

**DAVEN HULEN**  
**Chop's Specialty Meats – Lafayette, LA**

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Date: February 18, 2009  
Location: Chop's Specialty Meats  
Interviewer: Mary Beth Lasseter  
Length: 36 minutes  
Project: Boudin Trail

**[Begin Daven Hulen Interview]**

**00:00:01**

**Mary Beth Lasseter:** All right; today is Wednesday, February 18, 2009 and this is Mary Beth Lasseter with the Southern Foodways Alliance. I'm here at Chop's Specialty Meats doing an interview and we're sitting on the picnic table out back of the building. And for those who aren't here with us--overcast day, a little breezy, so we hope there's not too much interference with the microphone. But let's get started.

**00:00:25**

Can you introduce yourself for me; give me your name and tell me where you were born and your birth date?

**00:00:30**

**Daven Hulen:** Okay; my name is Daven Hulen. I was born right here in Lafayette, Louisiana, born in 1975, November; been here all my life.

**00:00:42**

**MBL:** Tell me a little bit about this place where we are--this store.

**00:00:47**

**DH:** Chop's actually started six years ago. It was another company before that; it was called Dab's Specialty Meats and we moved locations and we opened up Chop's Specialty Meats and do a little bit of everything.

**00:01:06**

**MBL:** What is a little bit of everything? Can you tell me a little bit about what you're selling?

**00:01:12**

**DH:** We do--we do a lot of boudin, a lot of sausages, crackling; we also do a lot of catering and plate lunches every day. We specialize in--in meat; we do a bunch of specialty meats stuffing and seasoned meats, pre-packed.

**00:01:34**

**MBL:** Can you tell me a little bit for people who are unfamiliar with this area, what would be the difference between say your store and a grocery store?

**00:01:40**

**DH:** Our store you can get a lot of stuff that's already pre-packed and ready to go straight on the grill or in your oven, like I said stuffed, seasoned--compared to a grocery store. You're getting not seasoned meats [*Laughs*].

**00:02:01**

**MBL:** How did you get into this business?

**00:02:03**

**DH:** Probably about 13 years ago I was looking for a job and my brother-in-law and his family have always done this and he hired me on at the store that he was working at and showed me how to cut meat.

00:02:21

**MBL:** So is it like an apprenticeship for lack of a better word?

00:02:24

**DH:** Is it what?

00:02:24

**MBL:** Is it like an apprenticeship where he trains you on the job?

00:02:29

**DH:** Pretty much; it's--it's pretty much hands-on to be able to learn how to do this stuff.

Different places cut it different ways so it all varies from store to store, where you go, how they're going to do it that way.

00:02:45

**MBL:** Have you ever gone to school to learn about meats or cutting meats?

00:02:50

**DH:** No, never been to school to--to learn about the meats and stuff. Took safety courses and stuff, food preparation tests, and--but not a meat-cutting school.

00:03:02

**MBL:** So that--that's all part of the certification process I would imagine?

**00:03:06**

**DH:** No; it's just to--Board of Health whenever they come they ask you for certain certificates and some places require it so that's what I had to do to get it.

**00:03:21**

**MBL:** Tell me a little bit since this interview is for the Boudin Trail about boudin. Let's start with the simplest question; what is it?

**00:03:28**

**DH:** It's actually a rice and gravy in a casing. It's just the way I can best explain it.

**00:03:37**

**MBL:** And do you know why it's so popular around here?

**00:03:41**

**DH:** It's been a tradition for a while. Everybody I know--my grandmother and grandfather used to do it in the backyard, make their own boudin and everything and--so I guess that's why people just enjoy it, just--it's tradition.

**00:04:01**

**MBL:** Tell me a little bit about your grandparents and when they used to make it. Do you have memories of those events?

**00:04:06**

**DH:** They used to get a--a few hogs and out in the back they'd slaughter them and they had a whole bunch of people that would come over and we would split the meat and make boudin right there and they'd cook for everybody that--that afternoon and whoever participated got to take something home.

**00:04:30**

**MBL:** What were your grandparents' names and what did they do for a living?

**00:04:32**

**DH:** That I don't remember what they did for a living. My grandmother was--her name was Arinee Perry and my grandfather was Wolman Perry.

