that had my—. You know, because I wasn't getting rich in the business, but I had people who weren't changing. They had people who used to go in to my different customers and give them free bread to try their product, and they would tell me about it when I'd go there and they'd say, "Here, you can take this with you and make some stale bread out of it." So, you know, I didn't try to get new

customers because it was difficult to try to get the products out every day, but I didn't lose too many customers. I generally only lost anybody when somebody died and their business didn't continue. But most of the people that bought my products liked my products.

[00:33:53]

DL: What are some of your old accounts that you remember?

[00:33:55]

SL: Well, R & O's in Bucktown was one of my big accounts, and obviously they're very successful, and from recently, talking to somebody around there, my son said, "Boy, if we ever go back they want our bread," so I guess we're not completely forgotten. Tony Angello, I think I heard he's sick now. I don't know if he's still operating. The business is there but I think he's sick. It's funny, he made a comment. I probably told you this because I thought it was unique. I wasn't happy for him to say it, but he had some radio host in his place and they asked him about the bread, "Where do you get the bread?" and he says, "Oh, I get it from United Bakery, but if he don't know you and don't like you he ain't going to sell it to you." *[Laughs]* And—

[00:34:39]

DL: Is that true?

[00:34:39]

SL: —he said that on the radio. Well, it was true.

[00:34:41]

DL: *[Laughs]*

[00:34:41]

SL: It was kind of true, but I didn't advertise like that, you know. It was true, and it wasn't that I didn't want the business; it's just that, you know, you had—. People don't show up

for work, stuff breaks down, and when you're committed to bring—. Like, well Central [Grocery, they] needed their bread early in the morning. Now most of the customers, most of the restaurants opened in the evening, and it wasn't really necessary to get the bread to them until during the day, but Central Grocery, they had people—. People at Central Grocery went and got their muffulettas to bring to New York and Pennsylvania and Chicago, and they were catching a plane at the airport and they had to be at Moisant for a 9:00 and they had to have their sandwiches by 8:00, so Central wanted their bread early. If I had took on business that I couldn't handle I'd be late getting the bread out, or maybe not get it out at all.

[00:35:49]

One of my other big customers, a good friend of mine, is DiMartino's, and he's doing real well. As a matter of fact, he opened up another place. That was what I was getting ready to tell you. I would get new business but only if one of my customers opened up another—

[00:36:05]

DL: Another location. [*Laughs*]

[00:36:06]

SL: —store and I was forced to take it. I didn't really want to do it but I sure didn't want to give it up, you know, because it was already my customer. Tell you the truth I would have had probably a difficult time serving people at his new store. I mean, you know.

[00:36:20]

DL: I've noticed that some of the old French bread bakeries used the same employees. Maybe they would shift around sometimes. Did you have employees—

[00:36:32]

SL: Yeah, we—.

[00:36:32]

DL: –that were with you for a long time?

[00:36:33]

SL: We had people that stayed pretty much with us, and once in awhile somebody would steal a worker but then he'd come back. You know, he'd be disgruntled about something I did and then the other guy would do something worse so he'd come back to me. That's just human nature.

[00:36:48]

DL: And you're Sicilian.

[00:36:52]

SL: Yeah.

[00:36:53]

DL: Did you guys make what we call French bread?

[00:36:56]

SL: We made what I would think was a really good French bread back in the '60s and the '70s when we were using the brick ovens, and I don't feel like we were able to produce the product that I remember as a kid after that. Now we still made some French bread, but we called—. We made a bread for R & O's and for DiMartino's that I called a Grecian bread, and, I tell you what, a lot of people started copying it. I mean they started copying the bread.

[00:37:30]

DL: What was it?

[00:37:31]

SL: It was like a poor boy with seeds on it, but we called it a Grecian bread. I used to make them five in a pack. It was one eighteen-by-twenty-six tray and we put five pieces of dough in there and by the time they would bake out they were all kind of real close together and then you had to pull them apart, so you could almost call them pull-aparts but we didn't call them that. But that was the equivalent of my French bread, was the Grecian bread, and a lot of my customers used that and they liked it. It seemed like it held up pretty good.

[00:38:10]

DL: Did your recipes or your ingredients change over the years?

[00:38:15]

SL: You make some minor changes but basically it's pretty much the same, you know, and I think—. I know I told you this but you might want to hear it again for the interview. When the guy came in there from the health department and says, "You don't have the ingredients listed on, you know, you don't have them written." I said, "Man, my grandpa would roll over in his grave if I would put the ingredients. He don't want to tell nobody what's in my bread. Everybody wants to know what's in the United Bakery Italian bread." We went around and around about that. He said, "Oh, you don't have the weight in grams." I said, "Man, I don't know a gram from a kilo." I said, "You want grams and kilos? Go around the corner and buy you some cocaine. They got golden scales that they weight that stuff on. They got plenty of money." I said, "Me, I went to school at St. Aloysius around the corner from here and I know the Dewey Decimal System. I know pounds and ounces and that kind of stuff. I don't know a gram and a kilo. I wouldn't know a gram from a kilo." *[Laughs]*

[00:39:10]

DL: So did you have your family work with you, your sons, your wife?

[00:39:15]

SL: That happened. [*Laughs*] But it wasn't easy. Yeah, we had that situation, but it was [difficult, and] that's all I'm going to say about that. [*Laughs*]

[00:39:31]

DL: [*Laughs*] I hear you. Can you talk a little bit about St. Joseph's–

[00:39:34]

SL: My–

[00:39:34]

DL: –Day?

[00:39:35]

SL: –son, Dominick, was an extremely good baker.

[00:39:38]

DL: I'm sure he was.

[00:39:38]

SL: He knew the products real good. It's just that, you know, father and son, you have difficulties. But my son was actually probably the best baker I had on all of them. If the bread came out the oven he could tell you what–. If it didn't come out right he could tell you why it didn't come out right, what they did wrong. And the equipment, that old, antiquated equipment, he could fix that equipment like you wouldn't believe. I mean he'd get–. That big mixer, that Century I was talking about, I had a real bad problem with it one time and I called in a machinist. The machinist was about to give up. My son got in there with that machinist and he worked on that thing for like twelve hours, from the time we stopped baking till the time we start to bake again that night, and he got that machine working for me. So, he was a good man to have around.

