

**KYLE GUIN**  
**Car Lot Bar-B-Que - Winfield, AL**

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Date: September 28th, 2006  
Location: Car Lot Bar-B-Que – Winfield, AL  
Interviewer: Amy Evans  
Length: 50 minutes  
Project: Southern BBQ Trail - Alabama

**[Begin Kyle Guin]**

00:00:02

**Amy Evans:** This is Amy Evans for the Southern Foodways Alliance on Thursday September 28<sup>th</sup> 2006 in Winfield, Alabama, at Car Lot Bar-B-Que with Kyle Guin. I think I probably just slaughtered that but anyway, Kyle, if you would say your name, please, for the record and also your birth date.

00:00:22

**Kyle Guin:** Kyle Guin, September 28<sup>th</sup> 1971, so today is my birthday.

00:00:27

**AE:** Today is your birthday?

00:00:29

**KG:** Yes.

00:00:29

**AE:** Happy birthday.

00:00:30

**KG:** Thank you.

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**AE:** Oh, my goodness. So before we get deep into the barbecue talk, let's talk about your last name and your family's connection to the town of Guin up the road.

00:00:41

**KG:** It was named after my fourth great-granddaddy, Jeremiah Guin, which—which one, our first—our second child is named after, and he gave the first land in Guin for the railroad and cemetery, so they saw fit to name it after him. That’s about it.

00:01:05

**AE:** So your family goes back a far piece in this area? [*Laughs*]

00:01:08

**KG:** Yeah, they go back a piece in this area—back from when the Civil—the Civil War was, so there’s quite a bit of history around here.

00:01:17

**AE:** And your parents are Roger and Faye Guin?

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**KG:** Yes.

00:01:22

**AE:** And your father started a car dealership here [at this very location] in the [nineteen] ‘70s. Can you give a little background on that?

00:01:28

**KG:** He started in [nineteen] ’75 or ’76 with an Oldsmobile dealership and that lasted—that lasted ten or fifteen years. And then he bought into the Chevrolet dealership and moved and

rented this place out for a while and kept the Chevrolet dealership about fifteen years and decided to retire. And when he retired, he decided to go into the barbecue business back down here, so in '98 we converted to a barbecue place.

00:02:03

**AE:** But he was doing barbecue on the side in the dealership for a time, was he not?

00:02:07

**KG:** Well, he did it on the weekends some. He really didn't do it on the side. He started tinkering with it and he had—when he—when he got out of the full-time dealership, he came up here and he started a—a used car dealership and then started building the barbecue up and building the barbecue up, and then we found we had less cars, more barbecue. So it just kind of phased out the car version of it.

00:02:36

**AE:** And so in John T. Edge's book *Southern Belly* he talks about your father maybe kind of wanting to make barbecue and sell barbecue to bring the people in to buy the cars. Was it kind of like an advertising ploy?

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**KG:** Yeah, kind of—kind of and it worked and he—like I said, he phased his way out of the cars and had more barbecue than he was selling cars, so he just decided to do it full-time with the help of his lovely family. **[Laughs]**

00:02:59

**AE:** Do you have brothers and sister?

00:03:01

**KG:** I've got two brothers, Greg and Phil. Phil is the oldest and Greg is the middle; I'm the baby of the three and no, they have nothing to do with this place. [*Laughs*]

00:03:11

**AE:** Were you just luck of the draw, or you really liked the barbecue business when you were growing up?

00:03:18

**KG:** Well my brother is a chaplain in the Air Force, so he was never around. My brother—other brother is a CPA, so he didn't really have the time. I just happened to be the one left over.

00:03:31

**AE:** But you enjoy it, too, right?

00:03:32

**KG:** Oh yeah, I love it; I love cooking for folks. You do it as long as I have now, and you ain't got much of a choice—either you love it or you go home. [*Laughs*] I've got three kids; I'm not going home soon.

00:03:44

**AE:** So do you remember when you were—I guess you would have been like five years old or so when he opened the Car Lot business back then?

00:03:55

**KG:** I can remember parts of it; I can't remember everything, but I can remember parts of being up here. I can't really remember when he opened it up but as far as being up here, all I can remember as a kid was being here up 'til I went to school and when I'd get out of school, I'd walk down here and help wash cars, help a guy out there that taught me how to drive—Charlie Bass. He's been here since I was a little kid, and I'd help him wash cars. And that's about all I ever did when I was a kid.

00:04:25

**AE:** How old were you when he started getting into the barbecue?

00:04:29

**KG:** Well I started getting, let's see—[I was] around 27 or 28, something like that was when he started really getting into it.

00:04:39

**AE:** Did you go away to college at all or—?

00:04:41

**KG:** I did not. I went for about a year, and I decided I was going to work for a living.

00:04:49

**AE:** Where did you spend that year?

00:04:51

**KG:** Bevel—it was Brewer City College up back then.

[*Short pause*]

00:04:58

**AE:** And we were talking when we were sitting out front about some of the things that are in the dining room now and that your grandfather was a—a butcher. He was in the meat business.