**00:04:49**

**MBL:** So did your grandparents live out in the country; the idea of sort of slaughtering hogs in town seems a little foreign to people today?

**00:04:57**

**DH:** Yes; we all lived in the country. Actually they had moved to the City and we still--my dad had property out in the back, south of Lafayette which was--called it the country but we would--we would have a bunch of acres and we did it over there.

**00:05:21**

**MBL:** Do y'all still have that place?

00:05:22

**DH:** Yes; we do.

00:05:24

**MBL:** Tell me a little bit about the Lafayette area. I know a lot of people call this Lafayette but then there are all these little towns that dot the outside. So where are we and how does it relate to Lafayette and where would your grandparents' place have been?

00:05:37

**DH:** Lafayette--we're in Broussard right now which is a little--I think it would be east of Lafayette and with my family--has properly in Youngsville which is south of Lafayette.

00:05:56

**MBL:** So did you grow up here in Broussard then?

00:05:59

**DH:** No; I grew up in--actually in Youngsville, yeah.

00:06:02

**MBL:** And where did you go to school there?

00:06:04

**DH:** I went to school--it was--my high school was Comeaux High School.

00:06:13

**MBL:** Okay; I want to talk a little bit about the culture of the area. What would you consider your family's background? Do you think of yourselves as Cajun?

**00:06:27**

**DH:** Yeah; I--I do because my grandfather and my grandmother did not speak English. They-- my dad would have to translate to me all the time every time I went over and they came over to us. So I think yeah; I would consider myself Cajun.

**00:06:46**

**MBL:** Tell me a little bit more I guess about your grandparents and the language. What kind of--how many children did they have and do any of them speak French besides your father?

**00:06:56**

**DH:** It was seven of them and all of them spoke French and English. There was four girls and three boys.

**00:07:09**

**MBL:** And what are they doing for a living now?

**00:07:11**

**DH:** What are they doing--what?

**00:07:13**

**MBL:** What are they doing for a living now? Do you know?

**00:07:18**

**DH:** They're--they're all retired right now. They're--my dad is the only one--he was the baby and he's the only one that's still working. *[Laughs]*

**00:07:26**

**MBL:** And what does he do?

**00:07:27**

**DH:** He is a salesman for a service pump company.

**00:07:35**

**MBL:** You mentioned that your grandparents might have the boucherie and slaughter the pigs. Was that something that any of their children's generation ever did or did they only participate when your grandparents were hosting?

**00:07:48**

**DH:** They would only participate pretty much whenever my grandparents wanted to do something and neighbors even, they would all get together and purchase a--a bunch of pigs and we'd have a big boucherie.

**00:08:02**

**MBL:** I'm interested--done a couple of these interviews and a lot of people are talking about how the food traditions are dying among younger culture. You, yourself are pretty young, and

you're making these traditional foods. I know you started in the business because you were looking for a job but can you tell me a little bit about why you stuck with it and--and what the work is like?

**00:08:24**

**DH:** Well I mean the work is--is great. It's--it's real nice to--to do this stuff; it's laid back most of the time except during the holidays. You have a bunch of orders that come through.

**00:08:42**

**MBL:** What's a typical day like?

**00:08:44**

**DH:** What--do what?

**00:08:44**

**MBL:** What's a typical day like?

**00:08:48**

**DH:** A typical day, we come in; we make boudin almost every day. Come in--

**00:08:53**

**MBL:** What kind is it?

**00:08:54**

**DH:** We just make the regular traditional pork boudin. That's the only one we really carry. We come in; we get our meat together. Start cooking that; we cook cracklings in the morning and then we started on our--our cases and filling up our--all our meat sections--we cut all that usually about 2 o'clock we're finished, and we start running more--the boudin that we cooked that morning, we'll start running it and we usually finish about 3:00--4 o'clock. And by that time it's time to touch up the case again. And I have guys that come in and start cleaning up for the night.

**00:09:33**

**MBL:** If you're done with the first part of cutting at 2 o'clock, what time are you getting into work and actually starting?

