

**KENDRA FEATHER**

**Richmond, Virginia**

**WPA Bakery**

**The Roosevelt**

**Garnett's**

**Ipanama Cafe**

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Location: WPA Bakery, Church Hill, Richmond, VA

Interviewer: Sara Wood

Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs

Length: 1:47

Project: Women, Work & Food in Richmond, Virginia

**[Begin Kendra Feather]**

**00:00:03**

**Sara Wood:** Okay; well I just have to do this little introduction. This is—I'm Sara Wood and I'm sitting here with Kendra Feather and we're at 27<sup>th</sup> and Marshall at the WPA Bakery and we're doing an oral history interview for the Southern Foodways Alliance. And it's December 8, 2012. So I'm going to have you introduce yourself and tell me who you are and where you are right now.

**00:00:26**

**Kendra Feather:** My name is Kendra Feather and right now I'm sitting in the WPA Bakery.

**00:00:32**

**SW:** And for the record will you state your birth date?

**00:00:35**

**KF:** Yes; May 29, 1970.

**00:00:39**

**SW:** And can you kind of talk about—can we just kind of start from the beginning and talk about what your history is with food? I mean did you foresee yourself wanting to own a restaurant someday when you were younger?

**00:00:55**

**KF:** Um, history with food, when I was a little kid I used to wait tables at—my grandmother would have bridge parties. I must have been like nine and I used to wait on tables and pretend to be a waitress and wait on everybody and they would give me tips, which I really liked. I don't remember what else, like my history—personally, I was always—always had like allergies when I was a kid so I wasn't allowed to have certain foods and stuff like that. So my personal history with food is probably a little different than my history with the hospitality industry because I always liked—I don't know. I always liked—my mom always had dinner parties and I always just enjoyed that part of it, the hospitality part.

**00:01:39**

**SW:** Did you like thinking about the planning and the little details and things like that?

**00:01:45**

**KF:** I think my mom liked that and I think I watched her do it. Both my grandmother and my mother liked to be hostesses and I think I just kind of learned by watching them. I don't think that I was necessarily very good at the details; in fact I'm probably—my mom is a perfectionist and I am not, so I would say that I wasn't very good at that when I was younger.

**00:02:08**

**SW:** Can you talk a little more about your mother and your grandmother's influence on you in terms of—I mean were they—did they cook a lot? Did—do you remember--?

**00:02:17**

**KF:** Yeah; when we were little. We lived in the country in Pennsylvania and we had eleven acres of land so it was all fields and woods. My dad built the house that we lived in. We could pick wild berries in our—in our woods and we would—you know like little kids have lemonade stands? We'd pick berries and sell the little pints of berries to neighbors. That was like our version of a lemonade stand.

**00:02:41**

We made like cobblers and always liked baked stuff; you know that was kind of maybe easy for little kids and you learn math that way by measuring stuff. But yeah; I just remember that. They always had a garden and there was always too much zucchini and I didn't like zucchini [**Laughs**]. I don't know if any little kid likes zucchini. I just—yeah; I was always around. I don't know; you know I don't know if other people had the same experience but we didn't go out to eat. I don't—I don't think anybody in the '70s went out to eat like they do now. It just wasn't—I mean you were at home and that was when they invented like TV dinners and things like that you know. But my mom made homemade bread; she made homemade pita bread; she made homemade donuts. Up—up in Pennsylvania they call them fasnachts and fasnacht day would be the same as like Fat Tuesday or the day before Mardis Gras? Or is that Mardis Gras—same thing; yeah, and that's like a Pennsylvania Dutch tradition. I don't know; yeah I was always around, I guess just eating dinner with your family and being around all the time--.

**00:03:50**

**SW:** And now how did you—how did you end up in Richmond?

**00:03:53**

**KF:** I had to go to college in a State school of either Virginia or Pennsylvania because my dad was in the military. And I used to visit Virginia as a child for family reunion. My mom—my grandmother grew up—right outside of here, a place called Dunnsville, Virginia.

**00:10:24**

So he's going to eat all the profits. **[Laughs]** [Referring to husband, John Murden] I was just bragging about you.

**00:04:37**

**SW:** [TALKING TO FEATHER'S HUSBAND, JOHN MURDEN] When do you guys—for your students when is the holiday break? Is it coming up soon?

**00:04:40**

JOHN MURDEN: One week and two days.

**00:04:42**

**SW:** One week and two days so is it like the week of Christmas and then--?

**00:04:48**

JM: They have two weeks off. I can't keep the days straight. Usually we go back a day or two back after the New Year.

**00:04:57**

**SW:** Uh-hm; **[Pause]** okay.

**00:05:11**

**KF:** No laughing at your computer either

**00:05:26**

**SW:** Oh you were talking about your grandmother was from Dunnsville.

**00:05:27**

**KF:** Uh-hm; yeah she's from—she's from Virginia and my mom would spend summers there. And so when we were kids we'd always have the family reunions and that's like in the Tappahannock area which is not far from where Urbanna is and things like that. So Virginia, I—I thought was really a pretty place, you know. I always liked coming to visit; I thought it was funny the way my cousins all had southern accents and said my name funny. They always said Kindra [*Phonetic/Laughs*] and I don't know; I just liked it. It was—it was a good memory, so I came to visit schools and I chose—I thought I wanted to be a writer for *Rolling Stone* back then so I wanted to go to VCU because then I could go see bands play in the city. [**Laughs**] So dumb —

**00:06:12**

**SW:** Why do you say it was dumb?

**00:06:16**

**KF:** Well because I think like that's one of those romanticized jobs when you're a kid, you know like I'm going to write for *National Geographic* or I don't know. It's just one of those things you think you can do. I'm going to work for *Vogue*. I think a lot of kids have these kind of like fantasized—well I think some people get those jobs, too but I wasn't really prepared to do to that

kind of thing. But I went to school for journalism at VCU and that's how I ended up in Richmond.

**00:06:41**

**SW:** And so how did you end up—what—how did you end up—I know that we talked about this the last time when I was visiting but how did you go from studying journalism to owning a restaurant?

**00:06:54**

**KF:** Um—

**00:06:58**

**SW:** You were a waitress for a while?

**00:07:00**

**KF:** Yeah; I always waited tables ever since I was a kid, just to make money and in college you know. Oh gosh; well I was a-journalism major and I think I had an internship with Sony Music like Columbia Records, Epic Records, and I was going to go into the music industry. That didn't work out because I don't know; the music industry is kind of sleazy. But somewhere along the way I figured out that I could get out of school earlier if I switched to a public relations degree [Laughs]. I had to take less-classes. And it was easier and then by the time I graduated I didn't actually even know what my degree was in. The school I went to lost its accreditation the year I graduated, so it was in pretty bad shape. I mean VCU is a great school now but back then VCU was still pretty small and not always doing the best job.

**00:07:49**

So I graduated and I kind of tried to apply for some random corporate jobs. My heart wasn't really in it. So when the restaurant that I worked at for all those years went out of business that was the opportunity I had to kind of—that—just that thing you're young and you're like oh, if I owned this restaurant I would do it this way you know or I would change things and I would do it—this is smarter if you did it like this so I kind of had the opportunity to see if I don't know—if my ideas were worthwhile. And yeah; just kind of a little bit of finagling to get the restaurant opened but it worked out.

**00:08:30**

**SW:** And what was the name of the restaurant that you were working at—you were waitressing at when it went out of business?

**00:08:35**

**KF:** It was called the Biddersuite. And that was a B-i-d-d-e-r-s-u-i-t-e; it was a play on words. It was like a little coffee shop/sandwich shop and maybe spent a very small time as like a—would have been in the early stages of a cyber café; it was really weird. And that—that became Ipanema and so, and now you know it's been there 14 years, so it's pretty cool.

**00:09:03**

**SW:** I want to go back and ask you a couple of things before we move on. Did you—when you were waiting tables you said you had always waited tables, was it something that you did to basically get by?

00:09:17

**KF:** Yeah; I mean just to pay the—pay the bills, you know while you're in college you know. I took out enough student loans to pay for my classes and I'd have to work to do whatever—groceries, rent, all that stuff. And it was easy; I mean it just was always pretty easy for me. I'm not saying I was always the best waitress, but you know I could do it and I was good at it. I could memorize you know a 10-top's order by heart; you know I could do all sorts of things, so--.

**[Laughs]**

00:09:45

And I just—I don't know; it just—it's always been a piece of cake for me to wait tables, so and it's also better money if you can tolerate—if you can tolerate being around people it's better than money it is working in the kitchen or something like that.

00:10:07

**SW:** I was going to say I feel like it takes a special kind of person to wait tables because it—it takes a lot of patience. And I—I guess what I want to know from you is—I mean how—how did you endure that? Or what was the most challenging part of what—did you like least about it or how did you—how did you go endure that I guess?

00:10:28

**KF:** The—one of the things about waiting tables is the automatic assumption that you're dumb or that you're uneducated or gosh, I don't even know, because I'm not in those people's heads. But that's what I imagine; that's what I've perceived from the way they've treated me. And that's not true, you know; there's college professors that are better educated than some of the people they're waiting on but being a college professor doesn't pay that good, so--. **[Laughs]** You know

there's all sorts of things, preconceived notions. You have to get used to the world treating you in a way that you don't feel like you deserve to be treated but you have to take it in exchange for money. It's kind of a weird job in that way.

**00:11:05**

But that's like the worst side of it. The best side of it is you get to just be very sweet to people and you get to bring them food and make them happy and when it goes well it's really a pleasant experience. It's not—it's not that bad but I think it's you know the longer you do it's—it's a lot of hours on your feet and you know if you know people who have been waiting tables a long time they get like varicose veins and they have all sorts of like leg problems. But it's hard—it can be a very sexist experience.

**00:11:35**

This place I used to work at called Third Street Diner, it's a 24-hour diner here in Richmond and I would get—I would go in at 11 o'clock at night and work until 2 o'clock the next afternoon and save all my tips and do it again the next night and then save all my tips and go into Lowe's like Monday morning to buy paint and this was when I was trying to renovate Ipanema but I didn't have any money. And 2 o'clock in the morning, 2:30 in the morning when the bars let out and you're waiting on a bunch of drunk-people, I mean you know it can get ugly but you just kind of—helped to have a goal. I think it always helped to have a goal for me.