[00:40:28]

DL: That's something that's come up in these interviews, is how you have to be so well-rounded. You're not just a baker. [*Laughs*]

[00:40:33]

SL: Oh, yeah. Oh, you're not a baker. I mean you have to know how to connect wiring when shorts and things happen and the electricity goes out. We had a fire across the street from the bakery one time and, I'll never forget this, I mean it was an unfortunate situation. A black guy I knew for a long time that had two lounges across the street from the bakery, things were going bad for him and from what I can understand he committed suicide and he set fire to his places. Chief McCrossen, in his last days back in the '80s, he was on the scene and the fire was out and they had turned all the electricity off on both sides of the street, and I went to Chief McCrossan, I went through the police line, and the policed grabbed me: "What are you doing?" I said, "I got to talk to the chief. I got to talk to the chief." I said, "Chief, look. I know you know Central Grocery and you know a few customers I have." I said, "They want their bread tomorrow. I got bread sitting there getting ready to go bad. If you don't put the electricity back on I'm going to be out of business." Well, he put the electricity back on for me."

[00:41:34]

DL: [*Laughs*] He knew the importance.

[00:41:35]

SL: Yeah. Unfortunately, about a year or so later-. I don't remember what happened. He'd probably never do it again. He did it for me and nothing happened; it was great. But I think the Brennans convinced him to turn the electricity on, I don't know what happened, but the fire

reoccurred and I guess that was the end of doing favors, you know. But I was glad I was in before that happened. *[Laughs]*

[00:41:58]

DL: So, it's not a glamorous job.

[00:42:00]

SL: No, no. You know, you got to kind of crawl a couple times if you have to keep things going.

[00:42:06]

DL: Did you ever have other jobs, or did you ever work outside of United Bakery?

[00:42:11]

SL: Yeah. I had my own little pizza place for a few years, and I sold insurance for Metropolitan in the '60s, and that was because I was working with my dad and I had the same problem with my dad that my son had with me. I didn't get along. So—

[00:42:23]

DL: It happens. *[Laughs]*

[00:42:24]

SL: —I decided to work for somebody else. But most of the time I was in business for myself.

[00:42:28]

DL: So did you keep working at United while you had Artista Pizza?

[00:42:32]

SL: Not really, no. I was pretty much in the pizza business. Now, I mean if they had a breakdown or, you know, after I closed at 12:00 at night and something happened, somebody didn't show up, I'd run over there and give them a hand, yeah, but not anything steady.

[00:42:44]

DL: But after the pizza place you went back–

[00:42:46]

SL: Right, well my dad–

[00:42:46]

DL: –fulltime at United.

[00:42:47]

SL: –passed away, and the pizza business, I liked it, I really liked my pizza business, but I thought the bakery was probably more lucrative, and now I had an interest in it because my dad passed away and now I had a share in it, so I got in the bakery business.

[00:43:08]

DL: Do you remember people talking – going back to muffulettas – about some of the roving vendors in the French quarter?

[00:43:18]

SL: Yeah, and there was a guy called Mr. Lavoie, I think, and my mom said when she was a kid that he had a wooden pushcart, like we used to make skateboards, [and] he would roll that through the French Quarter and he would be shouting, “Muffuletta! [*Italian words*]!” It means “hot muffulettas,” and I don't know if he made his own muffulettas, or he bought them from another bakery, or he bought them from my grandpa, but that's just a story that my mother related to me. I have no recollection of it.

[00:43:52]

DL: And do you remember sfincione pizza at all?

[00:43:55]

SL: Yeah. We used to make that for the family. That was a big thing. We'd make this thick crust. Well, it's on the same order as a pizza, but it's a real thick, thick dough, it's a heavy red sauce, and it's similar to pizza but it's very different.

[00:44:13]

DL: It's good.

[00:44:13]

SL: We used to make that in big sheet pans when we had big family get-togethers, and it was really nice to have, you know, the big brick ovens and slide these six or eight big sheets of sfincione into the oven and–.

[00:44:26]

DL: It's sounds like it's something that people eat more at their homes than in restaurants.

[00:44:30]

SL: Yeah, yeah. I think maybe Pizza Hut might have something, that the deep dish–

[00:44:37]

DL: Oh, no. [*Laughs*]

[00:44:37]

SL: –pizza is–. Well, I mean, I'm just saying that they were trying to duplicate–

[00:44:42]

DL: Duplicate Sicilian, yeah.

[00:44:43]

SL: –the product with that, you know.

[00:44:44]

DL: Like focaccia.

[00:44:45]

SL: Right.

[00:44:46]

DL: What are you most proud about, about the work that you did at United?

[00:44:51]

SL: Well, you're making me more proud than ever because I'm so remembered and I don't even know I'm so remembered, you know. Like I said, I'm proud that we had a product that people still talk about, and my name is brought up a lot with different—. You know, when they talk about culinary—. I mean, I know Tom Fitzmorris—. I remember when I came back from Florida one time, I think it was in December of '05 after Katrina, we were just visiting and we were still living in Florida and I called his show, and the guy says, "Oh, well, you know, we'll see. He's tied up right now." I said, "Well, my name is Sal LoGiudice and I had United Bakery." [He said,] "Oh, wait! Hold on a second! He wants to talk to you," you know.

[00:45:43]

DL: [*Laughs*]

[00:45:43]

SL: So I guess I had a little pull with him, and he talked to me on the radio. But Frank Davis was the one that was really into it. He did an interview with me and he was so—. He said, "Man, make sure, when you go back—." He didn't say "if," he said, "When you go back in the

bakery.” He said, “Please call me. I want to be the first to make the announcement.” I never went back in and poor Frank never made it, so.

[00:46:07]

DL: Yeah. The other thing that I think you are remembered for at the bakery is your beautiful shaped breads for St. Joseph’s Day. Can you talk a little bit about that tradition and how you learned it and some of the things you used to do?

[00:46:25]

SL: Well, I guess the traditional pieces were a cross, a palm, a cane, a beard, and an altar bread, which also would be double for what they called a bishop’s hat, because it had like four points on it like the old bishop’s hat. I think—. Did I miss something that was a basic? I think five or six pieces were basic, but then people would want something unique, like they started making a fish and a crab and an alligator.