**00:09:38**

**DH:** Well we actually come in--I come in at 6 o'clock in the morning; usually out of here for 5:30--6 o'clock that night.

**00:09:47**

**MBL:** That's a 12-hour day.

**00:09:49**

**DH:** Yes. [*Laughs*]

**00:09:51**

**MBL:** And can you describe to me I mean what--what are you doing during the course of the day? Are you managing people or are you doing the cutting?

**00:10:01**

**DH:** Actually I'm [*Laughs*]*--*I'm a manager, I'm the main meat cutter, I do all the catering jobs; like today, this morning I came in. I got my boudin together and got things situated for the day and I had to leave to go do a catering job and now I'm coming back and I'm going to start running boudin and making sure things are going right and finish up the night.

**00:10:28**

**MBL:** When you do these catering jobs are you serving traditional foods or what sorts of menus are you offering to the people in the area?

**00:10:35**

**DH:** Actually we tell them if all if--whatever you can think of we can figure out a way to do it. Today they just wanted us to go and barbeque rib-eyes and they wanted pork and beans, rice dressing, and potato salad, so--. Sometimes it's jambalaya and sometimes it's barbecued chicken.

**00:10:53**

**MBL:** Where did you learn to do all your cooking?

**00:10:57**

**DH:** Cutting?

**00:10:59**

**MBL:** Cooking.

**00:11:01**

**DH:** Actually I learned how to do the cooking from over here. I--the owner is big into cooking; he loves to cook and he took me on the side and started showing me how he wanted things cooked and I--like I say, I've been here for the last six years and I've been doing the catering since probably about three years now, so I've just learned from him and watching him and--. I knew a little bit already from grandparents and mom and dad, but learning his way--.

**00:11:32**

**MBL:** Can you tell me a little bit about him, his name, and--and how he came to start the business as much as you know?

**00:11:39**

**DH:** His name is Jeff Delahoussaye I don't really know what made him decide to do this besides I--I know he really likes to do the cooking and stuff and he keeps on saying whenever he retires this is what he wants to do for a hobby just to come in here and visit in the morning and drink coffee with customers and he wants to retire and have this place.

**00:12:07**

**MBL:** Talk to me a little bit about who your customers are; who is shopping here and how frequently are they coming by?

**00:12:13**

**DH:** I have a lot of oil field companies--companies that deal with us. Probably 70 to 80-percent of our business is oil field, cooking out for their customers, bringing boudin to their customers and we have a lot of walk-ins that come in. They--repeats; they come in all the time. Our boudin is very good and a lot of people around here really enjoy it so they come back and forth for the boudin. Sometimes it's just the boudin but they're back and forth for our boudin.

**00:12:48**

**MBL:** Tell me a little bit about these oil field customers. Are you catering for them here in town or are these traditional foods of the area getting shipped out across the country?

**00:12:58**

**DH:** Actually we do a lot of--the catering side is done around here and we do whatever they ask us to do. We'll do it and sometimes we cook it over here; they'll just pick it up and bring it to their customers. We do--do a lot of shipping; I have a lot of people that call us all around the United States to ship them boudin, ship them cracklings--whatever they need, stuffed meats.

**00:13:30**

**MBL:** The oil field customers, are they local people? I mean do they live in the area or are they coming in from California and Massachusetts and sort of learning about Louisiana food through what you give them?

**00:13:40**

**DH:** A little bit of both. I have some customers that have passed through; they work offshore or something and they're coming through and they're driving back to Mississippi or going to

Arkansas and you know they heard of it or they've tried something that somebody brought to them and they stop in and buy a few things to take home.

**00:14:03**

**MBL:** Let's talk a little bit about the boudin here. Describe to me a day of making boudin or an afternoon of making boudin from start to finish.