00:05:14

**KG:** He had—he had a meat packing plant; it was called, well Clay Guin’s—God, what was it called? I remember all the stickers that he had that said “Clay’s Finest Meats,” but it was—they slaughtered cows and hogs and sold to distributors and stuff like that but yeah, I’ve got—I’ve got a rifle out there that he actually slaughtered the hogs with, and I’ve got the wood chopping or wood block table that he actually did his meat-cutting. I’ve got some meat saw out there that he used and some of the scales and some of the ox yokes he had when he was farming and just little tinkers like that.

00:05:59

**AE:** Where has that stuff been stored and—and how did your family manage to hang on to all that?

00:06:04

**KG:** Oh, if you knew my middle brother you’d know; he’s—he’s—he’s unreal when it comes to the Guin family history. He hung onto a lot of it, and then all of us kept a little bit at one time and then—oh, the wood block tables, I don’t know how we kept them but they—I’ve had them for probably fifteen years, myself so—.

00:06:36

**AE:** I can pause that if you need to do some business.

00:06:40

**KG:** Yeah, pause it.

00:06:43

**AE:** Okay, so we were talking about your—your grandfather’s meat packing business. Where in town was that, do you know?

00:06:50

**KG:** It was on the south side of town. It was—it was on the way to Guin, really. Lord, it’s not there anymore; I can’t really remember where it was. It’s been so long ago since they tore it down. Daddy sold the property, and it went with it. And it was a developer, so as soon as they got it, they mowed it down. Me and my brother went out there and found an old meat cooler that he had that had a lot of old invoices and stickers and all that, and we hoarded up about everything we could to—to hold onto. But other than—I don’t know where—it was just on the south side of town.

00:07:32

**AE:** Was it—with your grandfather in the meat packing business, did your father ever talk about coming up and them having, you know, hog roasts or anything?

00:07:45

**KG:** Daddy—I don’t know how much Daddy actually did of the slaughtering or meat cutting. I know he did some, but he mostly sold to the other distributors around. When Granddaddy—I can’t remember—the packing plant closed down before I was born but it was—no, as far—as far as I know, Daddy—Daddy always sold cars, and when he didn’t, I don’t think he had any interest in—in the hog business. After—after that, I never did really hear anything else about it ‘til, you know, the early [nineteen] ‘90s or the late ‘80s, when he started cooking barbecue again—or when I can remember him cooking barbecue. It just kind of grew back in his blood, I guess.

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**AE:** Well let’s talk about the barbecue now. You were saying earlier that your father would barbecue at home once a month or something and—and enjoyed doing it. Can you—can you talk about that and those memories growing up?

00:08:47

**KG:** Yeah, he—he’d wait to well—I don’t know if it would be a holiday or something like that; he would go out back and he had his little make-shift smoker, and he’d throw a butt on the grill and let it sit out there all morning. And he’d come back in, and he’d you know—he’d be picking everybody, “What did you think about it,” and, “What did you think about it?” And, “Is the sauce too spicy or is it not spicy enough? Or is it not thick enough?” And they’d just, you know—it was more of a tasting party than it was a supper. It wasn’t really—just grilling us about how we liked it. That was the only thing that ever worried him. He just hated for somebody to say it wasn’t good. Of course, I don’t remember anybody ever saying that but he—he liked doing it.

00:09:39

**AE:** Can you tell me about the sauce because do I remember that you said it was your grandfather's recipe or something like that?

00:09:46

**KG:** As far as I know, Granddaddy had a recipe and Daddy—Daddy tweaked on it a little bit and got it—had—of course, I'm, you know, partial but it's the best I've ever had. I like it. It's just a good combination. It's not too sweet; it's not too spicy; it's—to me, it's just right.

00:10:06

**AE:** Is it mainly tomato-based or is there a little vinegar in it or—?

00:10:10

**KG:** It's a little bit of everything. It's got a little bit of this, a little bit of that; it's just a good mixture of everything put together. It's not—it's not a bottled sauce. I mean I know some people they try to take bottled sauce and put it in their bottles and say it's homemade, but I can guarantee you this is—this is made here every day.

00:10:33

**AE:** Is the sauce that you're making, is it pretty much the same as the sauce that your father and grandfather made?

00:10:39

**KG:** Pretty much. Well, like I said, Daddy tweaked on it a lot. When he used to have it, it used to be—I don't know what all he did with it, but it's a lot different to when we were growing up.

It was a lot—I don't know; I really can't explain it. You've just got to taste it then and taste it now to really realize the difference. As far as ingredients, I don't remember what all he added to it or took away from it but I don't know—he kept adding onto it until it was just right.

00:11:10

**AE:** And was your—does your father, today, does he like the sauce that you make?

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**KG:** Oh, yeah. Yeah he likes it. He ain't got a problem with it.

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**AE:** And tell me about your white sauce, too.

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**KG:** We—we do pretty good on our white sauce. We—like I said, out there before, there was a couple of boys from Texas that said—I'm not going to say the name of the business, but there was a place up around Decatur [Alabama], we'll put it that way, that had white sauce, and they said ours was by far better than theirs. Theirs was, of course—I don't care. I mean, you know, that's just two boys from Texas. But I get rid of it. I get rid of a lot during the week. So I go by fan base and they—I haven't had any complaints over it. There's a lot of people that come in and get barbecue now that would rather have the white sauce than the red, so we oblige them.