[00:47:00]

DL: New Orleans stuff.

[00:47:01]

SL: Yeah, I mean they’d start making Cajun stuff on the St. Joseph altar. Well of course they had lobster and crabs and fish on the St. Joseph altar so it was appropriate; it wasn’t out of place completely. We did a pretty good job making fish. They were beautiful, beautiful pieces. You know, I think I told you this when we had that interview at the International. We used to take blessed bread from the altar – and I can’t swear by this, okay – and you could put it in your cabinet and keep it forever and supposedly when a storm was coming you’d throw it outside. I don’t know the whole tradition. I think Arthur Brocato might be able to tell you better than me, you know, or Angelo, his brother. But I made a fish one time for her and—.

[00:47:56]

DL: For your wife?

[00:47:57]

SL: Yeah.

[00:47:58]

DL: Can you give us–

[00:47:58]

SL: And we hung it–.

[00:47:59]

DL: –your wife’s name?

[00:47:59]

SL: We hung it–. Yeah, Charlene, I made it for my wife Charlene, and we made it and we hung it on the wall. It wasn’t blessed, though. It didn’t come off an altar. About four, five, six, I don’t know how many months, all of a sudden we got these little bugs flying around [*Laughs*] all over the place, and we don’t know where these weevils are coming from. Then all of a sudden I look at the fish on the wall and he looks like he’s been shot with BBs. It’s full of holes. I go, “My God! This thing is loaded with bugs!” But it wasn’t blessed. It didn’t last. I don’t know if that’s got anything to do with it. [*Laughs*] I really should probably experiment with this and get a piece of blessed bread. I never did go that far. I guess I’d rather just believe that the blessed bread–

[00:48:41]

DL: Yeah, you might have to–.

[00:48:42]

SL: –didn't weevil, and–.

[00:48:42]

DL: You might have to ask your daughter for some out of her freezer.

[00:48:45]

SL: Exactly, right. [*Laughs*]

[00:48:46]

DL: Going back to the St. Joseph's bread, I've heard that a lot of people from the community that were doing altars would come, almost like an event, to your bakery and bake.

[00:48:58]

SL: Well, not all the time because the people who–

[00:49:00]

DL: During St. Joseph's?

[00:49:00]

SL: –were making altars, they were busy with their altars, and technically speaking, according to the original promise of the St. Joseph altar, they were supposed to make the bread too, but it just was too much for most of them and they wound up, you know, buying the bread on the outside. But we had–. Family came over that morning, the people that weren't making all that–. The people in that picture on the wall over there, they used to love to come there because it was fun time, you know. I mean it was work to us but they thought–. They would cook Pasta Milanese, which I don't care for, but anyway. They thought I wasn't Italian because I didn't like that. But they would cook the Pasta Milanese and have a big family get-together in the kitchen, you know, near the bakery, and then they'd go back there. The thing was, they couldn't really do a whole lot of the processing of the bread but there was a particular part of the process where,

before the bread is ready to go in the oven, you have to paint it with egg and sprinkle seeds on it, and there's a lot of that to do and they could do those jobs and it would help you because, I mean, you really weren't making enough money to hire people off the street. You'd need people for just a couple of days, and you're not going to find people to do that kind of stuff that you could depend on and you really don't want to just hire anybody to come fool with your–

[00:50:28]

DL: They're beautiful pieces.

[00:50:29]

SL: –food products, you know.

[00:50:30]

DL: What do you think about some of the new bakeries in town and the bread that's being baked today?

[00:50:35]

SL: I can't really condemn it. I mean I–.

[00:50:41]

DL: Of course.

[00:50:41]

SL: I can't really knock it because–.

[00:50:43]

DL: Everything changes.

[00:50:44]

SL: Everything changes and it's difficult–. I have to say it's very difficult to compete with the places like Sam's and Walmart. I mean they used to sell a loaf of French bread for a

dollar and sixty cents and now it's a dollar. It's a rollback. I mean I got a loaf sitting in there, in my kitchen.

[00:51:02]

DL: You can't compete.

[00:51:03]

SL: One dollar, and I asked them today when I got it, I said, "Would you slice this for me?" and they sliced it for me. I can't compete with that. I can't fight that. I don't know if we could make it today, you know. I know a lot of small businesses are struggling. I think your friend, he's doing well from what I can understand.

[00:51:28]

DL: Graison Gill at Bellegarde?

[00:51:30]

SL: Yeah. I couldn't think of his name. But, you know, they [*referring to Wal-Mart, not Bellegarde Bakery*] got some—. I mean it's not the best bread I ever ate but it's passable and, like I said, the price, I mean price is a big factor.

[00:51:43]

DL: It is.

[00:51:44]

SL: If you're in the restaurant business and you're getting something cheap enough and it's passable [*referring to Wal-Mart*], it's not, you know, something that people are going to reject, they got to go with it, because you're looking for the bottom line and with all the things going on today, man, it's tough to get a good bottom line.

[00:52:00]

DL: Yeah. So, is there anything else you'd like me to know about, or that you'd like to mention, that I haven't asked?

[00:52:06]

SL: Well, my old brain is probably loaded with more stuff but I don't know how to dig it out, you know. *[Laughs]* So I can't think of anything, but I'm sure when you leave I'll probably think of a whole lot of stuff. That's normal.

[00:52:19]

Charlene LoGiudice: You still, you know,—

[00:52:21]

DL: Charlene, would you like to add anything?

[00:52:22]

CL: —you still have people—. You still have people—.

[00:52:23]

SL: Yeah, you can talk.

[00:52:23]

CL: You still have people, you know, that talk about you starting up again,—

[00:52:28]

SL: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah.

[00:52:29]

CL: —[that are] interested and come to you.

[00:52:31]

DL: So your wife was asking if there's still people who—

[00:52:34]

SL: Yeah. Well one of–

[00:52:34]

DL: –want you to open up.

[00:52:35]

SL: –my good customers that I had locked up pretty good I definitely won't get back. He sold his property. Sal Impastato at the Napoleon House is my cousin and he bought bread from me, and I was really shocked that he got–. That was in his family for over a hundred years, that property. But I guess he figured, you know, it's time to get some rest and enjoy his money.

[00:52:58]

CL: And Brian is still working [*Unintelligible*].