**00:12:13**

I think people that have to do that and they don't have some other reason or a purpose it's pretty hard. I think it's pretty—it can really wear you down. You just have to know who you are—probably in any job but I only know my own experience, so---. But the sexism in the restaurant business is outrageous. It really is. And it's just kind of engrained, but you don't have to believe it, you know; I don't know.

**00:12:40**

**SW:** I'm wondering if—I know that this is very specific but can you think of when—back when you were waitressing can you think of you know you were talking about it's—it's great in ways because you get to make people happy and I'm wondering if you can think of a specific moment where it just—it stuck with you, a particular table you waited on that just melted your heart or— or vice-versa, just a table that was just a nightmare that has stuck with you, just any memories of particular tables you've waited.

**00:13:08**

**KF:** I mean there's always—there's like types, but Third Street Diner was a pretty awesome place in the sense that I learned a lot of lessons there. It's a very cheap—it's a very cheap little diner and they would have like these blue plate specials you know in the evenings like \$6 steak and a lot of the girls you know college students or whatever making their way, they would be-- . When you work at Third Street Diner there's people that come in there and although maybe some can scoff at a \$6 steak, for them that—that's it. That's the high-end of what they're going to pay to eat out. You can get people that maybe you know are so impoverished you know you're just seeing a different—people that work fine-dining will never see this type of clientele that you could see at this diner.

**00:13:54**

There was one guy who—just an older gentleman, always wore like workman's outfits, and I don't remember what—the girls had a nickname for him. They didn't like him. And he came in every day at like 5 or 6 o'clock and he would get like the steak special, you know what I mean and they were mean, you know like he wouldn't tip. But you know they didn't understand

why. Do you know what I mean? Like they never—I don't know; I always kind of found it my purpose with him in particular—I never did learn his name but I would just always try to make sure he got like four-star service you know.

**00:14:27**

And he never really said anything but I just kind of liked to fawn on him a little bit because I just felt like that was his—that was it; that was his treat for the day. That's what he did for himself, you know. Like, he took himself out to eat there for \$6 for a steak, you know like that was it, like and he probably—probably everything was very regimental in his world, you know like this is what I do at 4:30 every day. And I don't know; I just kind of have an understanding for people like that I think. I just kind of understand that that's their need and not necessarily for other people to judge you know. And those are those—maybe I just decided that for him and maybe he could care less but in my mind I did something good you know. I don't know.

**00:15:08**

**SW:** And do you think that—do you think that waiting tables and I mean you've talked a little bit about this you know as we've been sitting here, but do you think it's a—it's a really good social study of people?

**00:15:22**

**KF:** Yeah; definitely. I mean you can see—you hear—overhear things you probably shouldn't overhear. **[Laughs]** There used to be a girl that I'm pretty sure she was a prostitute—well not a—I don't know if she was a prostitute, but I think she ran an escort service because she used to come into Ipanema and she would often have lots of stacks of photographs of naked girls and be

discussing things and--. But she was supposedly a massage therapist that would you know make house calls. I don't know; we always suspected that maybe she was an escort. I guess I shouldn't say prostitute. I don't know; whatever—I don't know what the difference is but there's some things that you overhear. I mean there's—you know you can observe and make a lot of judgments but ultimately you're just supposed to stay out of it you know. And every once in a while maybe you just tell people off you know. Maybe you just step in and say something.

**00:16:14**

There was one guy I had to tell him, I wasn't actually waiting on the table but he cussed at one of my servers and I came out and told him you know you're not going to act like that. That's not okay. He kicked himself out actually. I never even kicked him out. He just—he just left. I think he was so embarrassed. But things like that you know you just have to—you see people be jerks, you see people be really sweet, I don't know. You see people get engaged. I don't know; there's everything you know. You see people breakup; that's the worst. **[Laughs]** Oh my gosh; yes that's the worst table you could ever wait on because like you don't want to go over and check on them you know and you can usually tell what's going on. Like who does that? Who asks their girlfriend or boyfriend, you know meet me at this restaurant at 7 o'clock. I'm going to break up with you in public. **[Laughs]**

**00:17:03**

**SW:** Has that happened to you more than once?

**00:17:05**

**KF:** I would say at least once that I remember, maybe more than once; I don't have a very good memory so--. There's too many stories. There's just too many stories you know—crazy stuff that's happened over the years.

**00:17:16**

**SW:** Besides the guy at the Third Street Diner that you would really—you treated extra special are there other customers that you remember from waiting tables that you either really loved or they were just of quirky characters and they've stuck with you over the years?

**00:17:30**

**KF:** I wish I could think of somebody. I mean there's—there's always lots of I don't now—. I mean there's just so many characters over the years you know. There's one old guy named Emory that was just as mean as a snake. It was like one of those older '70s hippies that bought a bunch of property and now he's a slum lord and he would be weird and he liked to talk about how he didn't care about money but then he would try to like tell the young cute waitresses that he had a lot of money you know to try to like sweet-talk to the girls. **[Laughs]**

**00:18:05**

And he always insisted he was allergic to like 12 different things and then he would just eat all those things and then insist that he was allergic to all those things and just—he just needed a lot of attention. You know some of those things are—sometimes when people are being demanding to you it's because they're not getting enough attention—if that makes any sense. They're demanding attention and they don't care if it's negative; it's still attention.

**00:18:26**

The same with a bad kid; I mean these adults that act like that they're the same as bad children you know. I can remember him being somebody I put up with for so many years and I catered to him and then finally one day I just told him to shut the hell up. And I didn't even care if he came in anymore. I think it just was like 10 years of like coddling him and you know putting up with his behavior and then one day I just got fed up with it because he was still—he's kind of a mean old man, so just one day somebody has been mean to you one too many times and you've been sweet about it and you're just like that's enough. And that does happen. I try—I feel like I fail if I do that but sometimes it just—you break you know. **[Laughs]**

**00:19:05**

**SW:** Why do you say you feel like you've failed?

**00:19:07**

**KF:** Because I feel like it's—I mean that's my job. I mean maybe I think that of myself. I don't know that my male counterparts have the same issues. I don't know that anyone expects them to be—I don't know that anyone expects them to be a—nurturing, like they—they're like yeah he's a good businessman or you know—ah, you know he's this or that or you know maybe they expect him to do shots of whiskey together or whatever. But with me they always expect me to be sweet and nurturing no matter how much crap they throw at me. And so—

**00:19:45**

**SW:** Because you're a woman?

**00:19:47**

**KF:** I think so sometimes. I mean I can't say because I am in the hospitality industry so I should be nurturing to a certain degree. But I also see it as my challenge as a person to try to just be good and but one of my downfalls is—and I don't know if other people would agree with this but one of my downfalls that I've tried to work on is that I make myself—I make myself invisible. And it could just because of being in the service industry for so long. I'm really good at making myself fade into the background or—or have my needs not be as important because I spent most of my life fulfilling everyone else's needs. So that's one of those things. You're just used to waiting on everyone your whole life. You wait tables your whole life and you're like you know—I mean I can verify that I do not wait tables at home, so--. **[Laughs]** But poor John; but yeah I just think having that kind of accommodating personality it kind of bleeds through to the rest of my life. And I have to work on that; you know that's one of those challenges for me is I don't know that I get treated the same. I suspect sometimes that I don't, also because I'm not a chef.

**00:21:00**

I used to cook on the line years ago but anyone that knows me now wouldn't even remember that.

**00:21:05**

**SW:** What—what was that like for you?

**00:21:10**

**KF:** That was fun. I don't know that I was very good at it and you know I was—and we had been joking a lot about whenever I talk about going in the kitchen because I enjoyed it, everyone kind of averts their eyes and walks away and doesn't want to talk about it, so--. One of the guys said I was really messy, which might be true. I got distracted, like I'd put you know rice on the

stove and walk away and then burn the pots so badly it had to be thrown away. I got distracted a lot.

**00:21:37**

So I still do that to this day; I put like water on the stove and let it burn out you know. But I liked the creativity; I liked coming up with recipes and I liked—I loved test kitchen you know just trying different things. The last time I got to do that was when I opened Garnett's, was I spent a whole summer eating sandwiches, trying different sandwich combinations and that was really fun and it was well-received; so that was really the first whole menu I designed by myself—or the only one actually so--.

**00:22:06**

**SW:** And can you talk—I guess this is a good place; can you talk about Garnett's and what it is, who it's named after and maybe a little bit about your grandmother? Let the bus go by--a little bit about your grandmother and her influence on you?

**00:22:21**

**KF:** Yeah; I opened Garnett's in 2009. It was—for 40 years it had been a little sandwich shop called Chaka's which was an older Italian family that had three brothers and, well, they had four brothers. Three of the brothers had different locations called Chaka's and then I think the fourth brother worked for the other brothers.

**00:22:46**

And so the building had a lot of history. And then it attempted to be something else for a couple years and then it went under and the people that owned the building were friends of mine and a lot of people were interested but for some—you know they offered me the keys. And they

said if you want the space you know you can have it but you have like a couple days to decide. So Garnett's is designed because of the space that it's in; it only holds like 20-some seats. It has no hood vent so you can't use anything besides a toaster or a sandwich press. So the entire menu is designed for that restaurant. And it was named—sorry.

**00:23:28**

**SW:** I was going to ask you so did you—did you see the space and then come up with the idea for the restaurant or had you had this and--?

**00:23:34**

**KF:** Yeah; I mean I had already—I had been interested in that space previously and that's why the owners of the building knew to contact me. I had—I had you know looked at it like the year before when it had been for sale and then it—then it went out of business and wasn't for sale anymore because it was just gone. But I—yeah; I just kind of felt like I had an idea that would work.

**00:24:00**

And my grandmother lived to be 103 and a half. And she passed away in 2010. So she lived to see Garnett's. Well not see it because she lived in Phoenix, but she heard about it and she saw pictures. And I named it after her; it's my middle name, Garnett and she—you know was like the oldest of five siblings. Her father was a teacher. She grew up in the Great Depression, through the Great Depression; she's like a fascinating lady. I mean she's a kooky grandma. Maybe she was four-foot-ten and she used to have to sit on a phonebook to drive because she's too short to like see over the dashboard and reach the pedals.