00:12:05

**AE:** Is the white sauce something that your family made or something that was kind of more of customer demand?

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**KG:** That was a recipe from my sister-in-law when we opened this thing. She had it tucked away. My middle brother, Greg, his wife, she's the one that gave—gave us the recipe. And to my knowledge, we hadn't done a thing to it, so whatever—whatever she had was right.

00:12:32

**AE:** Do you have any idea where she got her hands on that recipe?

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**KG:** Don't want to know. I don't want—I don't want it to track back to where it might have come from. As far as I'm concerned, she made it up. That's—that's all I want to know. *[Laughs]*

00:12:46

**AE:** Is she from Winfield or this area?

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**KG:** Yeah, she's from Winfield. Her and my—her and my brother dated through high school and went to college together and got married, I think, his first or second year in college. So they've always—they moved to Tuscaloosa when—well they were in Tuscaloosa, going to college, and they stayed down there for a while and then he moved back and opened up the practice up here.

00:13:12

**AE:** So would you say then that Car Lot Bar-B-Que brought white sauce to Winfield and this part of Alabama?

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**KG:** Yeah, that would be safe to say that. I don't think anybody was used to it. Or I don't know if anybody even knew what it was. I still have folks that come in and say, "What is this white sauce?" And then they'll take it, and they'll ask for it from now on so—. I think we started it around here.

00:13:40

**AE:** So tell me how you—how and what you learned about barbecue from your father.

00:13:46

**KG:** Hmm, we ain't got that long. We just take a good slab of meat and put it on the smoker and smoke it for a long, long, long time. We usually smoke it from—I think we put it on around 10:30—11 o'clock; it comes off the smoker about 7:30—8 o'clock the next morning, so I mean it stays on there quite a while. You know, a lot of people—we add some stuff, but a lot of people, you know, they'll try to flavor it up, putting rubs and baste on it and marinade and I just—I keep it simple. You know, if you've got a good hickory fire, you've got a good smoker, you keep it on there long enough, and you've got a good sauce to put behind it, there ain't much way to screw it up. It's not—it's pretty idiot-proof. Of course, I don't know, that's just my take on it. I don't know. A lot of people push their rub; they like putting it on there, and then you got too much garlic in something or too much paprika or you know—I don't know. I just like keeping it simple.

00:15:01

**AE:** And your dad did it the same way?

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**KG:** I do it the same way Daddy did it. Ain't no use—don't fix what ain't broke.

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**AE:** And that—the smoker that's up in the front room, that was the original one that your dad put in when he started the barbecue?

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**KG:** That was the one that he set on fire in '99. That was the renovation of '99 and 2000.

00:15:23

**AE:** And—and so can you talk about the fire a little bit? Was he baby-sitting the—the—?

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**KG:** Well I'd—we'd got through—me and him stayed pretty late that night. I don't know what we had going on but he had—there was a little partition around it and there was the suspended ceiling at the time and it was inside—actually inside the restaurant here. He—I had went home at like ten o'clock, and he was staying behind to throw some wood on the fire and leave it. Well about 10:30 I get a phone call from the police department, and the only thing they told me was, "Is this Kyle?" And I said, "Yeah." And they said, "Well we wanted to tell you that the Car Lot was on fire." So I come back up here pretty quick. And Daddy was on oxygen and I asked him, I

said, “What happened?” And he said, “Well I melted—I melted my shoe to the smoker and—  
**[Laughs]** I said, “Why?” And he said, “Well it just got away from me. It got hot and it—. He did. He melted the sole of his shoe out, trying to kick the door shut and he—he was lucky to get out of it because that partition he had wasn’t—it was—it was just big enough for probably two people to get in there and move around. But he—he was lucky. But that—that started the renovation process. We got a new smoker now. It’s probably three times the size of that one out there that we use. We can smoke up to—I figured that up the other day and we could—if we had to, we could probably cook around 1,300—1,400 pounds of meat at once, if we wanted to. It’s got three fireboxes, and it’s got four shelves but it’s—I think it’s about four-foot deep and twelve-foot long and twelve-foot high. It’s just a monster. We had it built around the back by a guy that rented out the space, and he built it and brought it around on the forklift and set it on the slab, and we built the building around it. It was too big to fit through the doors, so it’s—it’s a monster.

00:17:34

**AE:** So that was installed in ’99 after the fire after you were renovating. What made you want to commit to a smoker that big? Did you just—did you have grand hopes of what Car Lot Bar-B-Que could become?

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**KG:** That was Daddy’s idea. Daddy has always kind of overdone it. He hadn’t—he hadn’t never—I think that one out there was just a little bit too small. He couldn’t get enough meat on it and then you know **[Laughs]**—if it was too small, fix it bigger. Well he just—I think he went a little overboard and—but I mean it does the job. Lord, I can cook whatever I want to and how

much of it I want to. I can throw chicken, ribs, barbecue all at one time and not have any problems.

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**AE:** I would imagine that large smoker comes in handy on the Mule Day [Festival] weekends that we were talking about.

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**KG:** Yeah, it comes in handy. We get rid of a bunch that way. It—yeah, I couldn't have anything smaller when it comes to them days.

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**AE:** So are you doing most—you said ribs and chicken but then the barbecue, is it mainly butts or you do—?