[00:52:59]

SL: Yeah, my son, Brian, wants to go in the bakery business.

[00:53:03]

CL: He's talking to people all the time.

[00:53:04]

SL: He's talking to people all the time, and I discourage him a little bit because it's not that easy. You can't just get started like that, you know, and you can't rely on everybody to come back to you now. It's been ten years and they're buying bread from other people, even my good customers. I don't even–. Do you know if Mosca's is still in business?

[00:53:26]

DL: Yes.

[00:53:27]

SL: Because Johnny died.

[00:53:28]

DL: Another generation, but yes.

[00:53:30]

SL: Well his daughter and his wife took over the business. His wife was considerably younger and he was sixty years old when his daughter was born.

[00:53:38]

DL: Did they have your bread?

[00:53:39]

SL: Oh, they had my bread I think since 1946 when they opened Mosca's.

[00:53:42]

DL: Oh, wow.

[00:53:43]

SL: We weren't connected in the sense that some people think, and neither was Johnny. Johnny was just-. He related to it, you know, but anyway. But, yeah, Mosca's was probably one of my oldest customers, buying bread from my grandpa when my grandpa started the bakery.

[00:54:00]

DL: Do you remember your favorite moment in the baking process, like did you like to mix or did you like to have the bread come out of the oven?

[00:54:09]

SL: Oh, you mean on a regular occurrence,-

[00:54:11]

DL: Yeah.

[00:54:11]

SL: –which was my favorite part? Eating the bread, [*Laughs*] when it came out of the oven hot, and going inside and getting a cup of coffee and some real butter and put it on hot bread and let it melt on there: that was my favorite part. [*Laughs*]

[00:54:25]

DL: Nice. And what–? Sorry, go ahead.

[00:54:28]

SL: Sweetheart,–

[00:54:28]

CL: Can I say something?

[00:54:28]

SL: –you can–.

[00:54:29]

CL: No, I just wanted to say one thing about your Italian bread that I don't find with other breads you can do, is like we can take that Italian bread–

[00:54:38]

SL: Can you hear her?

[00:54:39]

CL: –and after–. You don't have to hear me. Then after it's stale, okay, you can cut it up, and what? You can make cinnamon toast, you can make toast, you can make French–. It never goes bad. You don't–.

[00:54:50]

SL: Yeah.

[00:54:50]

CL: It's not like you'd throw it away.

[00:54:53]

DL: It's true. Well, there's that tradition of not wasting bread, I think, that comes from—

[00:54:57]

SL: Yeah.

[00:54:57]

CL: You can use it in so many different ways.

[00:54:59]

DL: —the New Orleans Sicilian tradition too. You make bread crumbs.

[00:55:02]

SL: Well, we had a product, or a dish. I don't know where it started; it probably wasn't my family that did it. But when I was a kid and, you know, we weren't exactly wealthy, especially when my grandpa first started the bakery. I mean I don't know how he even got started. He had to borrow a few dollars from people and get rolling. But we didn't throw away the bread, and the stale bread, we'd break it up — the Italian bread, the braided bread — pull it apart, break the braids, throw it in a pot, put coffee, milk, a couple of raw eggs, some vanilla, a little sugar, and cook it. It looked awful. It looked awful. It looked like both ends of what you'd get rid of. But it was delicious. *[Laughs]*

[00:55:55]

DL: *[Laughs]*

[00:55:56]

SL: And my brother, when he was little—. Nobody ever named it, and one day my brother's sitting at the table and he says, "Mama, I want some stuff in a plate."

[00:56:05]

DL: *[Laughs]*

[00:56:06]

SL: And it became stuff in a plate the rest of our lives. *[Laughs]*

[00:56:08]

DL: Do you know how to make it?

[00:56:10]

SL: I just told you.

[00:56:11]

DL: Okay.

[00:56:11]

CL: That's it.

[00:56:12]

SL: *[Laughs]* I just told you. It could be stale bread, fresh bread, but it could be stale because when you put the coffee and the milk and all that stuff in there it's going to soften up, and you cook it down and it comes out looking awful and when you put it in a plate it looks like stuff in a plate, all right,–

[00:56:28]

DL: Since we're talking about ways–

[00:56:29]

SL: –some awful stuff.

[00:56:29]

DL: –to eat bread, do you have other favorite ways? Like I’ve heard some people like to stuff it with lemon ice or, you know, leftover red beans.

[00:56:37]

SL: I tell you what, Brocato’s seed cookies are very good, but my Italian bread with the lemon ice is excellent.

[00:56:44]

DL: Oh, I almost brought you some too.

[00:56:45]

SL: It’s delicious, it’s delicious. I love the lemon ice with–. I don’t have Italian bread so, no big deal. But, it goes good with the seed cookies, but we used to eat the Italian bread with the lemon ice, and–. I’m trying to think. You know who really liked my bread with a side product, was Irene. She made the bruschetta with my bread and it was out of sight, and she used to give it away. I mean I would go to Irene’s and fill up on her bruschetta and I wouldn’t want nothing else to eat, you know. I mean, I could eat a lot too, but I mean I loved the bruschetta. Then she made bread crumbs – I mean croutons – with it and it was unbelievable. Now, she may still be producing good products with whatever bread she’s using, you know, and I can’t knock it because–.

[00:57:36]

CL: Another thing I wanted to–. I mean I don’t want to be on this, but another thing–

[00:57:39]

SL: You can come sit over here by the microphone.

[00:57:40]

CL: –is, you know the Italian bread: it’s soft on the inside and it’s real–

[00:57:45]

SL: Velvety texture–

[00:57:45]

CL: –crusty–.

[00:57:46]

SL: –on the inside–

[00:57:46]

CL: Yeah, crusty–

[00:57:47]

SL: –crusty on the outside.

[00:57:48]

CL: –on the outside. That, you know, we always remember when the kids were babies we used it for teething biscuits.

[00:57:53]

SL: Oh, yeah, that’s true.

[00:57:54]

CL: –because of the outsides.

[00:57:55]

SL: Yeah, and they–

[00:57:56]

CL: Not the insides.

[00:57:56]

SL: –didn’t have teething rings–.

[00:57:57]

CL: They couldn't eat the insides [*Unintelligible*].