**00:24:44**

She was really eccentric and kind of notorious for trying to feed you food that had gone bad but just secretly is why I think she lived to be 103 and a half is because nothing could kill her. Always like spoiled milk, she'd just call it cottage cheese you know and she—whatever. It was so gross. **[Laughs]** But she was really eccentric but she just lived life. She lived life her way and I think my grandfather passed away—probably when my grandmother was about 40-something. Her kids were like 16 at 18 at the time. And she was single until she died. So if you can imagine being married for maybe 20 years of your 40-some year life and then maybe she was like 47 I guess and then being single for the next almost 60 years and just never settling down.

**00:25:42**

And when she was like 65 she started hiking. And every year she would hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon and back out and that's what she did. And she just—she carried plastic bags everywhere and when she walked around she picked up trash. She was so crazy. **[Laughs]** I mean she would wear outfits that my mom would roll her eyes and say I got that outfit for Christmas when I was in eighth grade and my grandmother was still wearing it you know. Like she was really frugal and—but she loved to be the life of the party and she loved—she loved to get in the mix. And she was like—I mean a ridiculous social butterfly, just ridiculous.

**00:26:19**

And I don't know; she was a neat—a neat old lady you know. And I think early on in life she was a great example for me to just live your life and kind of who cares what other people think. And also, the idea that you're never too old; you know I never had that kind of cap on me. I mean I never thought oh well I can't do this because I should have done this 20 years ago and now it's too late, you know that kind of thing where people go back to college when they're 60

or whatever. That's the kind of person she was. She was like screw it; I'm going to do it and what I want to do.

**00:26:55**

And maybe in some ways it might have been very selfish but it was also really inspiring you know. I don't know; she was neat.

**00:27:04**

**SW:** What was her full name?

**00:27:07**

**KF:** Her name was Garnett Beckman, well Hunley, Garnett Hunley Beckman and we called her Kiki; yeah. Yeah; I mean there's stories—they go on and on. That's—there's just too many stories. She was at Pearl Harbor when it was bombed. She spent I don't know how long on a ship, a blacked out passenger--passenger ship getting escorted back to the States, you know all the women and children. When she was in college, or maybe after college and this is hard to imagine how they did this but when she got out of college first, teachers' college, I think she went to Lynchburg College, then she turned around and took her teacher's salary to help pay for her next sister to go through college. And then they interned, you know helped each other, and the boys went to the Military.

**00:27:52**

Somewhere in her early 20s she and her cousin whose name was Zell hopped a Merchant Marine ship because they wanted to go to Europe. You know that's weird. I mean so if you can imagine two young girls, no credit cards—nothing like that back then hopping a ship full of men and you're like one of the five passengers **[Laughs]** and going overseas to travel around Europe,

I mean it's kind of I don't know—it's kind of neat. I love those stories about her. She's adventurous.

**00:28:25**

**SW:** Did you say that she climbed—when in Arizona she climbed you know you mentioned the Grand Canyon but did you say that she climbed a certain hill, like she'd walk every day?

**00:28:36**

**KF:** She used to get up early in the morning and hike; it was called Squaw Peak. It's now called Piestewa Peak because it's more politically correct—the name. But when we were growing up, yeah; it's actually a pretty tough climb and she did it—she probably stopped climbing when she was about 95 I think or 93, somewhere around there. She had a heart valve replacement and she was sick but that was her mountain. I mean she knew everybody.

**00:29:06**

Whenever we'd go visit; it was like the millennium, you know when everyone was like Y2K. I thought well who am I going to spend it with but the lady that saw most of the last you know 100 years or whatever? So I went out and hung out with her you know and we'd go hiking and it was crazy you know. She—every second person on the mountain knew her name and knew all about her, you know. She'd always tell people it's my birthday but I'm not going to tell you how old I am because I don't want you to treat me like a little old lady. And they'd be like oh Garnett that's okay. And then she'd be like okay I'm 89 and then she would tell them anyway. And then the next person we'd pass she would be like I'm not going to tell you how old I am because I don't want you to treat me like a little old lady. You know she's fun; I don't know.

00:29:51

**SW:** Can you talk a little bit more about—in terms of the restaurant named after your grandmother how—how else has she influenced the place if—if she has besides the name?

00:30:05

**KF:** Yeah; I don't know that was that big of an influence otherwise you know. But I mean her picture is everywhere and I think I just really wanted to name something after her. You know definitely not her cooking; she was a terrible cook, so--. **[Laughs]** I mean she was—she wasn't terrible but she wasn't very good. No; I don't think I could have done anything there that would have been influenced by her. When we were kids she used to make oyster stew for New Year's Day but we couldn't pull it off there you know. But nothing really other than, you know her picture is everywhere and we named it after her.

00:30:40

And the fact that I just wanted it to feel like your—you know like a grandma's kind of place—that kind of feeling of being warm and welcoming the way that grandmothers can make people feel you know. I don't know.

00:30:58

**SW:** Now is she the grandmother who was from Dunnsville?

00:31:02

**KF:** Uh-hm; yeah.

00:31:054

**SW:** And before I forget could you tell me your parents' names, their full names?

**00:31:06**

**KF:** Yeah; my mom is Laura Leigh Feather and my dad is Joseph Allen Feather.

**00:31:12**

**SW:** And do they still live in Pennsylvania?

**00:31:14**

**KF:** Yeah; they live in Mount Gardenia, it's a Chautauqua community, up in Pennsylvania.

**00:31:19**

**SW:** Hmm.

**00:31:19**

**KF:** Yeah.

**00:31:20**

**SW:** I wanted to ask you something before we started talking more about the restaurant. Sorry; I never mic myself so it's weird—okay. I'm wondering in terms of when you—when you—back when you were waitressing, having you know you talked about the Third Street Diner and working with the girls. What are the challenges of working around other women and what do you love about it in that kind of—terms of waitressing?

**00:31:45**

**KF:** My problems at Third Street Diner—Third Street Diner was a place that was known for pretty waitresses. It was kind of like their selling point. So the owner made you wear short skirts. And one of my problems with working with those girls was **[Laughs]** when they had—there were certain shifts and like say like Friday nights or whatever and certain sections that you were going to make the most money. And they would have like their day clothes on and then they would go back and change and let their hair down and put on like a different skirt or a different top and maybe more of a cleavage top and they'd go change their clothes and kind of get ready for the night you know.

**00:32:26**

And I don't really appreciate that part of the business, the selling sex thing. I think people buy what you're selling and you've got to choose what you're selling. Like I would wear a normal tee-shirt **[Laughs]** and I wore the longest skirt probably of anyone on the staff. I didn't feel the need to dress any different; I thought I was a good waitress, so--. And maybe they did make more tips than me, I don't know. Maybe they did but I hate that; I don't like it. I'm not interested in—I'm not interested in participating in anything like that.

**00:33:03**

I guess I'm much more interested in the coziness and hominess and all those other things that can come along with the food business. I don't really think I've ever been interested in the sexiness of it you know like sleek modern bars and I don't know. I just don't really care for **[Laughs]**—it's just not my thing you know. I understand that—that works but it just—it's just not something I'm interested in. I don't know; I don't want to say anything bad about what other people choose to do but I guess maybe I like the cornier stuff I don't know. I don't know else what to say.

00:33:41

**SW:** What did you love working around—what did you love about working around a bunch of other women?

00:33:49

**KF:** I think maybe because—just anything, just friendship, you know like camaraderie, advice. I didn't have a mom that—I didn't have a mom that would—taught me how to wear makeup or anything like that you know. Like I didn't know how to fix my hair and put on makeup and I think—. I went to Catholic School when I was a kid so I didn't know how to dress myself because you know we all wore the same clothes. So I think waiting tables was an outlet for me to meet people outside of my own—outside of my own world and they expose you to stuff like I can remember you know different versions like when I was younger and I worked at this little like family place **[Laughs]** and the waitresses used to try to give me advice and I was like 16. And they'd say stuff; when a boy go asks you to go deer-spotting you better say no. And I'm like why—why, like I didn't understand you know. It just—don't go out and you know—don't go out on a back country road with some guy like in his truck, like that—they would just tell you all sorts of weird advice like that and in that sense they were kind of like motherly or like aunts. And then as you'd get older they're kind of like the—maybe like the sisters you never had.

00:34:58

You know trying to tell you how to maybe—maybe giving you a couple pointers on how to dress nicer. I'm not talking about the cleavage girls, not—not those girls. **[Laughs]** But you know that kind of thing and—and honestly to this day one of the girls I worked with at the coffee shop in college is still one of my closest friends and she's a professor at VCU and she's great.

You know we met waiting tables together, so--. I mean there really is; there can be lifelong friends that come out of this kind of business you know.

**00:35:28**

**SW:** Do you think in terms of—I'm wondering because of your experience do you feel as though that there is an inherent quality in women to know what other people need in terms of you know like waiting tables or just how they treat other people around food, just like wanting to know what people need or wanting to kind of take care of them more—more than men? Do you think that's true or have you seen that in your experience at all?

**00:35:59**

**KF:** I—I would have thought that but I think I've worked with one too many women that were just terrible at that. You know I mean I think that's really—it's probably culturally conditioned for women to be more like that or for that part to be encouraged; you know so I think I'm really good at that. I think I read people really well. And the more complicated a personality the better I am with them for—in a lot of ways. That's not always good for me [**Laughs**] because that means the really complicated people like me a lot you know. But I've seen guys that can be just as sensitive as girls in that area as part—as part of being intuitive or being empathetic. But yeah; there's—there's plenty of people that are just self-absorbed and that comes with both genders you know.

**00:36:51**

And or I mean not self-absorbed but oblivious, oblivious to what others need around them you know.

**00:36:59**

**SW:** And I'm going to kind of change tracks a little bit here but I'm wondering in terms of—in terms of the food that's inherent to Richmond and the area what have you learned about food in Richmond over the years opening up all these restaurants and—and waiting tables here? Is—is—are there things that are particular to Richmond in terms of you know the food and the culinary history that you've picked up along the way here that you've just noticed in your experience?

**00:37:30**

**KF:** I think—there's like historical food in Richmond in the sense like there's Sally Bell's which you may have read about, you know places that have just been around forever and in that sense but I mean like Richmond having particular food that's—I don't know, and I think—I don't think Richmond has figured that out yet. You know I mean because we're a city you know we could say oysters. They're Virginia but they're really not necessarily ours because the water is an hour or two away.