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**KG:** We don't do many—the rib part, there's a guy up the street that used to do ribs [The Spare Rib], and I kind of let him have them because it's not—we're not a big place and I've got to pretty much be here all the time, and I'm the main cook. I don't have anybody that does it for me; I ain't going to hire nobody to do it for me. I just don't have time with having to work in the kitchen and do that, so mainly what we do are half-chickens. I think we cook—we cook them on every Thursday and have them through the weekend and when we run out, we run out. The butts I cook pretty much every day, and that's what people seem to want. That's what I'm going to do. I have calls for ribs every now and then, and every now and then I will cook them on occasion for people, but most of the time we just cook butts. I mean that's just—that's what I like to do. I

don't like fooling with that other. You've got to baby-sit ribs too much and then you—there's too many critics that say, "Ah, these are too hard," or, "These aren't cooked enough." And I just—I'd rather just not cook them than have—I can't stand somebody to come in and tell me they don't like something. I keep the barbecue; I haven't had any complaints about it yet.

00:19:54

**AE:** Well and—and in Winfield, in this small town there are three barbecue places—the rib guy up the street [at The Spare Rib] and the Boar's Butt. How has—how has—how can Winfield serve three—three barbecue restaurants serve Winfield do you think? Do y'all just do something different?

00:20:12

**KG:** Ah, to me there's just one barbecue place in Winfield. I don't know. But both sides of the street—I don't know. Ninety-percent of the time when people want barbecue, they come to me. One of them cooks with gas, which I don't agree with, and I don't care—you can publish that if you want to. They—you use hickory chips and gas, and when you use gas it ain't cooking; that's just using an oven. And then the other guy up the street, he doesn't stay open long enough to—he's only open a couple of days a week, and he doesn't sell enough, I don't think, to—he just does it—he retired from the school system a long time ago, and I think he just does it for fun. He does—he stays, you know—he stays enough to stay open, but I think that's about all he wants to do—just to have something to do. But as far as competition, I don't—it ain't being cocky; I just don't think I've got any competition around here.

00:21:18

**AE:** What about in the surrounding area around Winfield? Are there a lot of other barbecue places in like the county [which is Marion County], I guess?

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**KG:** There's—not really. There's—we started having some orders from Hamilton, which is north of here. I don't think there's a barbecue place in Hamilton. Fayette has got a couple—two or three—but we don't—I think we have some deliveries every now and then to some hospitals or some clinics and stuff in Fayette but Guin—Guin has got one, but I don't know. I've got—I don't know. I think I've got it around here.

00:21:57

**AE:** Uh-hmm. Well when your—your father started doing barbecue at the Car Lot, did you see it like getting to be big?

00:22:04

**KG:** Well it—it got a little bigger the longer he kept it—a little—he'd have to add stuff every year and do a little something different and then the catering started coming, and we did a little bit. When me and my wife bought it in what, 2004—2003, something like that—I started pushing it. I started doing a lot of advertising. Daddy never advertised or anything like that. And we've got some more stuff that we do that I pushed and tried to get a lot more younger people in and tried to get it out to different counties and different states, and that's how I think it's how—he had just run up on me one time and he come in for quite—quite a bit from Oxford to Atlanta. And I've had some more people from Mississippi that do that—that stop on the way over there. I don't know; I've just tried to push it a little bit more than Daddy did. I think Daddy was just

happy to cook for somebody and make a little money while he was doing it, but I want to corner the market. **[Laughs]**

00:23:16

**AE:** Can you talk a little bit about what kind of person your dad is?

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**KG:** He's a good guy. He's—he turned 70 the other day, [September] the 22<sup>nd</sup> and I don't know. When he had the car lot, we didn't—we didn't see him a whole lot when he was coming up in the car lot and, of course, he was trying to work all the time and make money for us. But then when he got out of the car business, he started getting a little more down-to-earth and not competitive or anything like that. He—he—the older he gets, the mellowed out he gets. He was kind of uptight for a while but he—he's a good fellow. He's—you won't find anybody around—I mean there's folks that oh, gosh—there's folks from Birmingham that you'll see that come in looking for Daddy. They had bought five cars from him in 1981. Or there's folks from I mean all over—Mississippi—come in and said they hadn't never bought a car from anybody but Daddy. And, you know, they still—there was somebody in here the other day that all he had bought was cars from Daddy and had Daddy find him another car. And Daddy doesn't even do cars anymore, but he—you know, he does it for people. He's a good fellow.

00:24:31

**AE:** And has your mother always been involved in the business or—?

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**KG:** Mother has been involved with anything Daddy was; she didn't have a choice. *[Laughs]*  
He—she's the one that kind of kept everything together. She—she always did the office work  
and kept him straight and kept the rest of us straight—three boys. That's hard to do.

00:24:53

**AE:** And you've got three of your own now.

00:24:54

**KG:** And I've got three of my own now, yeah. It's funny how things tend to turn, isn't it.

00:25:01

**AE:** So were you working pretty much full-time with your father before you purchased the  
restaurant from him, or how did that work?