**00:14:15**

**DH:** Actually what--what we do is we come in and we have some big pots. We'll usually do two big pots and we get our meat together. It's all--we use nothing but Boston butts; we don't do it the old way where you throw all kinds of stuff in there. We just use strictly Boston butts. We cut it up in small pieces. We get our seasonings together; we have a few different seasonings that we put in it. We put it all in. We make our own Chop's Blend and you know it's--it's kind of like how you know they have the Tony Chacherie's? Well we have our own Chop's that we make personally and we put that in there and a few other things. We put water in it; we boil it. It usually takes about two and a half hours to cook and we make a bunch of rice [*Laughs*]. And once--once that's finished boiling we'll mix it up; we have big mixers--mix it up and we have casing that goes on it. We have a hydraulic stuffer, so it's--it's really nice and it makes it a lot easier with the hydraulic stuffer. And takes probably about three hours to run the boudin, the boudin that we make and we put it in the cooler after it's ran and let it sit for a day and we'll pack it up.

**00:15:42**

**MBL:** Going back to that description, the meats--y'all are not a slaughterhouse. Where are you getting your meat products?

**00:15:52**

**DH:** Actually I use a couple of suppliers. One is Doerl Food Services which is located right here in Broussard. And then another company is Christiana which is located out of New Orleans and they're big meat packing companies. I'm sure they get their meat you know from all over but that's who we use. They--they come and they call on us and we get a truck every day from them, so--.

**00:16:23**

**MBL:** Now your spices; are y'all mixing those in the store or are you giving your recipe to a spice company that does the mixing for you?

**00:16:30**

**DH:** We give it to a spice company; they have everything--we have a patent on it and all we have to do is just order it from them and they mix it up and ship it to us. The company is Cargill out of Breaux Bridge, Louisiana.

**00:16:49**

**MBL:** And then when we talk about the different spices that you're putting in the boudin, without giving away secret recipes, what is it--peppers or garlic or--?

**00:17:00**

**DH:** Actually we do--we put it's a lot of dry seasonings. Like I said we--we call our seasoning Chop's seasoning. We put Chop's seasoning; we use garlic powder, onion powder, red pepper, black pepper. It's basically you're just to your seasoning--it's already got in it, and that's basically it.

**00:17:25**

**MBL:** Who developed this recipe? Was it a family recipe from the owner or is it something that the staff collaborated to create?

**00:17:32**

**DH:** Actually the--the owner came up with this. They--he--him and another guy sat down and figured out exactly what they wanted to put into it and from there they doctored it up and--well we doctored it up from one point to another until we got it where we wanted it.

**00:17:52**

**MBL:** I noticed you didn't mention in that list of ingredients liver; but I know some people put liver in their boudin. Can you tell me sort of how it flavors it and why y'all choose not to use it?

**00:18:06**

**DH:** We choose not to use it just--they have so many people that doesn't--doesn't like the liver taste in it. So I know it's not traditional--traditional would be with the liver but we choose to just use a straight Boston butt pork meat in it.

**00:18:25**

**MBL:** And are y'all using fresh onions and peppers or are those of the powdered variety too?

**00:18:31**

**DH:** It's all powder--all powder.

**00:18:34**

**MBL:** Is that to keep it shelf-stable or--?

**00:18:37**

**DH:** No; it's just that's the recipe he came up with and that's--we just try to stick with it. We have a good thing; everybody likes it, so we try not to switch anything around.

**00:18:50**

**MBL:** Is there a time of year that people in this area eat boudin more often than others? I know we're a week out from Mardi Gras; are y'all making it in larger batches?

**00:18:59**

**DH:** During the holidays and during the winter; if it's cold outside for some reason boudin sells more. Whenever it's a little bit warmer it seems not to sell that much I guess because the rice and stuff, a lot of people work outside around here.

**00:19:21**

**MBL:** How are people eating the boudin? Is it an entrée; is it a snack--breakfast, lunch, or dinner?

00:19:25

**DH:** I have people that--that eat it as a meal or just come in during the day and they--they'll grab one link and make a day out of it, cut it in three pieces and eat a little piece at a time. You can pretty much eat it any kind of way you want. *[Laughs]*

00:19:42

**MBL:** So y'all sell it hot to the customer and also packaged?

00:19:46

**DH:** Yes; ma'am we sell it hot and cold.

00:19:52

**MBL:** Going back to the ingredients again, I had a question about rice. I've talked to a couple of boudin folks and they are very particular about the rice that they use. What kind of rice do y'all use?