[00:57:58]

SL: They didn't have teething rings; they just had the giant bread to teeth on.

[00:58:00]

CL: But it was so crunchy on the outside that, yeah; they loved it.

[00:58:02]

SL: And they would gnaw it.

[00:58:03]

CL: They would gnaw on it.

[00:58:04]

DL: And I don't think people know that kind of Italian bread anymore in New Orleans.

[00:58:06]

CL: No,–

[00:58:06]

SL: No.

[00:58:06]

CL: –they don't. They don't have that kind.

[00:58:07]

SL: No, they don't have it anymore.

[00:58:09]

CL: That's what was so different. I loved the crust. Me, I would eat the crust. Remember, Brian would eat the inside and I'd eat all the crust. *[Laughs]* But the babies could teeth on it and it wouldn't choke them.

[00:58:18]

DL: So, in closing, can you talk a little bit about some of your favorite places and types of sandwiches in New Orleans?

[00:58:25]

SL: You mean like—

[00:58:26]

DL: It could be memories as a kid,—

[00:58:27]

SL: —muffulettas or other kind of—?

[00:58:28]

DL: —muffulettas, places you used to go and get sandwiches, poor boys, muffulettas.

[00:58:33]

SL: Well, I mean I could tell—.

[00:58:35]

DL: Or how much they cost?

[00:58:37]

SL: Yeah, I could tell you a story about that and, like I said, my kids, you know, they: “Oh, my dad's going to tell you about the roast beef sandwich now.” Well, when I was an altar boy at St. Mary's I was like ten years old and I didn't have any money. I mean, you know, a nickel was pretty good, okay? This friend of mine and I would try to steal a nickel out of our

lunch money during the course of a week. You know, we'd maybe get ten cents a day for lunch, or less, believe me. You'd get a nickel for lunch and a nickel for a little carton of milk and sometimes I wouldn't buy the milk and at the end of the week – and it wasn't every week, maybe every two weeks – we'd get like forty-one cents together, okay: thirty cents for a roast beef dressed, with a nickel for a Barq's root beer.

[00:59:25]

DL: Where would you get it?

[00:59:26]

SL: At Battistella's, and I mean it probably wasn't that great of a sandwich, but from what I can remember it was fantastic. Whoever paid the penny tax, the other nickel would play the claw machine. The claw machine lasted all of like about ten seconds, and that was our charge for the two weeks, or whatever you want to call it. The reason I brought the story up, back in the '70s, in maybe '78, '79, when Pac Man came in and my son, Dominick, who was my oldest boy I was talking about before, he said, "Dad, give me some quarters," and he'd take ten dollars worth of quarters and put it in the Pac Man machine, or Frogger, or whatever machine they were playing, and that's when I said, I said, "You know, I would play a machine one time if I paid a penny tax, every two weeks or maybe once a month, and I played it for ten seconds and it was a nickel, and that was my big charge." I said, "You guys put ten and twenty dollars in these Pac Man machines like it's nothing."

[01:00:21]

But, yeah, the roast beef sandwich was thirty cents and the root beer was a nickel and it was a penny tax, thirty-six cents, and if you wanted to really be conservative and frugal you would get a gravy sandwich for ten cents and you wouldn't buy a root beer; you'd just eat the

gravy sandwich and it was ten cents and you didn't have to pay any tax because anything under like twelve or fourteen cents there was no tax. It was three percent, so you didn't have to pay no tax. Then there was a potato sandwich. If you were a little more extravagant you could get a potato sandwich for fifteen cents at Martin Brothers.

[01:00:56]

DL: At Martin's.

[01:00:57]

SL: At Martin Brothers and that was on—. Well we went to the one on St. Claude, St. Claude and Pauger, I think it was on, and then eventually they opened one out in New Orleans East near the high rise. I forget the street. It was on the old Chef Highway [*Chef Menteur Highway*]. But, yeah, those are some of the places I can remember back. Now I tell you one place that we went to, which is doing phenomenal today – which I don't think their sandwich is that phenomenal because I've been there. DiMartino's got a much better roast beef sandwich than Parkway Bakery, and Parkway Bakery's like, oh my God! People die to go to Parkway Bakery! Well, I'm going to tell you my experience with Parkway Bakery, which it didn't bother me that much, but I went to the Parkway Bakery when I was going to teenage dances as a kid, and we would go in there and, I'm not kidding you, the place was a dump, okay? I was like sixteen, seventeen years old, and we went to the St. Dominic's dance, or Sacred Heart, or Germania Hall or one of those teenage dances, and about 12:00 at night on a Saturday night we'd go get a roast beef sandwich from Parkway Bakery. Well these guys looked like they came right off of Camp Street, and they still had the wine bottles in their back pocket and they were serving you, [*Laughs*] and you had to shoo the flies away to eat the sandwich, but, you know, we were kids. Now, today, Parkway Bakery's like, oh man. They're—

[01:02:25]

DL: New generation.

[01:02:25]

SL: –doing fantastic. They’re making a fortune. It’s unbelievable.

[01:02:30]

DL: So we’ll have to bring back a new United Bakery.

[01:02:33]

SL: Well, I don’t know about that, but I wish–

[01:02:35]

CL: [*Unintelligible*] [*Laughs*]

[01:02:35]

SL: –we could. It’d be nice, you know.

[01:02:37]

DL: Well, thank you so much, Mr. LoGiudice. You’ve made us all hungry–

[01:02:41]

SL: [*Laughs*]

[01:02:41]

DL: –but especially hungry for your bread, which is missing from all of our lives now.

[01:02:44]

SL: Now I want some Italian bread. I want some hot bread with butter and coffee. That’s what I used to like.

[01:02:49]

DL: Thank you.

[01:02:49]

SL: At 3:00 in the morning when I would stay over at my grandpa's house – I was a little kid, I must have been maybe, you know, I wasn't even in school yet, maybe, four or five years old – at 3:00 you could smell the bread coming–. The bread was baking and now the house–. We were on the second floor and the ovens, the scent was coming. I wake up, "Papa, can I get some bread?" and he'd give me a cup of coffee with mostly milk and I'd get bread and butter and coffee, and I think I was five years old.

[01:03:22]

DL: Those are nice memories.

[01:03:23]

SL: Now, you know, I'm seventy-two, so that's sixty-seven years ago. It's a long time ago.