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**KG:** Yeah, probably—I worked—I'd come and help him during lunch for about four or five  
years and when they'd go on vacation, I'd run it for them. Probably the last year or so before I  
bought it I started really staying up here a lot and helping him cook because he—he had cancer a  
while back, and he needed a lot of help back then and so we—I don't know, we just kind of  
jumped in it. And I can't even remember if that was before he had the restaurant or after he had  
the restaurant. But he's had some—more little things done but I don't know. I stayed up here  
quite a while the last year before I bought it, and then the opportunity came and they wanted to  
retire and I said, "How much you want for it?" And they gave me a price, so yeah, you can't  
really Jew with your mama and daddy.

00:26:05

**AE:** So how long have you and Amy been married?

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**KG:** We've been married about four years, haven't we? [*Turns to his wife*] Four years and three kids. [*Laughs*] That's not a dull moment at our house.

00:26:15

**AE:** So do you think Amy knew that she was marrying into the barbecue business?

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**KG:** Yeah. Matter of fact, one of the—let's see, when was it? When we first started dating, I had to work. It was—it was the Christmas parade and we got covered up, and the next thing I knew she was running tables and doing this, and that wasn't but probably the second or third date. And she had come up to see me when I was at work, so I think she knew what she was getting into.

00:26:47

**AE:** So she works here with you every day and brings the babies in and—or how does that work out?

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**KG:** Yeah, she worked at the plant for a long time, and I made her quit after the—made her quit—listen to her. After about the—let's see, when our second one was born I told her, I said, “That's about it.” She was working second shift and third shift at the big plant over at Guin;

that’s no place for a woman, so I said, “You can just help me, and we can cut out somebody.” So it’s worked out fine; we’ve made it pretty good. I don’t know about this third one, though; I might have to open up another business or pick up garbage on the side of the street. **[Laughs]**

00:27:32

**AE:** So tell me a little bit more about how you’ve changed the restaurant since you’ve owned it—about what you’ve added to the menu and just the décor and things like that.

00:27:42

**KG:** We—as far as the menu, we haven’t added a whole lot; we’ve added some stuff. We’ve got a little thing that Daddy came up with that was probably right before I bought it or right after I bought it—I can’t remember—but they come up with a little thing called “The Smothered Pig” and I sell a—he came up with it, and I pushed it. I had one guy who came in one night and said—my nephew was working for me at the time—and asked him—said, “Fix me a smothered pig.” And I looked at him like, you idiot, you know. What—what is it? And my nephew, Clay, said—he said, “I’ll take care of it. You just sit here and watch.” So he put it on a plate and I said, “Well that’s a pretty neat idea.” And he—I started advertising it and we sell—that’s probably one of our best—best sellers.

00:28:39

**AE:** And what is it?

00:28:41

**KG:** Well it’s—it’s just—it’s pretty simple. It’s a plate of fries; it’s covered in cheese, barbecue meat on that, and then smothered in sauce, and it’s, you know—everything kind of jammed up

together but it—it is a Car Lot exclusive. It’s—oh yeah, and for the—for the ones that aren’t as—it’s a pretty good meal, and I mean it will cover a plate pretty good. It’s—you’ve got some people that can't eat them and some people that can, but we’ve got what you call a “Piglet,” which is just the half version of it that we sell a bunch of, but those are probably our two main sellers. And then you’ve got the “Chick” and the “Chicklet” that we’ve got now. People started griping because they couldn’t get chicken on it, so we swapped it over to where you can put chicken on it. So we—we sell a bunch of those. That’s about the only change on the menu that we’ve got. We started doing wings and stuff like that, but that’s about it.

00:29:49

**AE:** What about sides and stuff?

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**KG:** They’re about the same. You get baked beans, potato salad, slaw. We’ve got turnip greens; we’ve got sweet potato fries now. What else?

00:30:03

**AE:** Where did those recipes come from for the potato salad and whatnot?

00:30:08

**KG:** It’s a secret. *[Laughs]*

00:30:10

**AE:** Okay.

00:30:10

**KG:** It's a secret. I don't reveal that source. *[Laughs]* That's just a secret.

00:30:18

**AE:** What made you want to put sweet potato fries on the menu?

00:30:23

**KG:** I have no idea. Somebody come in one time and said, "You should get them if you can." And I hunted and hunted and hunted 'til I found some, and we sell boo-koodles of them. I can't stand them, to tell you the truth; I don't like them. But everybody else does; they'll get them and they'll eat them plain, or they'll put powdered sugar and butter on them and it—well, they like them. *[My wife]* Amy likes them, so I guess that matters.

00:30:50

**AE:** Do you have any desserts on the menu?

00:30:52

**KG:** About the only thing we've got is banana pudding. We—we've tried to keep some cobblers in the past, but banana pudding, the way we make it, we can make it quick and everybody likes it. Everybody asks for it, but that's about the only thing that we have.

00:31:13

**AE:** And now tell me about the pick-up window that you've installed here.

00:31:18

**KG:** Well that’s another Car Lot exclusive. That—we had—there’s about, I think—I think the front portion of the building, which—where the tables and everything were—was the showroom. That’s where we had cars set up—Oldsmobiles—and our kitchen was where the parts department was. We just cleaned all the shelves out and put plumbing in and, you know, prettified it a little bit. Well then that covers probably a quarter of the building; well the rest of it is a garage in the back with two big sixteen-foot double doors on each side. Well that’s the drive-thru; you drive through one and drive to the back of the kitchen and drive out the other side. It’s a drive-thru or pickup window, but it’s a drive-thru.