00:20:03

**DH:** We use the--

00:20:09

**MBL:** Is it like a long-grain or a short-grain or do you even have a preference?

00:20:13

**DH:** It's--all we use is long-grain, long-grain rice. I don't know the name of the company that we get it from but all long-grain.

**00:20:21**

**MBL:** And--and why long-grain? Does it do something to the consistency or--?

**00:20:26**

**DH:** Supposedly it doesn't absorb once it's fully cooked; supposedly it doesn't absorb as much of the--the juice. That way it keeps it--keeps it moist, keeps your boudin moist and not dry.

**00:20:43**

**MBL:** When you're making a batch of boudin in the afternoon, how many pounds are you getting out of a single batch and how long will that last you in the case?

**00:20:54**

**DH:** We make two batches; we roughly get about 250-pounds for each batch and we're making it I'd say about four times a week.

**00:21:06**

**MBL:** Is there a set schedule or do you just do it as you need it?

**00:21:10**

**DH:** We have a set schedule but we also--if we see that we're running low, some people come and they'll--they'll take 100-pounds to ship out or they'll have some places that want to serve it

in their restaurants so it depends on you know who is buying it and how fast it's going to go. If I need an extra batch we're going to make it.

**00:21:32**

**MBL:** Can you tell me which restaurants around here are using it or--?

**00:21:38**

**DH:** They have a place in Sypamore Point, Bellevue Inn; they--they use it and I had another one that came. He hasn't been back but he's came and bought a few pounds from us--I'm not sure of the name of that one; I don't even remember.

**00:21:55**

**MBL:** When people eat the boudin what are the different ways that people eat it and how do you like to eat it?

**00:22:03**

**DH:** I like to eat it right after--what we do to cook it is we boil it, and right after it's boiled to me it's--it's the better way. Some people take it out of the casing and make sandwiches with it. Some people barbeque it; barbequed is very good. We even smoke some of ours and that's actually pretty good too--smoked boudin.

**00:22:28**

**MBL:** How are you smoking it? How long?

**00:22:30**

**DH:** We have a smoker, all electronic smoker, and I guess it will take about five hours--four to five hours to smoke it.

**00:22:40**

**MBL:** So it's already cooked before you put it in the smoker 'cause you've done that in the batch, so you're just infusing it with smoked flavor at that point?

**00:22:47**

**DH:** Right; we're putting the smoked flavor into it from the wood chips.

**00:22:54**

**MBL:** Is there a particular kind of wood chip you like to use?

**00:22:56**

**DH:** We use just plain oak chips. We don't get into anything fancy; we just use the traditional wood chips.

**00:23:06**

**MBL:** For people who aren't here with us this afternoon, can you describe sort of the--the physical surroundings of the way the building is built, where are we, and--?

**00:23:18**

**DH:** Okay; we're actually off of--it's a pretty major road that--that passes in front of us called Albertson's Parkway. We have I don't know if I had to guess probably about five to seven acres

that we're on. The building was originally supposed to face the front which most of it does but we kept on adding on as we grew. And we have a parking lot on the front--a small parking lot in the front and it gets bigger towards the back, and--.

**00:23:54**

**MBL:** And how is the store laid out? I know that there's retail space in the very front.

**00:23:57**

**DH:** Right; we have--we can sell a few things in the front with the retail and then all the sudden we have meat cases and then the meat department--right next to the meat department where we cut all our meat and grind our meat is the kitchen, right--hooked onto it with some double doors. And they do all the cooking and plate lunches in there. And then you walk to the back and we have a crackling room and we call it our smokehouse room in the back with our smoker. We have a small freezer outside, coolers, sinks outside. We try to make sure we keep everything nice and clean.

**00:24:41**

**MBL:** Tell me a little bit about cracklings if you would.

**00:24:45**

**DH:** Okay; our cracklings, we get them all pre-cut already whenever we order them. I have a guy that stays in the crackling room all day. We actually have two automatic turners and all he's really got to do is put it in there at a certain temperature and turn on the turners and watch them.

It takes about an hour; we pre-cook them and then we go back in the cooler with them [*Train whistle in background*].

00:25:12

**MBL:** We'll hold for a second. All right; we'll let that train get by. You were telling me about the cracklings. They were already cut and there's a turner. Are we frying the cracklings?