[01:03:28]

DL: Thank you so much.

[01:03:29]

SL: Abraham Lincoln might have been president. I don't remember. [*Laughs*]

[01:03:32]

DL: [*Laughs*] Okay.

[01:03:36]

[*Transcript suspended; break in recording*]

[01:04:41]

CL: I mean you hate to say the prestige, I mean, [you're just loved].

[01:04:44]

DL: Sure.

[01:04:45]

SL: Yeah.

[01:04:45]

DL: Absolutely.

[01:04:46]

SL: It was prestige. I didn't want to brag about it, but it was prestige.

[01:04:48]

DL: Well it's part of your--.

[01:04:48]

CL: It makes you feel so good. It is.

[01:04:49]

DL: It's part of your identity, right?

[01:04:50]

SL: Not too many can walk behind a counter at Central Grocery and grab a salami and just eat it, you know, and it was like--. I don't know if they were upset about that but they never did tell me anything [*Laughs*]

[01:04:59]

CL: No. But I mean I loved--. You know what I miss is--

[01:05:03]

SL: You know, I mean the stuff is all--

[01:05:04]

CL: --giving it away.

[01:05:04]

SL: –cut and you walk back there and you grab a piece of salami and you say, “Oh, this tastes good.” *[Laughs]*

[01:05:07]

CL: Yeah, Sal, another thing: I loved giving it away. Look how much we gave it away.

[01:05:10]

SL: Oh, that is something. That’s something–

[01:05:12]

CL: Oh, my gosh; I just miss that.

[01:05:13]

SL: –that I didn’t hit on.

[01:05:14]

DL: Okay.

[01:05:14]

SL: I’m going to tell you what, when I have to go buy bread at the grocery, even a dollar loaf, but sometimes I want the buns and different things that I used to make for myself special and, I’m going to tell you, to go and pay for it, and I mean I’m looking. Walmart’s got a good cheap loaf of bread for a dollar, but the rest of the stuff? I mean you get some little pistolettes you’re looking at four or five dollars, you know, and I’m like I gave away so much. My calling card–. People would say, “Do you have a card?” I never carried cards but I carried bread. Every day–

[01:05:46]

CL: Right. We always had bread.

[01:05:47]

SL: –I made excess. I made over–. Well you always want to have over in case you burn some or you ruin some or something happens, but I wanted extra bread. I always had extra bread in my car.

[01:05:58]

CL: And I don't want to say it opened doors, but I mean it–.

[01:06:01]

SL: Well, yeah, it did.

[01:06:02]

DL: Okay. I'll ask about that.

[01:06:03]

CL: When Charlie Foti wanted–.

[01:06:04]

SL: Oh, gee.

[01:06:04]

CL: I mean Charlie Foti: “Oh, look, I'm having a get-together. I need bread.” Or Judge Marullo.

[01:06:07]

SL: Yeah, Frank Marullo. I made–.

[01:06:09]

CL: I mean it just opened so many doors.

[01:06:11]

SL: I gave them the bread, but I mean it opened a lot of doors for me.

[01:06:14]

CL: I mean they still know us and they're still, you know.

[01:06:16]

SL: Yeah, they still treat me good.

[01:06:17]

CL: But it did open a lot of doors that wouldn't normally--.

[01:06:19]

SL: My son had to do an interview with a prominent person at one [time. My] son was going to Ben Franklin and he had to do an interview with somebody who was a prominent individual in New Orleans or somebody, and I said, "Well, I know. Charlie--." I went to school with Charlie. I mean, I'm a little younger than Charlie, but he was--

[01:06:46]

DL: Charlie who?

[01:06:46]

SL: --my big brother--. Charlie Foti. He was the sheriff for thirty years. My son interviewed him. It was a terrific interview. I still got my commission [*Laughs*] from Foti's office, okay. I mean, it's no good anymore, but I still carry it. I tell you what, I got stopped in Mississippi and it was like 2:00 in the morning. I mean, what the heck, 2:00 in the morning, and the guy says, "You know you were speeding." I said, "Oh, how fast was I going, officer?" and he said, "You were doing like fifty. It's a forty-five." I said, "Oh, man. I'm so sorry," and I opened my wallet and I'm trying to get my license, and he says, "Oh, are you a policeman?" I said, "Well, I'm not anymore." I never was, but. [*Laughs*] He says, "Look, just watch it. Take it easy," you know. [*Laughs*]

[01:07:32]

DL: So these are some of the thing that you miss about–

[01:07:34]

SL: That was–

[01:07:34]

DL: –the bakery,–

[01:07:35]

SL: –some of the perks. [*Laughs*]

[01:07:36]

DL: –about being – the perks – a celebrity.

[01:07:38]

SL: Right, there were some perks to it, okay. Oh, and my wife did that at Frank Marullo's court. She was teaching at Hynes and she wanted to do a courtroom scene with the kids. Frank says, "Well, you know, use the courtroom when I'm not using it." So she brought all the classes up there and they tried the wolf for killing a pig, [*Laughs*] and it was great, and we got it on tape, okay. But Frank loved it. He said, "This is fantastic," and then he got all his people, his prosecutor and the defense counsel, and they talked to the kids, and what's good about it–. A lot of schools don't do this kind of stuff, but think about it: if you've never been in a courtroom when you're seventeen or eighteen years old and you never had any experience, you're scared as hell. But if you're in third grade and you've already–. You went and saw; you've been in a courtroom; you know what it's all about; that's a fantastic life experience hands-on. That's better than the classroom, and we used to do that. Every year we did that for several years. After–.

[01:08:50]

CL: [The bread opened – the bakery opened that up.]