00:32:06

**AE:** And you had a mechanic back there, so it’s like a mechanic shop that’s kind of been abandoned with some things here and there, and people just call ahead and drive-thru to pick up at the window, huh?

00:32:16

**KG:** Yeah, it’s—it’s pretty simple but—

00:32:18

**AE:** Has it been pretty well used? Is it popular?

00:32:21

**KG:** Here lately it has been. I’ve had some problems with the doors, so when we were having our last—our last baby, I’m the only one that’s heavy enough that can actually lift the doors. My Daddy told me he could, and I told him he wasn’t heavy enough; he’d just climb the chain. But—but when it’s opened, it gets used; I mean it’s—it’s a pretty good—pretty good setup.

00:32:45

**AE:** Do you have—would you say most of your business is take-out or pick-up, or do you have a lot of people that eat in the dining room?

00:32:50

**KG:** There's a lot of people that eat during the day in the dining room. At night I'd probably say eighty/twenty—eighty-percent pickup. A lot of people just—around here, if they eat out, they'll either go to a nicer restaurant—I mean, you know, we're just a hole in the wall. We're nothing extravagant. You're not going to come here and—you're going to order at the window; you're going to wait in line to order, and then you're going to sit there and wait for somebody to come out and give it to you. I mean we don't wait on tables and a lot of people, you know, well they like sitting down and getting waited on hand and foot, but we're not that kind of place. We're just a joint.

00:33:31

**AE:** And when your father started doing barbecue at the Car Lot, I guess, obviously then, in Winfield there weren't—there wasn't any zoning or deed restrictions or anything to prevent him from doing a restaurant in a retail space. Was there any kind of awkward transition when it became a restaurant only from a business sense or a property-owning sense?

00:33:53

**KG:** No, not really. It—it made the transition pretty smooth. I mean it's—nobody complained. I think when—I don't know. I think people were hesitant 'til the first night we opened, and I can remember it like yesterday. Boy we was covered up. I told Daddy—or Mother, I said, “I don't

know if we'll have anybody show up 'cause I don't know how serious they think we are about this." But you know Car Lot Bar-B-Que, you know—like I said before, you can go into about every state in the United States and you'll not find another car lot that has been converted to a barbecue place. But it took off. I don't think anybody had any reservations about it then.

00:34:40

**AE:** And it was obviously important to you, then, when you bought the business, to keep it Car Lot Bar-B-Que, even though it's just the restaurant now.

00:34:48

**KG:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, the only thing that's changed about the name is it no longer says "Roger Guin's" on the front of it. I figured it's just Car Lot Bar-B-Que because everybody—everybody helps from time to time, and I ain't going to put one name on it. So it really shouldn't have been that way to begin with. It should have been Guin's Car Lot Bar-B-Que, as many of us had a hand in it. But I reckon Daddy was tooting his own horn a little bit there so—.

00:35:12

**AE:** So on your logo now and the t-shirt that you're wearing, what made you choose that vintage of car to be on the Car Lot logo?

00:35:20

**KG:** That was my brother Greg. He had—when we first started opening up, he started looking—he just teeter-tottered on the computer one day and came up with a menu and brought it up to us one day and it just—it had a '57 Cadillac rear-end on it and had our logo on it and it

just—I don’t know. It just—that was that. There wasn’t no looking again. That’s the first one—  
first one that he made and the last one he made, so it stuck.

00:35:50

**AE:** So even though your brothers are doing other things, what do they think about you carrying  
on the family business?

00:35:57

**KG:** They—my oldest brother, he, like I said, he’s a chaplain in the Air Force. He’s in Colorado  
Springs; he’s got nine kids of his own. He doesn’t—we don’t see him about every once every  
three years, so that’s—he doesn’t really have a big say-so in it. He likes it when he comes, but he  
doesn’t come a lot. Greg—you know, the older brothers, they’re going—they’re going to rag you  
a little bit and tell you, “You need to do this,” and tell you, “You need to do that.” But I just tend  
not to listen. I’ve always kind of—there’s nine years between me and him, so I kind of went by  
the toot of my own horn. But he likes it, and he likes coming in here; they come in here about  
once or twice every week, and they eat and sit around. But they—they like it, I guess, but I ain’t  
never really asked them. *[Laughs]*

00:36:47

**AE:** What do your parents think about you and your wife running this place now?

00:36:50

**KG:** Well they like it; they don’t have to. *[Laughs]* They don’t have to fool with it anymore. Of  
course, Mother—Daddy will make deliveries for me every now and then. Mother stays up at the

window quite a bit and runs the cash register. But other than that, they're happy I'm doing well with it.

00:37:09

**AE:** Do you see anything different in the future of Car Lot Bar-B-Que? Do you have grand plans to expand or anything?

00:37:17

**KG:** Everybody has got plans but I—you know, you get too big, you kind of lose heart of things. I kind of like being small. Change—my wife can tell you this: I hate change. I don't like changing anything. I don't like changing the—the type of blue jeans I wear, the type of shirts I wear. Shorts with work boots on is pretty much—ninety-percent of the time you see me, I'll be wearing the same thing. You know it's—I don't like change, so no, I just keep it the way it is. I may expand a little bit and maybe put a party room on in the near future, but that will be about it—more employees, more problems, more money coming in, more money going out—stay small. As long as this works, I ain't going to screw it up.