**00:38:02**

There's a couple things that are—that are actually from Richmond but it's weird stuff like the Norton grape was actually a hybrid grape that was made in Richmond or it was made on the estate of some guy that used to live in Richmond. I'm trying to think of some things; I mean I don't know—even know if I would know that much about the history of the food around here that anything that's originally from this area. But I do think that—I think this has been something that like I know John and I have talked about a lot recently is Richmond used to spend a lot of energy trying to be everybody else. And Richmond you know when I was younger people used to walk around and be like well, New York has this or New York has that or so and so or I'm going to move to Chicago or I'm going to move to San Francisco where everything is like this or

that. And I used to be like well then go. You know I like it here. I grew up in the—in a really rural area so Richmond was a big enough city for me and I really liked it. And I think there's a lot of really wonderful things around here, but I feel like Richmond has spent a lot of time trying to be somebody else's identity and I mean maybe that was just the experiences I had.

**00:39:14**

But except for places like Sally Bell's you know or places like that—that are just like they have just been keeping on, keeping on forever. But a lot of the younger folks are like, the restaurants that were just opening and those you know they were trying to be more I don't know a sign of the times, you know more trendy. And I think just now in the last couple years and maybe with the help of things like the Southern Foodways Alliance you know teaching people that you should embrace what you are you know. Like we talk about New Orleans a lot as being a place that just—I wish I could remember the way John described it. He described it really well—that they are who they are and unapologetically so. But you're welcome along for the ride, you know very welcoming but--. And I—I don't know; or Austin, you know Austin just figured itself out a little bit ahead of everyone else and people get so jealous. Well Austin has this and Austin has that. Well Austin figured it out and Austin is very loyal to itself. You know and I think Richmond—Richmond(ers) are just starting to learn to be positive over the last I don't know five to ten years and—and really insulate and learn about themselves and—and embrace who they are.

**00:40:33**

But the food history is complicated because although like New Orleans—I had a friend that actually taught me this, he said although New Orleans was settled by the French; we were settled by the British who aren't necessarily known for their food so--. **[Laughs]** It kind of—you know not a very rich culinary landscape in this area; it's more a lot of the same classics that you

find in other Southern cities I think. But I don't know; maybe there is something you can unearth. I mean I'm—I'm definitely always reading stuff but I haven't really discovered anything in particular.

**00:41:07**

**SW:** Well you mentioned Sally Bell's and that's an institution here.

**00:41:11**

**KF:** Yeah.

**00:41:11**

**KF:** And they've been around forever and it's you know been in the same family for so long and then there's just generations of women who work there, so I'm wondering in terms of that kind of history and in terms of it being an institution how much of an influence that has on you being here with all of your restaurants?

**00:41:26**

**SW:** Um—

**00:41:28**

**KF:** Just the idea of—

**00:41:30**

**KF:** Yeah; that's an influence now. I think when you're younger or maybe I should say when I was younger, it was just about staying open. I think you know now looking—I thought maybe I might own a restaurant for five years. You know I never thought I would own—never once did I think I would own another one. Each time I'm like this is it. And then the next time I'm like no; I'm not going to do anymore. I think that—I think it's amazing to understand that—that exists and also the way that—hmm, how would I explain this—like not to follow trends and not to be—not to change yourself all the time to please people, just to do something well and do it consistently over a period of time. That's how Sally Belle's became Sally Belle's. You know like they probably have even changed their business model. I think at one point you could get whole cakes and now you can't anymore or something like that.

**00:42:29**

Do you want that kind of longevity? You know do you want to be around forever and everybody just kind of knows you and accepts you? Do you want that kind of business, that kind of volume, or do you want to be the media darling for a year and get in all the glossy magazines and have a PR company? You know it's—it's a different world you know. And then in five years sell and open up the next shiny thing you know? Like some people don't want that kind of history. I really like the idea.

**00:43:03**

There's these little kids that come in here, like or they come into Garnett's too, and the idea like there was one little girl that loves our grilled cheese. It's not like it's rocket science; it's just a grilled cheese but she likes it and you know we have been open like three years and that's where she wants to go for her birthday. You know she can go anywhere and her parents are like where do you want to go for your birthday? And she wants to go to Garnett's and have a grilled cheese and she wants to have a lemonade and you know that's her treat and that's kind of neat.

And to think that one day she might be I don't know 25 or 26 and say she has kids of her own and then she brings them in and wants them to eat the grilled cheese at Garnett's because she wants them to experience something she experienced in her childhood; that is what Sally Belle's is. That kind of longevity is I think really beautiful but you got to kind of romanticize it to hang in there long enough I think you know and I like that idea. I like that part about being part of someone's history you know.

**00:44:03**

I don't really like the idea of imagining myself being 85 years old and sitting in the corner being like *I remember you when*—you know like but maybe I will be; I don't know. I mean that wouldn't be so bad. That's not such a bad way to live your life you know; I don't know.

**00:44:18**

**SW:** Do you think—I guess now would be a good time just—you know we started talking about you opening Ipanema. Did you think—I mean what was going through your head when you did that? Were you really scared? I mean it seems like opening your first restaurant would be crazy. I mean how—what was going through your mind and how were you feeling when that happened?

**00:44:38**

I don't think I remember; I think I mean looking back it was just—I mean I didn't know any better to be scared. I didn't know—I didn't understand that it would be hard. I just—yeah; I think I thought it would be easy I think just like anybody does. I was like well I'm just going to open a restaurant you know. Like I mean I just was fortunate enough to stay open. I was fortunate enough to get rave reviews within the first three months of opening which means lots

of money came in which means we stayed afloat. I didn't have a credit card. I don't think I even had a car. I mean I didn't have anything. It was dumb. I mean I think my parents lent me like they're old wood-hauling truck, like this big old battered pickup truck to drive around just so I could to like the store and buy things. Otherwise, I had a bike and god. I had no money you know; I just didn't know what it would take. I didn't understand. But I just worked every day; that's what I did you know and it just—it gave me an identity, it gave me something to do and then early on we got lots of accolades so there's a reason to hang in there. People like this; okay let's keep going. And then just—I just kept riding the wave and kind of growing and growing up along the way you know—ups and downs, so--.

**00:46:07**

By the time I was smart enough to figure out some things it was really too late you know. I was deep in, so--. I don't know.

**00:46:16**

**SW:** Can you expand on that a little bit, like you were deep in, like too—too deep in to call it quits or--?

**00:46:23**

**KF:** Well I—I was pretty trusting and I'd say about three years in, I don't know; maybe somebody asked me about my taxes and I was like you know my accountant files my taxes. He liked to drink. But I just you know figured that he was taking care of everything, but he—he didn't file my taxes for like three years and I didn't file. And some of the taxes apparently I was supposed to file, but I didn't know—so I ended up owing like \$80,000 but still at the time—I think I waited tables four nights a week to pay my rent and stuff.

00:47:01

**SW:** At Ipanema?

00:47:02

**KF:** Uh-hm; at Ipanema so that started the whole like getting a new accountant and—who is still with me to this day and saved me. And the harsh reality of being \$80,000 in debt and realizing if I walk away from this business that \$80,000 follows me and I'm not really qualified to get a job doing anything else right now because you know I had this public relations degree where I couldn't get a job anyway. And my other choice was to stay in it and work—work it out. And it probably took—maybe it took six years to pay it off. So that's year nine—I think maybe by year nine or ten is when we finally made some money. So isn't that crazy when you think about it that way? But in the meantime I made a living. I didn't have a lot of wants, so I waited tables or I cooked whatever and I took a salary and you know just worked out the debt and got smarter along the way. But I made a lot of really bad mistakes you know. I had to fire a girl. I was her maid of honor in her wedding. And I had to fire her and she's still not my friend to this day. **[Laughs]** You know I like I had—I just had to get used by people. You know I had to find out the hard way that when people—sometimes when people come into a restaurant they—you're supposed to do this routine where they're supposed to be like hey that's Kendra. She's the owner. And I'm supposed to be like hi guys; I'm Kendra. I'm the owner. And they turn to their friends and they want their friends to know that they know you. And then you're supposed to like do your little—do your little jig and you know maybe say something really funny and—and then go all right; you know take care. And maybe if they're really someone you like maybe they get a free appetizer or something, you know they get—and then that's social—like I guess like social,

I don't know what; whatever you call it—social points for them you know and then they seem important to their friend.

**00:49:10**

And I—in the beginning I thought I made so many friends. I was like I have made so many friends since this restaurant opened. And I just didn't understand that if they came in and they would go like how is your day? I'd be like oh my god it's been the worst day and they would just kind—their eyes would kind of glaze over. And I was like oh, they don't actually want to hear that you know. And I think I started understanding the role of—and the role is through good times and bad is that everything is great and I love my job and I'm so glad to see you and you say hello to whoever they want you to say hello to and you know you act accordingly and that's—that's your role. You know that's who they expect you to be.

**00:49:56**

And I don't know. And they'll ask for special favors and they are not people that deserve special favors at all. They are not—they're not your good friends you know. You don't have each other's phone numbers and you don't even know each other's last names you know that kind of thing but it's this character that you've become. And it took me a little while. I resented it; you know I resented that anyone felt like I owed them anything you know besides food in exchange for money you know. But I think I've learned after a while that that's just the character you're supposed to play to a certain degree.

**00:50:28**

I know that sounds kind of jaded but it's just a role and it's important to people and it makes them feel good. And if that's what it does that's okay; you know I mean if it makes them feel good and you know every once in a while I'll play it up for a guy if I think he's on a date I'll make a big deal about him to impress his date you know. Oh look at so and so; how are you

doing, you know? Oh big man; you know like I don't know—it's just one of those weird things in life about restaurant owners and the weird celebrity that they're given you know—whether it's deserving or not you know.

**00:51:03**

**SW:** Has that changed for you since you opened the Roosevelt and this bakery, too? I mean does it get—is it exponential when—you know when you get more and more press. I mean does that—does it change or how do you weather that? Is it just sort of the same--?

**00:51:20**

**KF:** I think I—I think a lot that I'm going to start becoming a target because I think that—I think that there's a lot of people that when someone does well maybe—maybe it's human nature not to be able to separate your own success or your own failure from someone else's. So maybe if you're not really happy in your career and you see somebody else doing really well maybe you're just like well that's not so great. There are just some people that are like that; you know like people always say haters can hate or whatever. I have a lot of social paranoia. I think that people don't like me because I probably had to fire more than my fair share or get into it with people more than—more than the average person probably has to because I have to defend a lot you know. And I have to be the one to tell people that it's not okay to act the way that they act whether it be throw them out when they've drank too much or cut them off or—or not give them a job you know.