[01:08:54]

CL: My situation opened those doors for me. I mean I knew Frank before, but it did help to have that, and I was part of that inner circle because even though I wasn't as wealthy—. I used to joke. I used to say, "This is a joke." I said, "I'm the only guy that I know that's not a rich man." Everybody I dealt with, the Zuppardo's, the Dorignac's, R & O's in Bucktown, they're all rich. Tony Angello ain't poor. Mosca's ain't poor. All the people I dealt—. Pete DiMartino's pretty well off now too. I said, "Everybody I sell bread too is rich." I said, "What happened to me?" [Laughs] you know, but I still was in that circle. I was still in that clique, if you want to call it, and, you know, this is maybe wrong and maybe I shouldn't say it but, I mean, take it out if you think it's wrong. You know how sometimes the policemen, you know, they get stopped by another policeman and they let them go. You know what? You'd have to be a jerk not to let one of your compadres get a pass. I mean if that's—. My wife's a schoolteacher. I'm sure there's some perks to being a schoolteacher. There's some perks to being a cabinetmaker or, you know, whatever. I don't think it's fair to hold it against—. I don't think they should be on the take and crooked but there's perks to your jobs, and it's part of the job, besides the pay. Like I said, I had the perk of being with businesspeople and I miss that a lot.

[01:10:34]

CL: It's not what you know, it's who you know.

[01:10:35]

DL: So did your kids think it was special that you did what you did?

[01:10:38]

SL: Yeah. I think they did. I think they did and, you know, they—.

[01:10:44]

CL: Especially Brian.

[01:10:45]

SL: Oh, yeah, my son; oh, God. Oh, man, he was—. What was the dean's name at LSU-  
NO?

[01:10:50]

CL: I don't know, but it's—

[01:10:52]

SL: I call it LSU-NO. I—.

[01:10:53]

CL: –UNO.

[01:10:53]

SL: Look, I went to LSU-NO. It's LSU-NO, okay.

[01:10:56]

DL: *[Laughs]*

[01:10:57]

SL: I went to St. Aloysius. It ain't Brother Martin, it's St. Aloysius. I don't give a damn, okay, and St. Mary's Italian's gone, but that's my school. But, yeah; I mean, LSU-NO—. You know, *[Laughs]* I went to school at St. Mary's Italian. The school's gone, the building's gone. I went to St. Aloysius. The school's gone, the building's gone. I went to LSU-NO, it's UNO, and I went to school in the Army barracks; they're gone. So I said, man, I have no history in New Orleans of my [schools. People] say, "Where'd you got to school at?" [I tell them and they say,] "I've never heard of them places," you know. But it's really kind of depressing that—. You know,

Brother Martin should still be St. Aloysius. It should. That's another story, I know. But they had a hundred years. Cor Gesu had twenty years.

[01:11:45]

DL: *[Laughs]*

[01:11:45]

SL: That's so wrong. And then when they talk about they're the oldest Catholic high school in the valley? They're not. Holy Cross has got it because Aloysius gave it up. They gave it up when they didn't continue the name with St. Aloysius. I know; I'm sorry.

[01:11:59]

CL: *[Unintelligible]*

[01:11:59]

DL: So can you talk about your generosity as a baker; that you used to like to bake extra things?

[01:12:05]

SL: Oh, I used to give bread to everybody I knew, man. I mean it was great because it was a good feeling, you know, and, like I said, that was my calling card. I had little Italian breads in the car, I had a little French breads, I had pistolettes; I mean I had a carful of bread all the time and, I tell you what, I usually didn't go home until I gave all the bread away.

[01:12:26]

DL: Did your license place say "Bread Man?" *[Laughs]*

[01:12:28]

SL: Well, it should've, but it didn't, you know.

[01:12:30]

CL: Your dad started that.

[01:12:32]

SL: Yeah, my dad was real generous. Well my dad was—

[01:12:34]

DL: Generous.

[01:12:35]

SL: Yeah, he was very generous. My dad was a very generous man. People say Italian people are tight; my dad wasn't like that. Me and my brother aren't like that, you know.

[01:12:44]

DL: I remember meeting you right before Katrina and then after Katrina and I was with Stephen—

[01:12:49]

SL: Yeah.

[01:12:49]

DL: —whose grandfather, Mr. Tureaud, used to fix your ovens sometimes—

[01:12:52]

SL: Oh, yeah. Well, he—.

[01:12:54]

DL: —and you would always give us bread.

[01:12:55]

SL: Oh, yeah. Well, yeah, but I mean his grandfather was a great guy. He was a very intelligent, very terrific mechanic, whatever you want to call him. He had knowledge; he was a smart man and he was good at what he did. But there was a guy named Tank that made the brick

ovens, in I think all of New Orleans. I forget his initials, but if you go to United Bakery, where my place was, I think you could still find out what his initials were. His last name was Tank. Is it B. Tank? I don't know; I can't remember. But he was an old guy and he knew the brick ovens, and when he—

[01:13:39]

DL: So he built your ovens.

[01:13:40]

SL: He didn't—. Not for me; he built them for my grandpa and, you know, back in the day. It was a guy named Tank. He built all those ovens at Ace Bakery, United, probably Sunrise and Leidenhiemer, and all them places. He did most of them. From what I know about it, he did the ovens. Now they had people, like Mr. Stafford, Stafford Tureaud, he could repair them but he didn't build the ovens.

[01:14:08]

DL: Right.

[01:14:08]

SL: And the unique feature of the oven I didn't really understand, but the way the base was built and the heat would travel through the—. If you would see one taken apart it would look like a miniature of the catacombs. You know, if you would see like the guts inside, it was like a miniature of the catacombs because there was all kind of passageways and the heat would travel in there, and in reality, from what I understand—. I might be wrong because I'm not, you know, I'm not a physicist or whatever technology you need to explain this. But the heat that you're putting in there today was the heat you're cooking with tonight or tomorrow, and we had to turn it on today so that it would stay hot for the next day but technically you wouldn't have to turn it

on if you weren't going to bake tomorrow and just bake with the heat that was in there already. It was a unique way that these ovens were made that that heat would do that, and I don't know if the right word was green heat – you don't want to have green heat. You want heat that's been there. I don't know how to explain myself on that one. And they had river sand on top. That was a great insulator, the river sand on top. After they closed the brick in then they would put a truckload of river sand on top of the oven to insulate it. That's what they insulated it with.

[01:15:37]

But the brick oven, what I was telling you about before, the best way was when you put the bread right on the brick, the hot brick, because when you put it in a pan and you put the pan in the oven the pan would have to get hot before the bread could bake, and that took a lot away from the product's initial function – not function, but its initial production, or however you want to phrase it. I don't know. Like I said, I don't know if it shocked the bread or shocked the product, whatever, but that made the best crust. Even today in a pizza oven one of the big things is you don't want to put something—. Well you don't want to bake a cake if the oven's not hot yet. The oven has to be preheated and then your fire has to kick down and just maintain, but the oven's got your three-fifty or your three-seventy-five or whatever you're going to bake at.