00:38:09

**AE:** How many employees do you have outside of your family being here?

00:38:13

**KG:** Well we have two or three during the day and then probably four or five at night—so not that many. But I got one—I got one—or one or two that helps me back in the kitchen getting food ready, and I've got a couple that run food out to the tables. That's about it.

00:38:37

**AE:** You want your sons to follow your footsteps in the business—one of you? We were talking about that a little bit earlier.

00:38:48

**KG:** I figure I've got a one-in-three chance of—my oldest boy, Gabe, he—he likes being up here. He'll come in, and he'll go straight to the kitchen, and he'll try to clean something. He'll grab a dish and a rag and start cleaning it up. But I figure I've got a better chance for him than the others. The others aren't really old enough, but I don't know, they—I guess I've got a pretty good chance for him.

00:39:15

**AE:** Would you really want them to be in the business? Do you enjoy it and think it's something worthy of passing on?

00:39:21

**KG:** Well I think everything is worth passing on. It wasn't a bad deal for me. I mean it's—you know, it pays the bills and you get to be around people, which I kind of like. I hadn't really ever met a stranger. I ain't real shy about things but it—it's done good for me, and I think if they enjoy it—I mean if they don't want to, you know, what—fine, I'll do it 'til the day I die. I mean that's—it's in my blood now, and I ain't got anything better to do. But if they want to do it, then I'm behind them; if they don't, I'll still make them work here when they're kids. But you know once they get old enough to go to school, if they want to go to college, I'll send them to college.

00:40:04

**AE:** Before you got into the business and were working with your dad, is there something else that you thought you'd be doing before taking over the restaurant?

00:40:10

**KG:** Not really. As a matter of fact, I painted houses for about eight years before that and had a pretty good living going on there. And it just—Daddy kept talking to me about it and saying, “Well this is going to be yours one day—yours one day—yours one day—and finally, it come with a little price, but it was mine one day. **[Laughs]** They finally just said the heck with it, and they were ready to get out. So I wasn't stuck where I was at, so I figured why not? I'll try it and see. And I like it. It's fun.

00:40:51

**AE:** What do you like best about it?

00:40:52

**KG:** Well on the cool days, I like being out in the cooker. I mean I can spend quite a bit of time out there just playing with the fire or doing something like that—no place I'd rather *not* be in the summer. It's hot out there. **[Laughs]** It—that's—I don't know. It's, you know, it's just work. I mean you got to work—you got to enjoy what you do to—to do it for a living and I do that. But I mean it's—the best thing is when somebody comes up and says you know, “I enjoyed my lunch,” or whatever and that kind of makes it all worthwhile.

00:41:32

**AE:** Do you—have you ever entered any contests or think about doing that maybe one day?

00:41:39

**KG:** I had a guy who came in here a couple weeks ago—the first time I think he’d ever been out—in here and he asked me before he left, he said, “Did you cook this?” I said, “Yeah, I do all the cooking.” He said, “You need to enter that in the contest.” And I said, “I don’t think so, I said, “I ain’t got time. I’ve got three kids. I ain’t got time to be jumping from state to state with a cook—cooker pulled behind my Jeep.” I said, “I ain’t got time for it. I just—I’d rather—.” I told him, I said, “They can—when they get done with the contest, they can just come here and eat.”

**[Laughs]** So I—I ain’t got any plans of ever doing that. If somebody wants my sauce, though, I’ll sell it to them.

00:42:18

**AE:** Oh, yeah? You would look to bottling up your sauce?

00:42:20

**KG:** Well I’ll bottle it up here, and I’ll sell it by the gallon, quart, and pint—side, whatever they want. But any of those barbecuers that—that ain’t got no sauce, they—they can call me. I’ll set them up with some sauce.

00:42:36

**AE:** So what would you say, specifically, sets your barbecue apart from other barbecues?

00:42:41

**KG:** Oh, Lord, I don’t really know. It’s basically the same thing you get every time you come in. I really—I really didn’t never—hadn’t never asked anybody what—I mean I’ve eat at some places, but I can’t remember what it tasted like. There were some good, some bad. I hadn’t really

asked anybody what—what they liked better about mine. But as long as they keep coming, I don't care, you know. It's going to hurt my feelings when somebody comes in and says, "That was the worst thing I've ever eaten," but I don't see that coming in the near future.

00:43:19

**AE:** Do you foresee doing this until you just can't do it anymore?

00:43:23

**KG:** 'Til I drop. I'll do it 'til I can't pick up a box of meat, and when I can't do that I'll hire somebody to pick it up. I got three kids. Surely, God, one of them could pick it up for me. But other than all that, it is being on your feet all day. Yeah, I'll stay in it.