**00:52:34**

I had a lady who—here's a crazy story. Years and years and years ago when I first thought I was interested in buying a house but I didn't know what kind of mortgage I could

qualify for I went to a mortgage company. And I said you know I just want to do a preliminary thing. And she goes you own Ipanema don't you? So this is before I had Garnett's and I said yeah. And she goes yeah; I applied for a job there once. And I said oh okay. She's like yeah; you didn't give it to me. And I was like oh, okay; you know I thought nothing—yeah okay fine. I didn't. Obviously I know that you didn't work there, so--.

**00:53:07**

I thought nothing of it because I didn't recognize her so it's not like I was like oh that lady that I was determined not to give a job to. So far as I'm concerned if I didn't give you a job that just means I gave it to somebody else. You just didn't get the job. I thought nothing of it. They get back to me and they're like yeah; you qualify for like nothing. You don't qualify for anything. And I thought there's people that work for me that qualify for houses—that bought like houses. You know this is like during that crazy housing boom where everyone is getting houses for like nothing. And I was like everyone is getting all these houses. How come I don't qualify for a house, you know blah, blah, blah. And I think it was like six months later a friend through a friend through a friend said something to the effect of like—I was like yeah I was going to try to buy a house last year but I didn't qualify. And they're like yeah I know. I'm like what do you mean you know? And they're like oh, I heard about it. I'm like what do you mean you heard about it? And it was like this girl was talking about it at a party about how she messed with me and that it was just like a game. I guess she was mad at me. It doesn't even make any sense how that was a game but she was mad at me for not giving her a job, however I mean she had a job in a mortgage company. She's obviously doing much better than waiting tables. **[Laughs]**

**00:54:14**

And—and so she decided to screw with me and gave me like all this false information. But that's really bizarre and—and bizarre and vindictive, but—and I happened to be one of those

—you know I’ve had weird experiences like that and so I think I carry like a weird healthy dose of paranoia sometimes that people don’t wish you well or they don’t want you to succeed, because I think I’ve seen a little bit of that. But it’s probably the little bit I’ve seen might be all that exists, but you know I’m aware that—that that’s just a part of human nature you know and part of succeeding is that someone is not going to be happy for you. And I don’t know; you got to live with that you know.

**00:55:01**

**SW:** And on the flipside of that I mean what is it like for people who don’t expect favors from you, people who just want to come in and enjoy this thing you’ve created? I mean what is it like to—and not just the Roosevelt but any of these establishments; what is it like for you to see people who—and you talked about the girl who wants to come in for grilled cheese on her birthday—I just wonder if there are other stories or experiences that you’ve had that really drilled home like I did the right thing or this is—this is an emotional path because you’re getting to see people have this experience that you wanted to create for them?

**00:55:39**

**KF:** Yeah; I mean just today there was a—I mean this place is—well everyone talks about the third place concept a lot which is you know first place is home, the second place is work, and the third place is that other place that you go to. And—and like I said the community blogs was like the virtual third place for a long time but now Church Hill has got more places coming up and this place is—a couple sitting here, a couple sitting there, and they started talking today and then they started you know just chatting. And one guy gets up to get another cup of coffee and just starts chatting with that guy at the counter. I mean it’s such a small space that they are eventually

having like one conversation as neighbors. Maybe they know each other through so and so or maybe they met at a party once and that goes on all day long here. They're so friendly.

**00:56:29**

And I just sit back and watch and it has nothing to do with me, but it serves something. I mean I feel like they've done studies that say that it's actually good for people's health. I might be wrong but I feel like that's true. I feel like—it's supposed to be good for people's health, you know when they talk about there's this one group of Italian people that all lived to be 100 years old and why is that? It's like well, because you know like here; they leave their house and they walk down the street saying hello to people on the way or whatever and come to a little place and have a little coffee and pastry and visit with their neighbors and then go back. Like those things are really important to—to people's health and welfare and also to the welfare of the community. And those are—that's kind of neat; that's the kind of stuff that—that lasts long past when you're around or when you're here you know. That's—that's stuff that's—I don't know; I feel like I'm so corny when I say stuff like that, but it's neat. And I don't have to be a part of it which is great and I don't have to make it happen and I don't have to run the conversation. I get to be over here watching it happen. If they want a refill I just smile and pour their refill. I love it; I just like to watch it all play out.

**00:57:45**

And it—and you see the goodness in people you know. They're all so nice and sweet to each other and so polite and nobody is being rude. And it's just nice you know. One—if there is a little kid everyone is like smiling and waving at the little kid. It's just sweet; I don't know. It's—it's—those are those moments that make up for any of the negative moments that can—that can exist. I wish I could think of other things, but-- I mean people pay me compliments a lot. There's

that you know as far as the positive part about success, but that just makes me feel uncomfortable. I just feel weird.

**00:58:21**

**SW:** How come?

**00:58:23**

**KF:** I don't know. I think that goes back to the invisibility thing. I just don't know how—I don't know how to take it. I just—I don't feel like—I know how ridiculous this sounds but I don't necessarily think that anything I do is particularly great. I mean I'm proud of everything that I do but I think anybody could have done it. I just happened to be the one that did it if that makes sense like I didn't invent something that no one else you know—it's not like the cure for cancer. I always joke about it's not the cure for cancer; it's not rocket science you know. They're just sandwiches or they're just muffins. I kind of fell on my whims to a certain degree and I'm fortunate to attract some really great like employees or you know like business partners, just nice people. But I think I don't understand; I don't understand why it's interesting to other people or--.

**00:59:26**

Like they did a cover story; did you read that? The local paper—yeah; and—

**00:59:33**

**SW:** It actually came out—

**00:59:36**

**KF:** Okay; did it? I couldn't remember if it came out the week before or week after. A couple people came up to me and maybe I made this joke in front of you before where they were like that brought tears to my eyes. And I'm like why? It's not like it said I had leukemia. I don't understand. Like why did you get all teary-eyed and they think I'm being ridiculous and I'm not. I don't understand why it's so interesting because for me it's like okay you opened a restaurant. I mean I can talk to you all day long about the things I think and Lord knows at least I'm giving John a break right now **[Laughs]** because I like to talk his ear off about everything. And I have opinions about you know I think this is right and this is wrong or I think people should do more of this and less of that. And I definitely am working on my own life philosophy you know. I'm kind of trying to figure out what that is and what—how I want to live you know. I think I'm still trying to figure that out but I don't necessarily think that anything I do is that especially interesting if that makes sense, so--.

**01:00:35**

**SW:** Do you think that that's one of the keys to your success though that you are not the type of person who lets success go to your head?

**01:00:45**

**KF:** I don't know. I don't know; yeah I mean hmm, I'm trying to think of reasons why I think maybe other people don't succeed, but--. I don't know; I think that—I definitely you know behind the scenes like see other business owners do things and go like oh god, please don't do that. That's such a bad idea, like—and maybe the things I don't like about them are when they're arrogant but—but some of those people are plenty successful in their arrogance or in their haltiness. I don't really like things like that. But there—there is a place for all that, so I don't

know. Maybe the personality I have suits the kind of work that I do. I don't know that I would do well in a fine-dining, wine-elite kind of world. I call them snob peddlers. **[Laughs]** I'm such a jerk.

**01:01:46**

I don't think I would do well. I think that's where I would actually fail so I think I found my little corner of the world you know—maybe that's it. I know my strengths.

**01:02:00**

**SW:** I feel like besides the *Style Weekly* and I saw John T's piece about the Roosevelt in *Garden and Gun*, but I was at the Historical Society today and one of the historians I was just talking to her because I was doing some background research and she said oh there's that one woman. She's got four restaurants here; she's amazing. And she was going on and on about you. And I just think do you—you know you were talking about the person who said that the article in *Style Weekly* brought tears to their eyes; do you think it's that—that when people read the story of someone who has been successful and who has pulled themselves up by their boot straps that—that is inspiring to people and people connect with that more? It's not like a—a snobbery thing. It's just someone who has worked so hard and has really good ideas and it's worked for them?

**01:02:46**

**KF:** Yeah; I mean—I mean there's a big difference between me and—there's a lot of restaurant owners that opened restaurants with five or six business partners. I mean I have no partners in the first two restaurants I did and I did them all without taking out loans. I did all—I mean I really did do it with hard work and—and being clever and you know doing some of the stuff myself and whatever—just kind of figured it out. But in that sense yeah; I think it—it appeals to people

in the sense that it doesn't--. I mean even some small local businesses still seem corporate you know in their approach and I don't know. I mean I'm proud of that part of myself.

**01:03:38**

The part that I'm probably the most proud about is the fact that I did it all on my own you know. And although I do have a partner with the Roosevelt and I have a partner with the bakery I mean the only reason the Roosevelt exists is because I wanted to be the Lee's partner because he's great. You know in all honesty he's just great. And I'll never regret that for a day I don't think. He's just—the more I get to know him the more he's a wonderful business partner, but—and that's the neat opportunity I have now which is that—maybe if I'd approached him 12 years ago and said do you want to open a restaurant together he would have been like you're that whacky vegetarian lady down the street. You know like what are you talking about? So I can get people to take me a little more seriously. That's good, but--.

**01:04:25**

I don't know; I mean you know I don't know your experience but everybody kind of secretly wishes they could own a restaurant or a bar. When I was growing up in Pennsylvania, a lot of the dads—I don't know if ever saw this but they would turn their basement into like a little bar and they'd have like a kegator and they would be like you know football games have everybody over and be like all right, belly up to the bar and they'd pretend to be bartenders. So it's like this weird thing where people are always like yeah; I always wanted to just cash in and own a sports bar or like own something you know. So maybe that's it; maybe it's that part that appeals to people, which is—I secretly always wanted to do this. But I don't think they really—I think they think they do but I don't think they really want to own a restaurant sometimes. I think the part they romanticize is involved in the ego and I think that's the part that isn't really going to

work out the way you planned you know. I think that they think that makes them popular or powerful. I don't know.