[01:16:35]

DL: So you get your spring.

[01:16:36]

SL: To get your spring, right, and it's the same thing with these cookies and all the stuff that they bake over there.

[01:16:42]

DL: So was this guy, Tank, from New Orleans? Like were these ovens—

[01:16:44]

SL: I don't know his–

[01:16:44]

DL: –that were special to New Orleans bakeries?

[01:16:46]

SL: –total history. I don't know.

[01:16:48]

DL: Okay. I know Graison Gill from Bellegarde had done some research and said that it was a unique oven that you had.

[01:16:54]

SL: Yeah, and, like I said, he built–. From what I understand he built most of the ovens in New Orleans at the time, but I don't know if he could have done as much as they say he did. I mean it might have been a, you know, like a myth or a legend that got carried away. But Tank was the guy. I don't know if he was a black man, a white man, or half black or half white, but he was in that business and he was the best, from everything I ever heard about him.

[01:17:20]

DL: And can you talk a little bit more about some of the hats that you wore on your daily operations and sort of the rituals of working in the bakery day to day?

[01:17:32]

SL: You had to know about the baking of the bread and the mixing and everything else, of course. Then you had to make sure that you know how to keep the equipment running in case you couldn't get a mechanic out there when something would break down. You did your bookkeeping. You did your cleanup. When the health department came around you had to make

sure the place was ready. You had to be the sanitation inspector. Oh, and I have a new function now. I just learned something. I am a domestic engineer; I'm not a house husband. See, *[Laughs]* my wife works and I stay home, but I'm a domestic engineer. I don't want to be called a housewife, or a house husband, okay. *[Laughs]*

[01:18:15]

DL: Great. I think–

[01:18:16]

SL: That's my new title.

[01:18:16]

DL: –that's it, but I just wanted to end with this–.

[01:18:18]

SL: Was there a third?

[01:18:19]

DL: With this little ad that I had found from the newspaper from 1959, from United Bakery.

[01:18:24]

SL: You're fantastic. I mean you got stuff that I never saw, you know. *[Laughs]*

[01:18:28]

DL: It's called the archives, the joys of the archives. It talks about St. Joseph bread and–.

[01:18:34]

SL: This is what year?

[01:18:35]

DL: 1959.

[01:18:36]

SL: So my dad would have put that in there, and he–

[01:18:38]

DL: So St. Joseph–.

[01:18:38]

SL: –didn't own the bakery then. It was still in the hands of the estate. That was after my grandpa died.

[01:18:42]

DL: So it reads, “St. Joseph bread and Italian cakes bakery. Home of Italian bread.”

[01:18:47]

SL: Today's the 24<sup>th</sup>.

[01:18:48]

DL: Oh, okay.

[01:18:51]

SL: Isn't it?

[01:18:52]

DL: Yes.

[01:18:52]

SL: Yeah. My brother called me up before. That's a coincidence. The guy who's picture you looked at on the wall? He died in 1958 on today.

[01:19:02]

DL: Oh, interesting.

[01:19:03]

SL: And my brother says—. He called me up this morning and he says, “I want you to remember where you were fifty-seven years ago today,” and I said, “What?” I had to think about it. I said, “Oh, man.” I was playing with Angelo Marchese at Washington Square on Elysian Fields and my dad came looking for me to say my grandpa died. We called him “Papa.” He said, “Papa died,” and the funny part about it is he went in the—. This Dr. Poe, who was his doctor, he went to see his doctor on a Thursday and he said, “Doc, I just ain’t feeling good,” and he didn’t even want to put him in the hospital. My grandpa said, “Look, I want to go to go get checked out,” so he put him in the hospital and he died that Saturday morning. It was like wow, you know, and nobody—. It was unexpected, totally unexpected, and the funny – not funny part, but he was just starting to do really well. He had just bought a brand new 1958 Delta 88 Oldsmobile, gorgeous automobile, all the chrome, beautiful. I wish I could have kept that car. I wish I had it right now. He put a hundred miles on it. He paid cash money. If he wouldn’t have paid cash money my grandma would have got the car. If he’d put a down payment she would have got the car for free, with the insurance. He paid cash money on a Thursday and that next Thursday he went in the hospital and he died on that Saturday, so within a week he was—. I think he put a hundred miles on the car, and I mean he was so proud of that car. Like I said, I was like fourteen or something like that.

[01:20:34]

DL: Were they bakers in Italy?

[01:20:36]

SL: My grandpa came here as a clarinet player and a carpenter, that’s what he did, but he met the Ruffino family and got interested in my grandma, Stefani, you know, and that’s how he got in the bakery, when he met—.

[01:20:52]

DL: And were the Ruffinos bakers–

[01:20:53]

SL: But–

[01:20:53]

DL: –in Italy?

[01:20:54]

SL: –you see the family tree? My cousin went through a lot of work in 1965 to make that tree. That’s the ten children, and then he put–. I mean there’s so many more right now. Oh my God; that thing would be elaborate. But my [grandmother, it] was one of those–. My great-grandpa and my great-grandma are in the center of that picture, and their ten children around, and then each one of those bands just tie in with their families, you know.

[01:21:31]

DL: Great. Thank you so much.

[01:21:33]

SL: Well, thank you. I enjoyed it, and I can’t believe that all this stuff I could go find–.

What?

[01:21:42]

Thomas Walsh: I’m just about to run out of battery.

[01:21:43]

CL: *[Laughs]*

[01:21:44]

SL: Oh, you want me to–? You [need some silence]?

[01:21:46]

TW: No, no.

[01:21:47]

CL: No, he needs a cut.

[01:21:47]

TW: No, I got what I need, but I'm about to die.

[01:21:50]

SL: Okay.

[01:21:51]

TW: I just wanted to make sure that I had a closing statement from you, so, thank you.

[01:21:55]

SL: Well, thank you. I didn't realize I had so many thoughts in my head. Y'all brought so many things out that I didn't know were there. It was like in my subconscious.

[01:22:04]

DL: It's a joy. Thank you.

[01:22:07]

*END OF INTERVIEW*