00:25:23

**DH:** Yes; we fry it and we have grease in the--in the pots. Put it in; it'll--it'll keep on producing grease whenever you put it in so all we're having to do is we take the grease out--a little bit of grease out, put your cracklings cooking. Like I said it takes about an hour; pre-cook and we put them back in our cooler and then we have another pot on the other side and we call it our popping pot. And what we do with that is in the morning or whenever we're popping the cracklings we heat it up to 400-degrees and you put the--the cracklings that you've cooked in there and it makes them tender. We call it popping; it makes the little blisters all over on the skin and where people can chew it and enjoy it.

00:26:09

**MBL:** How do people buy cracklings--by the pound or bag?

00:26:14

**DH:** It's by the pound. It's--we sell it for \$9.49 a pound right now. It's--the prices always fluctuate and you can--you can buy it by the pound. We have jugs; a lot of these oil field guys

that I was saying earlier, come in and buy gallons of cracklings to take to their customers. We use gallon--gallon jugs all the time. We ship cracklings in the gallons.

**00:26:40**

**MBL:** Since you mentioned pricing with the cracklings, tell me a little bit about the--the pricing of boudin. What does boudin cost to make roughly and--and how much can you sell it for?

**00:26:51**

**DH:** Boudin is pretty cheap you know to make. It takes a lot of time and that--I think that's why the price is so much higher. But the rice, you know doesn't cost that much. The meat, you're paying \$1-something for it but it's the cooking time and the preparation and all of that--that adds up and we sell ours for \$3.49 which is pretty average around here.

**00:27:24**

**MBL:** That's \$3.49 a pound?

**00:27:25**

**DH:** Three-forty-nine a pound; yes ma'am.

**00:27:26**

**MBL:** How does that compare to something like sausage? How much does that sell for?

**00:27:30**

**DH:** Actually the sausage--we have sausage--\$3.29 a pound so it's actually about the same but you make more because of the rice. You don't have rice in your sausage; you just--so you make a little bit more on your boudin.

**00:27:48**

**MBL:** And then of course it's labor-intensive; you've got all those hours in it. Tell me about the people you've got working here with you. You don't have to mention names specifically but who--who's working in this line of business these days?

**00:28:01**

**DH:** Okay; I have--like I say I have a crackling guy [*Laughs*]. He stays back here; he cooks cracklings, he cleans at night. I have two clean-up guys that come in every night and pretty much pick up after us [*Laughs*]. As we make a mess they pick up. I have three people that work in my kitchen making plate lunches. We do all kind of other things for breakfast and frying and stuff. I have three--two butchers plus myself that work in the front and a cashier.

**00:28:34**

**MBL:** You're obviously pretty busy; so people are eating these foods in their homes a good bit. Do you think that the food traditions here are--I don't know particularly strong or stronger than they used to be or do you see them fading as younger people aren't making the traditional foods at home anymore?

**00:28:55**

**DH:** Traditional foods--I could see how you know they have more people eating steaks than the old time stuff. You know a lot of people like--they eat the intestines and stuff of pigs and--we don't even handle that you know and I could see how it's fading. We--we just cook--we--we cut over here boxed meat which is not like a slaughterhouse. All the boxed meat that we get is pork chops, yeah; steaks, gravy steaks and barbequing steaks and filets and chicken.

**00:29:37**

**MBL:** So it's--when you say it's boxed is it already cut into steaks when it arrives to you or does it arrive as a side of meat that you then slice?

**00:29:45**

**DH:** It arrives as--it's a big bulky piece of meat that we have to slice ourselves. Compared to a slaughterhouse, they'll get a whole calf in and have to cut it down from there.

**00:29:58**

**MBL:** And so you're getting then the product from the slaughterhouse?

**00:29:59**

**DH:** Basically yes; the meat--they call them meat-packing plants.

**00:30:06**

**MBL:** Does that have something to do with coding, restrictions, health certifications? What differentiates y'all from them?

**00:30:16**

**DH:** Yeah; it's--it's a lot different. I'm sure they have to have different codes that they have to go by in a slaughterhouse compared to us because they're having to kill and they have to have an Inspector there. All our meat is already inspected by the time it comes to us. And they have to get all theirs inspected whenever they--it gets to them.