**01:05:33**

**SW:** And you talked about being little and playing waitress for you—when like your mom's friends and your grandmother. Did you secretly want to own a restaurant when you were younger?

**01:05:46**

**KF:** No; I wanted to be a stewardess when I was little. I was going to learn languages and then—but then I flew and it turns out I get motion sick, so--. **[Laughs]** Yeah; what else did I want to do? I think I wanted to be a teacher for a little while but my mom was a teacher so then at some point during my rebellion I decided I didn't want to be like her. And then yeah; I was going to be—I don't know. I wasn't a very driven child so I think these are all things I figure out in my adult—in my adult life. I think when I moved to Richmond I kind of just started—I had been very sheltered so I think when I moved to Richmond and moved on my own to a city I think I started just absorbing everything around me and kind of started learning about that kind of stuff.

**01:06:30**

I mean I probably only started eating interesting food somewhere in my 20s, you know. I probably just ate quesadillas and chicken sandwiches or something you know as a college students—bagels; I don't know. So that stuff only came later.

**01:06:46**

**SW:** And there's a couple things I just want to go back to make sure I have. How old were you when you opened Ipanema and why the heck did you decide to open a restaurant?

**01:06:57**

**KF:** I was 28. I always say that to people when they ask me, when they say they want to do something and I go—and they're like I don't know what I'm going to do with my life and I'm like when I was 27 I didn't know I would own a restaurant when I was 28. It happened in six months and if that gives people—you know but—but opportunity was there and I was available to take advantage of the opportunity. And I always try to say that to people as an example of be prepared when opportunity knocks. You have to be prepared. They always say that you can't have your life all tied up in all these complicated things because then when opportunity knocks you're going to have to say no and let it pass. And I was able to not—I was able to be one of those people that doesn't live with regrets. And that sounds—I've gotten to take advantage of a lot of opportunities that came my way and not have to say no, which is great.

**01:07:49**

I don't know why. I just—owning a restaurant seemed like a different idea back then than it does now. I mean that would have been—the very early stages of the whole food celebrity, *Food Network* world, so before food became so—and social media, food wasn't so all-consuming for everybody like it is now. I think it was just maybe—maybe I was—I think I always thought I was a little bit smarter than I really was back then. I think I was just arrogant in a way. I just thought I could do it; I don't know. I have no idea, honestly; I wish I could remember better. I wish I had like a diary that could tell me but I don't really remember where my head was other than it just seemed like a good idea and I was such a whimsical or kind of

impulsive person that I always just moved forward with everything I did. Like I was like I think I'm going to do this and then I would just do it you know. I don't know. **[Laughs]**

**01:08:55**

**SW:** So by the time you opened—so how long was Ipanema—I keep saying—I'm from Michigan; I'm sorry—how long was Ipanema opened before you opened Garnett's?

**01:09:04**

**KF:** Was it 12 years? No; 11—11 years.

**01:09:11**

**SW:** And by that time was it—did it get easier financially to—to open another restaurant? I mean I'm just wondering in terms of the finances of it; was there momentum building? Did it seem like oh this is no problem, full-speed ahead, or did you still have to worry about things in order--?

**01:09:30**

**KF:** Yeah; it's easier in the sense that Ipanema was paying the bills so opening Garnett's I didn't have to take any money from Garnett's. I didn't need—you know one of the problems with restaurants I think is that say you have three owners that are going to open a restaurant. Well they each want to make \$50,000 a year but they restaurant they opened isn't capable of churning out \$150,000 a year in profit. So what do they do? They got to work the jobs. They don't want to work the jobs and everybody bleeds the restaurant dry and the restaurant fails.

**01:10:05**

I was able to—you know in the early days I was able to wait tables so I never took any money from the restaurant until the restaurant was solvent. Later on when Garnett's opened I didn't have to take any money from Garnett's because I got my salary from Ipanema. In fact, only this year did I ever take any money from Garnett's so three years. But I had those three years to let Garnett's become solid and become what it would be. So that's just a—that's the advantage in that sense—the sense that you have momentum and also Garnett's didn't do so well, so Ipanema kind of helped keep Garnett's afloat a little bit by making desserts for it and stuff like that so it cut down on the cost.

**01:10:49**

And yeah; in that—in that sense and also the longer you've been in business the more you have—there's this vital crew of people you need like you need a good plumber and you need a good electrician and it takes years to find the right people that won't screw you over. The refrigeration guys I used, I've used them for 14 years and they love me and I love them, and you know now I call them up. I'm going to be doing something new and they're like anything you need. We're great; I pay my bills as soon as I get them and they help me any way they can—great relationship. But it takes years to find that team. Or a good builder; you want to start a new place. Who is going to build that counter? A good—well I said electrician, like who else—like a logo designer. There's one girl that does all the logos you know. So I've also gotten the chance to assemble my team and that kind of—that really became cohesive at Garnett's and then carried itself over and that was kind of nice because Ipanema, I mean it was a mess for a long time you know.

**01:11:49**

**SW:** How so?

**01:11:51**

**KF:** Just I didn't have any of that help and I didn't have any of that kind of professional—I feel like I always called all the wrong people, all the crooks, you know like there are. There's people out there—there's plumbers and there's electricians that are A-students and there's ones that are D-students and they're still charging you the same amount of money you know and that kind of thing. So I've been taken advantage of my fair share, so--.

**01:12:16**

**SW:** I'm wondering if you we could talk just a little—do you have a little bit more time? I think I'm—we've been sitting here for an hour; are you game for a couple more questions? If you want me out of your hair just shove the microphone out of your face. No, no; this is the whole point.

**01:12:34**

**KF:** I know but it's hard; it's hard.

**01:12:39**

**SW:** Can you talk about how you came up with the idea for the Roosevelt and how—and can you introduce Lee because you mentioned him and I just want to make sure we have his name and who he is on the record and how partnering up with someone has—has changed things for you? You talked a little bit about that earlier but I just wanted to talk about that in terms of the Roosevelt?

01:13:05

**KF:** Okay; so let me see.

01:13:10

**SW:** When did you open up?

01:13:12

**KF:** Two thousand eleven. So 2010 I took a little trip to New Orleans with a friend. Came back and Garnett's had been around for a year. And neither Garnett's nor Ipanema was doing well at all. It actually had a rough haul; we had—had a bookkeeper who had—*[Pause]* I don't know how to say this politely—messed up everything up to the point that both the restaurants were suffering.

01:13:44

It caused a lot of chaos and there was missing money and all this other stuff. And so I was pretty stressed and pretty upset and just decided to take a weekend trip. I had never been to New Orleans. Went with a friend, loved it, and fell in love with the city and the spirit. And kind of wished that when I came back to Richmond, I was—obviously it was wishful thinking because both my restaurants were failing at the time; I wished you know if I ever had another restaurant you know I would do like this because you get the bug. You get the creativity bug which is—my next restaurant is going to be—you know. But you're just joking most of the time and this time you know I was definitely just talking. And I said I want it to feel like New Orleans felt you know just really positive of a place. I mean we talk about that a lot. And my wish had always been that Richmond would be more proud of itself, and you know whatever. And so—and I had always loved the cooking of Lee Gregory. And so my business partner at the Roosevelt's name is

Lee Gregory and he's like a South Carolina native, culinary school guy—kind of worked his way up through kitchens around the area and he used to be the head chef of a restaurant called Six Burner and I used to go in there.

**01:15:02**

**SW:** And that's your—

**01:15:03**

**KF:** Yeah; it doesn't exist anymore but it was the kind of restaurant when you went in Lee would never get any press. When they would list the top chefs in Richmond he was never on the list. He never really ever got any press or any mentions or any kind of accolades. And he was young; you know still—still young, but when you would go into the Six Burner every other chef in town was eating there. He was that guy. He was the chef's chef; you know like the man's man. You know like—and there would be so and so from this restaurant or this chef from that restaurant. When they had a night off that's where they ate. And you know I would go in there all the time and bump into all these people and you know always talk about—we'd always be like Lee is the best.

**01:15:50**

And he used to always want to have his own place and he used to pull me aside and be like you know Kendra; what do you think about this idea? And I'd be like I don't know. That doesn't sound like a very good idea. And he'd be like all right you know. Lee has always had different ideas over the years. And I used to always joke, and I was like god if I had the money Lee, I'd love to open a restaurant with you, you know whatever.

**01:16:09**

So I get back from New Orleans; this is 2010 and the people that own a lot of properties around Richmond that they also own the property Ipanema is in and they're very fond of me and they're like there's this restaurant in Churchill. It's in foreclosure; it's a building and there's a fully equipped restaurant on the first floor. And they're like do you want it? I'm like what do you mean do I want it? And they're like if you want to open a restaurant there we'll buy the building because we believe in you, and you know they're just that kind of people. They're amazing, amazing people.

**01:16:42**

So I immediately called Lee. I think I emailed him and said hey, here's the situation. I know this sounds crazy. And he was like well what's the catch? And I was like I don't know. And so we both went and looked at it and we liked the space and we just started meeting. And we didn't really know each other, I mean just to go back, we had met on a few occasions where I think I maybe had one or two many glasses of wine and would wander into the kitchen and be like I really loved my dinner. And he would probably wish that I would get the hell out and he was very polite, but I'm sure—looking back he was probably like get that crazy lady out of my kitchen. So we had only met on a couple of occasions just really politely talking, you know shop together. So for me to ask him to be my business partner was a big risk because we didn't know anything about each other.

**01:17:30**

But the very first meeting we had he said look; I don't want to do fine-dining. And I said me, too. And he's like I like this, this, this, and this. And I was like yeah; me too. And I mean weird things like now—now this will seem funny now. We both subscribe to *Garden and Gun Magazine* you know **[Laughs]** like we both like the Southern Foodways Alliance, things that neither one of us had in common with anybody else that we knew of. There—we've read all the

same stuff; we liked a lot of the same types of foods and you know I already liked the food he cooked and we basically had the same idea and we liked the same look. So it's been incredibly easy to be his partner. He pretty much let me decorate the restaurant any way I wanted and he just would kind of check on things and be like all right that looks good. And I let him write whatever menu he wanted. And I did—one thing I did that he wasn't sure about he's happy with now I did the all Virginia wine list and that was kind of a big deal because nobody else had really done that in this area. And yeah; it just kind of came together for that. And then that's when people really started knowing who I was around here is really—was the Roosevelt and it really has a lot to do with Lee and the success of that place, so--. But he's great. He's unlike—unlike the chefs that they show on television or maybe the kinds of characters that chefs think that they want to be, he's--. Sorry; I know I'm making too much noise.