00:43:43

**AE:** And then what about this volunteer fireman gig that you have?

00:43:47

**KG:** Oh Lord, this—this has took away from a lot of that. I've—I'm a member of the local Fire department here, and I used to make a bunch of calls. But three kids later and a business that takes up thirteen, fourteen hours of your day, I don't make a whole lot of calls anymore, but they still let me. They let me come dress up every now and then so we—I don't know. I've got some good friends on the Fire department. They take care of me. When my smoker starts smoking a little bit, I've got a couple of buddies on the night shift. They'll call me ten, ten-thirty [at night] and say, "Hey, you need to come down here and check your fire; I'm here waiting on you." You know, it's just a small town but they're—they're good boys.

00:44:33

**AE:** So what do your buddies think about you being the guy who sets fires here at his business and puts them out when he goes with the Fire department?

00:44:40

**KG:** It's a little bit of a joke sometimes. It was about three or four weeks ago I was cooking up—it was real hot that day, and my smoker kind of tends to get a little hotter on the hotter days and there was—there was smoke just blowing out of it. And this buddy called me about 10:30 and told me I needed to come up there. Nine-one-one [Emergency] had called them and said my business was on fire. So I run down there and opened the door, and there was smoke everywhere; you couldn't see, and it was hot. He told me—he said—he said, “If you want to go in there, we'll put our air-packs on and we'll do it right.” And I said, “Alan,” I said, “I ain't doing that.” I said, “That's embarrassing to come down here and have to call my buddies out of bed to come put my fire out.” I said, “I'll get a water hose and run in there, and I'll put it out real quick.” But it—we get—we get a kick out of it from time to time. And I'm the butt of some jokes.

00:45:40

**AE:** What—what made you want to be a part of the Fire department here?

00:45:42

**KG:** I don't know. I've always had a bunch of friends that was on it, and I had a couple that told me that I needed to keep on—keep on—keep on—try it. And so finally, right after—I think it was the day I got back off of the—when me and my wife got married, they signed me in and I started taking classes, I think, the next day. That was pretty much it. I don't know. Like I said, I've got some good friends on there, and there's no better friends than your buddies.

00:46:18

**AE:** Does the fire department here ever have like a fundraiser, where they have barbecues and things like that? Dinners?

00:46:24

**KG:** We did one year. Let's see, a couple of years we did it, and it set off pretty good. But we haven't had one since. We've—our Chief is good at getting grants, so we haven't had to do any fundraising for much. He's—he's got a bunch of money from the state to get new equipment, so we hadn't really had to be bothered with it. We've got probably the best equipment that you'll find on a volunteer base. I think we have five or six full-time and then twenty-something volunteers. But we've got—we've got better equipment than some—than a bunch of the full-time. So I like it. It's fun. I don't like it when a place burns down but, you know, it's fun to get out there and do something. You feel like you're doing good by somebody.

00:47:25

**AE:** Well is there anything about the barbecue part of what you do that I haven't asked you that you want to mention or talk about?

00:47:32

**KG:** Not really. I think you've covered it today. I haven't never been asked this much questions. **[Laughs]** I think on my 160-question test for the fire department there was less questions than this. I think those were a lot easier, some of them. But no, I believe you covered it—ain't much. **[To his wife, Amy]** You want to add anything?

*[Amy shakes her head, “No.”]*

00:47:54

**AE:** Well what would you want folks to know about Car Lot Bar-B-Que, if they’ve never been here before and they might maybe want to come?

00:48:00

**KG:** It’s a friendly place to come. Nine out of ten times, unless one of my teenagers [employees] is mad about something, you’re going to get a smile out of them. You’re going to have a, “Have a great day,” when you leave. I don’t know. It’s just something that you hadn’t never seen before. I mean, like I said, it’s a car lot and it’s a barbecue place. I’ve got a lot of memorabilia on the walls and—I don’t know, it’s just a good little—a good little place to tinker.

00:48:31

**AE:** Are the license plates on the wall in the dining room—is that a nod to the history of the place, or is that just kind of a thing, that your buddies bring plates by?

00:48:38

**KG:** Well most of my buddies that bring them, let’s see, probably half of them are firefighter tags, rescue squad tags, and then the other half are, I guess, civilian tags—just regular. But most of them out there came from somebody that I know—about probably ninety-percent of them. And then I have a bunch of old folks that come in that they brought—I’ve got some World War II tags, and there was an old friend of mine that had a kid—or had a boy that lived in Hawaii and he brought me a tag, and that’s something you don’t never see around here. It’s just mostly people I know. People that come in and eat and they say, “Oh, I’ve got a tag I need to bring

you.” I said, “You bring it, and I’ll hang it up.” And the next thing you know, I’m knee-deep in tags and ain’t got time to hang them, and three weeks later they’re saying, “Where’s my tag at?” I say, “It’s still here; I haven’t hung it yet.” But it—it’s people I know. I know a bunch of folks.

00:49:37

**AE:** Do you eat your own barbecue every day?

00:49:40

**KG:** There’s not many days that go by that I don’t eat barbecue sometime. It’s—I like it.

**[Laughs]** And plus it saves you—my wife don’t have to cook.

00:49:56

**AE:** All right. Well I thank you for sitting in here with me. I’ve enjoyed our visit very much.

00:50:00

**KG:** Thank you. Thank you. I’ve enjoyed it myself—a lot more than what I thought I was going to.

00:50:05

**AE:** **[Laughs]** Well thanks for it all.

**[End Kyle Guin]**