**00:30:42**

**MBL:** If you work around food all day long and you're cutting meats and you're catering lunches what do you cook and eat at home? How's that?

**00:30:50**

**DH:** That's a sore subject. That's what I have a problem with all the time. *[Laughs]* I never know what to cook; I don't even know what I want to eat most of the time. Sometimes you run across something that you see or you're cutting that you really want to cook and you'll cook it but most of the time it's--you don't want to mess with anything.

**00:31:15**

**MBL:** Now tell me a little bit about your family; are you married or do you have children?

**00:31:19**

**DH:** Yes; I'm married. I've been married for 13 years and I have three kids.

**00:31:23**

**MBL:** And what are their names and ages?

**00:31:27**

**DH:** My youngest is nine; her name is Madison. My second to youngest is Taylor; she's 10.  
And my little boy is 11; he's the oldest.

**00:31:42**

**MBL:** Has working in the meat business been a good way to support and bring up a family?

**00:31:49**

**DH:** Yes; it--it is. It's--you can make a good living at it. It's very good to me.

**00:31:56**

**MBL:** Is it something you might like to see some of your children go into one day?

**00:31:59**

**DH:** If they want; I mean whatever they want to do I'll support them. But hopefully they'll go to college and get a desk job because it's taking a toll on my feet.

**00:32:15**

**MBL:** On your feet all day?

**00:32:16**

**DH:** Yeah.

**00:32:21**

**MBL:** I guess that pretty much wraps this up. Is there anything that I haven't asked you about boudin or the store here that is relevant that you might want to share with us? Or, is there any advice you might have for somebody who is interested in getting into this business--either going to work in a store that does this or maybe opening their own store? Are there things that you've learned sort of on the job that you say I wish I knew this earlier?

**00:32:52**

**DH:** Always make sure the layout is how you need it. There's a lot of things that we would have changed before we built this store; that's basically it. Just get a lot of information from everybody. See how they want--how they preferred it laid out and take it in and lay it--and before you build get your blueprints and make sure it's good. *[Laughs]*

**00:33:16**

**MBL:** Do you network at all or talk to other people sort of in this business--in this trade to figure out what they're doing and what y'all are doing differently and what works and what doesn't?

**00:33:28**

**DH:** Yes; like I said I've been doing this for 13 years and I know a bunch of meat-cutters and butchers and we talk all the time. My brother-in-law is still doing it; I have a few friends that I've worked with before that are at other stores. We always keep in contact and--and see what sells the best; we give each other ideas.

**00:33:51**

**MBL:** I know some stores around this area close and then after-hours they do deer processing.

Is that something that this store also offers the public?

**00:34:01**

**DH:** Yes; but we're--we're trying to lean towards getting out of it. For the first year deer processing--processing is real good money. So the beginning we were taking it in to be able to support the store. And we're finally able to get away from it, so we're--we're starting to move on. But we used to.

**00:34:23**

**MBL:** And that would coincide I guess with the busy holiday time of year for cooking everything?

**00:34:27**

**DH:** Yes; it was right in the middle of the--the busiest times and we had a lot of late nights, 11:00--12 o'clock before you get out of here and it was--it was rough.

**00:34:40**

**MBL:** Have y'all ever tried making boudin here with something other than the pork like perhaps venison? I know you couldn't sell it commercially but have y'all ever done it for just yourselves?

**00:34:47**

**DH:** Actually yes; I've--I've done it for the owner, Jeff. We made probably about four batches of venison boudin for him. He makes it and we give it--he gives it all to his customers; he has a--he also owns another oil field company. So he gives it to all his oil field company people.

**00:35:09**

**MBL:** How does the taste compare to the regular pork boudin that y'all are making?

**00:35:17**

**DH:** It's good; it's a little drier. But it basically--you really can't tell the difference; unless you eat boudin all the time and you know what you're looking for, you're not even going to tell the difference.

**00:35:31**

**MBL:** All right; well thank you very much for your time today. I appreciate it.

**00:35:35**

**[End Daven Hulen Interview]**