**01:19:03**

**SW:** It's okay; it's fine.

**01:19:07**

**KF:** He's just kind of his own person. He likes what he likes. He takes care of his kids and loves his wife and likes to tell corny jokes. I don't know; you know he likes to talk about wrestling and football and I don't know dumb action movies. He just **[Laughs]**—he—he doesn't talk about himself all day long. He doesn't talk about food all day long. He doesn't walk around and act like he's a big deal.

**01:19:32**

So as you can you know see like the things that I think are great about him are well suited to my personality so he's just like kind of an aw-shucks kind of guy. He still—I think he

probably calls me at least once a week and goes Kendra can you—can you believe it? I mean can you believe it? And I'm like no. **[Laughs]** We still have that conversation a year and a half later and we've been named you know Restaurant of the Year and all these accolades and you know we—we actually got in *Garden and Gun* magazine, you know things like that—that just you know we never—when you set out to say you're just going to open this little neighborhood bar and grill in Church Hill and hope people come you know it starts off so simple. So that's actually a really beautiful story. I'm very, very proud of that place and I'm proud that Lee is my partner and I'm just really you know—I mean he's probably my—he's probably my version of the celebrity chef like you know I feel very proud to know him and want to show him off to people. So that's where I'm guilty of being like that. **[Laughs]**

**01:20:36**

**SW:** Now in terms of the WPA Bakery how—have you thought—I mean had you thought about this for a while? Was this something that was in the back of your mind, I want to do this someday? I mean how--?

**01:20:51**

**KF:** I used to love making desserts so I kind of self-taught. I baked for years. I had a little apartment above Ipanema and it's on like the fourth floor of the building so I could see out over the city and I would just sit up there and bake and teaching myself—and for Ipanema I would teach my self like vegan desserts and things like that. And I baked for years until Garnett's opened. And when Garnett's opened I had to work so I was kind of a baker for a little while. And I just wanted to—I like making pies. That's my thing and I have a very specific pie recipe that we use so all of our pies are very uniform. And I feel like you would know an Ipanema or a

Garnett's pie. It's very different than other pies. We don't use the same kind of crust. We use—we just do it differently.

**01:21:39**

**SW:** Can you explain how it's different?

**01:21:41**

**KF:** It's—we use a shortbread crust in a spring-form pan so it kind of gives a nice perfect circle but it's not a flaky pie crust and not a classic pie crust. It's actually more like a shortbread or a tart crust they would call it. So we do that because I just like—I like shortbread so it's just something I like. And then the filling and then if it's a fruit pie we do a crumb topping because I have a theory that everyone loves a crumb topping. It's just one of my theories. **[Laughs]** Kind of like you know those blueberry muffins with crumb toppings and we do it with our muffins here, too. So it just became this kind of uniform styled dessert and pies are very easily made vegan by just a certain—get the right kind of margarine and opposed to butter and it's very easy for us to make vegan pies which is great for Ipanema that specializes in vegan and vegetarian food, so I just started making pies.

**01:22:35**

And I just—I like that people like my pies, so it was just like very rewarding you know and positive feedback, so--. I did that for a long time and then when Garnett's opened I stopped baking and not long after that I was diagnosed with a gluten allergy so that meant no more flour. And then that's when David, who had always kind of baked a little bit too, he started taking over the baking full-time.

01:22:59

**SW:** What's David's full name?

01:23:00

**KF:** David Rohrer—it's R-o-h-r-e-r. And he used—he and I have worked together for 11 years, so he was like a line cook chef in Ipanema for years and then he took over the baking about I guess—when Garnett's opened so three years ago and now we have a bakery together.

01:23:20

**SW:** And how long has the bakery been opened?

01:23:23

**KF:** About three weeks; yeah and it's been really busy you know. **[Laughs]** It's good.

01:23:29

**SW:** Is there anything that you guys like in—I'm curious if there are signature desserts or—or pastries here and if—well I'll ask you that first? Is there anything that's new since this bakery--?

01:23:45

**KF:** Yeah; we've been making sticky buns here, you know like kind of classic northerner thing and people really like the sticky buns. And we make these little French pastries called canelés. They're like a little crepe batter pasty. They're like as big as a donut hole and really small. But we're not that—that's as far as we go as far as getting into European desserts because you know Dan is not a trained pastry chef and you really just can't into that world unless you're really

trained in it. So we just kind of specialize in like really classic Americana desserts like sticky buns and coffee cake and muffins. I mean he makes great muffins. I know that sounds weird but a really good muffin is—is a great thing you know. **[Laughs]** Yeah; just simple, just classic—lemon chess pie, chocolate pecan pie, you know hummingbird cake, whatever—carrot cake, just really all the simplest I mean—I'm sure that anyone could make our desserts at home if they wanted to. You know just one of those things you know. I think that we do a good job but they're—they're not rocket science. **[Laughs]**

**01:24:55**

**SW:** Are you—now are you using WPA Bakery to—to make desserts for the other restaurants?

**01:25:02**

**KF:** That's—that's the—when Roosevelt opened and then we got another client with the Virginia Museum we actually had enough desserts that we could open our own storefront. You know we were waiting for that. I mean that was the whole pie-shop idea that was like in the—in the wings—waiting in the wings for all these years.

**01:25:23**

**[Pause]** So yeah; we just—it was smart because we didn't need the foot traffic to stay open. So when we went to open this place we already have enough money to pay the rent and David's salary to bake because we had all those clients. So it was a pretty fool-proof plan you know; we just had to wait. It took a couple years, so--.

**01:25:56**

**SW:** And I'm wondering—I just have a couple more things. You said that you were here like 5:30 in the morning and so I'm wondering if you could talk about the fact that you have these four places under your belt now but it's not—like a done deal; you're still pitching in just as much or more and it's not like you can go on auto pilot and say okay I've done my job. I mean you're still rolling up your sleeves and working. Can you talk about that?

**01:26:22**

**KF:** Yeah; well I had to get up at 5:30 this morning and I got here at 6:30. I—I think that I'm not—I think I'm a better co-worker than I am a boss in that sense that it's easier for me to get in the mix and wait tables or get in the mix and you know get behind the counter and serve coffee to see what needs to be fixed.

**01:26:54**

You know I—I used to hostess at the Roosevelt and that's how I would see the problem with how the reservation policy needed to be—because I was there every day experiencing it and I—you know so I worked really hard on coming up with a reservation policy for that place or you know kind of understanding what people want and understanding how it affects them like you know you can ring people up 50 times and they all groan at the price and you're like, well maybe we should drop prices. Maybe this is a little too expensive. I mean you just—you can look at the paper and see numbers and stuff but I'm not really good at that. I'm not really good at making those graphs or those charts and comparing numbers. But I'm—I'm better at being there and—and observing and—and feeling things. I'm always—I'm always like it doesn't feel right. I can't even explain that but a lot of things I do are based on how it feels. And so I feel the positivity coming from people and I think that means we're doing something right or I notice that everyone really likes this and nobody really likes that. You know just it's easier for me to

understand what's working and what's not. And I'm not always at all the places like—like right now I was filling in at the Roosevelt because we fired somebody so during the period of time until we hire someone I'll fill in. And then for a while I was working you know filling in at Ipanema at night. Like right now I haven't been working in Garnett's but I go in there every day and eat lunch so I'm around.

**01:28:35**

And I feel left out and I feel out of control sometimes if I don't you know—but there's also a part of me that has to let go of that control because you can't be everywhere at once and you got to just put your checks and balances in effect and hopefully that works you know. But things happen; you know you just can't—you can't drive yourself crazy. Do they give stuff away? They probably do. I can't be there every day at all four places just to know that everyone is ringing up every single cup of coffee or whatever kinds of things make business owners crazy and make them work the long hours that they do. I don't do that; so although I do participate I don't—I don't work 24/7. I can't. I would lose my mind, you know and I think that I would become a jerk. And then I'd be a jerk to my staff and then they'd quit and then I'd have to get new staff and I'd be a jerk to them and you know I don't know.

**01:29:35**

I don't know if it's the right way; it's just the way I do it, so--.

**01:29:40**

**SW:** And in all this time have—because this is all—this whole project is about women and food has this been hard? What have been the upsides and the downsides to being a woman in the business in—in your business and—and you know making all these restaurants work? I'm wondering if—what your experience has been like.

**01:30:04**

**KF:** It's—when I first went to open Ipanema, the landlord said okay, well you know how are you going to open this place? And I said I'm going to open this place and I pointed out my male friend and I said he's going to loan me \$15,000 to open this place you know and I'm going to do this. And so the landlord does a credit check on me, right but he never does a credit check on my friend who is a very assertive male, you know the power of suggestion, shakes his hand firmly, and looks him in the eye and says yeah, I'm going to give her \$15,000. That guy didn't even have a checking account right but it was the old school Southern boys' network, you know like this old Southern guy is like son, are you going to give her \$15,000? And he's like yes, sir; and he's like all right shake on it, you know. It's all done; it's great and I'm just standing there completely amazed that—that just happened. But it got me what I wanted so what do I care you know?

**01:31:04**

I, you know I put in—I put in plumbing at Ipanema when we first opened, the very, very last inspection we had to pass was this plumbing inspection and I didn't have money to hire a plumber so I went to Lowe's and I—you know asked all these questions and bought these parts and I put them together myself. I had never done any plumbing before. And I was just plumbing like one of those plastic mop sinks that you get for like \$50 bucks. No big deal; and the plumbing—the plumbing inspector comes in and I'm like yeah; I did this myself—very excited, right. And he's like that's sewage pipe. That's not plumbing pipe. And I'm like what—it's pipe you know? And he's like no; that's not okay. And I started crying because I was like I was so proud of myself and I was just tired and stressed you know and just so crest-fallen that we weren't going to open on time. He looked at me crying and he was like oh god, fine; and he passed me. Was

that an example of him giving me a break because I was a female crying? Yes; and you know what I took it. I was like thank you very much.

**01:32:07**

I mean there's been good and bad you know. I think that it's been hard on me when I was single to date. I think that a lot of alcoholics wanted to date me because they thought they could get free beer. A lot of people wanted to take my power away you know.

**01:32:25**

**SW:** How so?

**01:32:26**

**KF:** I can just remember—he's going to hate this conversation; you just have to deal with it. I can remember dating people and having them to try to discipline my staff as if a stepfather disciplining children and me being appalled by it and being—what did you just do? You're not that their boss. I'm their boss. And that was always really hard. It was really hard for the men in my life to allow me to be in control of that environment whether it be for chivalrous reasons or not.

**01:33:04**

They had the need to take over control or take power and it was always really hard for me. And also the doubt that maybe that's all they liked about me. You know maybe they liked the idea of—maybe it made them seem important because they felt like they had some say you know kind of like the idea that everyone wants to own their bar, well maybe you just date a girl that owns a bar and then you just pretend like you own it. You know like I mean I don't know—definitely that was hard.

**01:33:40**

And in the kitchen it's tough. When I used to cook and I can remember being guilty of this myself, say there's our cooks in the kitchen, two girls and two guys. Say I'm one of those girls. I can remember being like say you ask a question like how long do you guys think it takes to cook this cream sauce? But you would ask the guys and not the girl. And I can remember never—ever being able to work with another female in the kitchen. I can remember always clashing and—and I can remember always never asking them their advice on kitchen things assuming—automatically assuming that the boys knew more even though—and I would catch myself doing this; I'm saying I'm guilty of it as much as anybody else was. I would catch myself doing this realizing that the girl might have had a much better resume, much longer resume than any of the guys did but for some reason I would immediately go to the guys and I would discount the other female in the kitchen. That was something I was guilty of doing and got accused of doing and kind of had you know a rude awakening to the fact that I was doing that.

**01:34:55**

But also clashing with other females like having big blowouts and them challenging my authority or—as—I don't know if that was an alpha-female thing, you know I mean I don't know what that was about. You know I'll never know but I haven't always had very good experiences and kitchens can be very much boys' clubs. I mean that's different. There's dynamics you know. I mean the genders play in. I used to make a joke that you needed to have a rooster in the hen house. Sometimes in front of the house there's too many girls working and they fight with each other. And it doesn't have to be a—it doesn't necessary have to be attractive or anything but sometimes there has to be a guy in the mix. Gender is bound to bump into each other out for whatever reason. If you've got like a female bartender and three female servers on one night you're going to have problems. They're going to bicker for whatever reason. I don't know why

but if you have a male server, female bartender, and two other female servers then maybe it'll ease up. I don't know what the reasoning is you know. I mean then I guess you could get way into like gender politics but--.

**01:36:09**

But my experience has been that I have taken advantage of it and I've been taken advantage of you know in the same sense that—that plumbing inspector might have passed me--. I'm sure there's one or two plumbers that got one over on me too because I was a dumb girl and didn't know you know like just the story about the mechanics. And you know we're like the mechanic treats me different because I'm a girl you know. I think there's all those challenges but I felt like—I'll say this; and I think I've even told John this, I feel like I had to open—I had to open three or four business to get the same amount of attention that some men get for owning one. You know I feel like it was easier—I don't know; it was easier for people to discount me or especially the vegetarian restaurant. I mean that's easy for people to be like oh, you just have a little vegetarian restaurant you know down the street. Nobody cares; it's in a basement you know. I mean it's easy to ignore and easy to not treat it as equal to another restaurant. But I used to think that. I don't know if that's true. But to this day there are still people that talk to Lee and not me at the restaurant.

**01:37:37**

There's a guy that came in and said—he said I want to—yeah I want to talk to you about this Board of—he wanted to make up some weird Board of his—of chefs where they all get together and go out to dinner and give—give advice and stuff like this, like counseled elders so to speak and he's inviting Lee to be on it, because he's like you—you know because you own your own business. It's like Lee had owned his own restaurant but I at that point was on my third. And that guy just did not address the conversation to me at all. And it might have just been

his excuse to make buddies, you know. But things like that will come up. Like I've been in a bar where—I was with a friend who was a cook and the owner of the restaurant said hey, let me give you a tour of my new place you know. Let me take you around and let me show you, you know but like left me sitting at the bar. You know I wasn't included. That happens sometimes. And I could say that's because I'm a woman or it could be because I've gotten really good at being invisible. I mean it might be my fault that this happens. You know but then again I didn't really miss anything either. You know really I'm not crying about it, but you know when it does come up every once in a while I think—I notice and I might make a comment to someone like later and be like you know what I noticed happened today? Like this happened but I don't really hang onto it in a negative way.

**01:39:05**

But I guess we're talking about it now so all these kind of—it's starting to trigger these memories of things that have happened over the years and-- I have been treated differently and sometimes it might be an advantage and sometimes maybe not but it hasn't affected me and it hasn't affected my success. And you know, so I never believed it I guess—that helps.

**01:39:36**

**SW:** This is my last question and then if you want to add anything that's always the last question. I'm wondering if there have been any women along the way that have helped you or I guess as an addition to that if there have been any woman that you've helped along the way in terms of the business or any of the restaurants—just in general really I guess.

**01:40:03**

**KF:** I don't know. No one really helped me; I didn't have a lot of help. There was one restaurant owner though that I'll never forget in the early days at Ipanema I didn't have anyone to talk to. I didn't have any friends that were restaurant owners and I thought they were all friend with each other and I kind of felt like a—kind of felt like the kid who eats at the lunch table by themselves you know. In my imagination, my perception they all knew each other and they were all friends. And you know I was twenty-eight; I was young. I looked even younger than I was and like I said I owned a vegetarian restaurant like who cares?

**01:40:45**

But there was one lady named Leslie who owned a restaurant that's been around forever and she used to come down after she would get off work and have some drinks maybe with her chef and hang out at Ipanema. And she came around a lot in the early days and she would—she used to be like if you ever need anything—that's it. You know she was like if you ever need someone to talk to, if you ever need anything, if you need any help in any way you just call me. And she's the only one—the only one of all those people you know and it meant so much to me. And I never did take her up on it, but you know I'd see her around. I actually-I haven't seen her in years now but I'd see her around and just that meant a lot to me. You know and I think I've always tried to help anyone that's asked me because I didn't have anyone to talk to. So wherever—you know I've had—one guy was like I want to open up a frozen yogurt place. Can I talk to you about it? Like I get a lot of requests like that or I want to open my own business. Can I interview you and ask you how you did yours? And but I don't know of any—I don't of anyone in particular that I've helped that I can think of. I'd love to claim it but I don't think I have you know.

**01:42:10**

**SW:** Do you know Leslie's last name and what her restaurant is?

**01:42:13**

**KF:** Leslie's last name is Tuitte—T-u-i-t-t-e—I think that's how you say it and her restaurant is called Helen's.

**01:42:22**

**SW:** And that's in Richmond?

**01:42:23**

**KF:** Uh-hm; yeah.

**01:42:27**

**SW:** I have just a couple more questions.

**01:42:29**

**KF:** Okay; that's fine.

**01:42:31**

**SW:** You mentioned this—sorry, I keep reaching--. You mentioned this a couple times like you're just—oh I'm just a vegetarian restaurant and people are like oh, you're just the vegetarian restaurant. Do you think that there's a stigma to that, I mean that because you're—you have a vegetarian restaurant it's like lesser than other restaurants?

**01:42:49**

**KF:** Yeah; I do. It is in people's eyes.

**01:42:53**

**SW:** Why do you think that is?

**01:42:54**

**KF:** It's part of our culture. I mean—I mean it's—I mean didn't—I feel like Anthony Bourdain in like the '90s was like bash vegans. It's cool you know like I mean it's—it's definitely getting more accepted now but owning a vegetarian restaurant was not the brightest idea in 1998. I mean it was during the—my god what was that diet? What was that diet everyone was on, the all-meat diet? What was that? Oh Atkins Diet, yeah; which was all like meat and vegetables. You know people would come in and be like I'm on the Atkins Diet and I'm like well, there is nothing for you to eat here unless you just want to eat a salad you know. And they'd be all upset and I'm like what do you want? Go somewhere else you know.

**01:43:38**

And we also weren't strictly vegetarian we started. You know we always kind of pescatarian or whatever but I mean yeah; it just doesn't count you know. I mean I'm not saying that I agree but that's the general perception. I mean it just—you know there's—you know you meet people and they're like oh, you know. Oh you own a restaurant. What's the name of your restaurant? Ipanema; oh I've never heard of it. Yeah; it's a vegetarian restaurant. Oh yeah; I'm not a vegetarian, oh yeah. Yeah I probably will never come eat there and I'm like yeah; that's fine. I don't care. You know like I don't get my feelings hurt.

**01:44:17**

But one of the jokes between Lee and I was when we went to do the Roosevelt and we wanted to do a 100-percent Virginia wine list, Lee said are people going to make fun of us? And I was like probably but you're talking to the girl that owned the vegetarian restaurant for 14 years like I don't care. You know it doesn't mean it's a bad idea. Just because some people don't like Virginia wine it doesn't mean that they're right you know. And I mean there—there is a community that needs that and it's not that easy. It's actually not that easy. It's a lot harder to cook vegetarian and vegan food than it is to not knock out some pork chops and mashed potatoes you know. I mean it's a lot more creative and I don't know, challenging; I like it.

**01:45:05**

But yeah; I—I can't—I don't know if that's the perception of other people but I've always kind of assumed it's that silly—silly little place in the basement you know just who cares?

**01:45:16**

**SW:** I've taken so much of your time.

**01:45:18**

**KF:** That's fine.

**01:45:19**

**SW:** Is there anything--? I mean we've talked about—

**01:45:26**

**KF:** I don't know.

01:45:29

**SW:** OK.

01:45:30

**KF:** Yeah; I feel like I'll think of something tomorrow you know. John can you think of anything? **[Laughs]**

01:45:38

**SW:** Can you—can you say John's last name too for the record, just who--?

01:45:42

**KF:** Murden—M-u-r-d-e-n.

01:45:44

**SW:** And who is he?

01:45:47

**KF:** He's my husband—husband. Yeah; I don't—I don't know. I mean I wish—I appreciate you asking me those questions but I—I don't know.

01:45:58

**SW:** Okay.

01:45:59

**KF:** You know I hesitate to go on. You know I can tell some stories and I can talk but that doesn't--.

**01:46:03**

**[End Kendra Feather Interview]**