

**MAURICE HAYNES**  
**Magazine Deli—New Orleans, LA**

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Interviewer: Sara Roahen  
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs  
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Project: Ya-Ka-Mein in New Orleans

**[Begin Maurice Haynes Interview]**

**00:00:00**

**Sara Roahen:** This is Sara Roahen for the Southern Foodways Alliance. It is Wednesday, May 9, 2012. I'm sitting here at Magazine Deli with its owner, Maurice Haynes, I believe. If I could get you to say your own full name, that would be great. And tell me what you do for a living.

**00:00:18**

**Maurice Haynes:** My name is Maurice J. Haynes, and I'm a schoolteacher. I've been teaching for twenty years. I decided to go out on leave and run my business.

**00:00:30**

**SR:** And what do you do here?

**00:00:33**

**MH:** I run a sno-ball stand, oversee everything.

**00:00:39**

**SR:** So you're not teaching right now?

**00:00:40**

**MH:** No, I'm currently just running the sno-ball stand. I taught for twenty years and I just decided to take a break and run the sno-ball stand.

**00:00:52**

**SR:** What did you teach?

**00:00:53**

**MH:** I taught fifth grade, second grade, physical education.

**00:01:00**

**SR:** Where? At one particular school or—?

**00:01:02**

**MH:** My last school I was at Live Oak Elementary and it became a charter school. And then I was transferred to Murray Henderson Elementary School on the West Bank. And I was teaching second grade when I went on leave.

**00:01:19**

**SR:** When did you leave and open this place?

**00:01:21**

**MH:** This is my third year. I taught for three years at Live Oak and I opened the sno-ball stand up my third year teaching over there at Live Oak.

**00:01:33**

**SR:** And you've been here for three years?

**00:01:34**

**MH:** Yes.

**00:01:36**

**SR:** Now tell me a little bit about what inspired you to make that career change.

**00:01:42**

**MH:** Okay. Before Hurricane Katrina I had a couple of ice cream trucks that ride around in the neighborhood and they sell pre-packed ice cream. And I lost two trucks in the hurricane and I sold one, and I always had a love for selling ice cream, sno-balls, and frozen cups. And I just thought I'd branch out and try to do it on a larger scale.

**00:02:04**

**SR:** Can you tell for the record—because not everyone who will be reading this and listening to this is familiar with New Orleans—what is a frozen cup?

**00:02:13**

**MH:** It's sno-ball flavor mixed with sugar and water and it's in a small cup and it freezes up in the freezer just like a sno-ball, but it's not soft ice. So it's a little harder, but it's a good—same taste.

**00:02:32**

**SR:** And you kind of peel the cup away as you eat?

**00:02:33**

**MH:** Well you can get a wooden spoon or a plastic spoon and eat it. Some people call it frozen cups, zips, huckabucks—New Orleans names.

**00:02:45**

**SR:** I've never heard "zips." That's a new one.

**00:02:47**

**MH:** Okay. *[Laughs]*

**00:02:49**

**SR:** Do you sell those here?

**00:02:50**

**MH:** No, only sno-balls. Yeah.

**00:02:53**

**SR:** When you had the ice cream trucks, was that the only thing that you made?

**00:02:58**

**MH:** Frozen cups, and I had a lot of pre-packed ice cream—Blue Bunny, Blue Bear.

**00:03:06**

**SR:** So the trucks that come around my neighborhood and Uptown—that's the kind of truck that you owned?

**00:03:08**

**MH:** Yes, yes, but mine was unique. It was a mail truck and they were all pink because I did a little research on it and they said pink ice cream trucks will give you the urge for ice cream. So that's why I went with the pink color.

**00:03:26**

**SR:** What kind of routes did you have?

**00:03:29**

**MH:** Oh, mainly Uptown, second lines. Every Sunday I would go to the second line and maybe the little deejays, the Jazz Fest, right around there. Wherever they had people out, that's where I would go because I was able to sell on the streets of New Orleans anywhere.

**00:03:46**

**SR:** But I guess you must have had employees because you were still teaching then?

**00:03:51**

**MH:** Yes. Well to be honest with you, *[Laughs]* I would bring my truck to school, plug it up at the school at 3:15, and I would sell ice cream to the kids. I was real cool. *[Laughs]*

**00:04:05**

**SR:** Yeah, you were probably the coolest teacher at school.

**00:04:08**

**MH:** Yes, they all loved me over there. *[Laughs]*

**00:04:09**

**SR:** Do you have—you said that you lost two of your trucks. Do you have the third one still?

**00:04:13**

**MH:** I have one, but it's not running. I need to put a little work into it, to get it back on the road.

**00:04:21**

**SR:** Now how did you get into that? Was it in your family?

**00:04:28**

**MH:** Well growing up one day I went to the ice cream truck. And I spent six dollars in two minutes. And from a little boy I said, "Wow, it's not a bad job." So I said, "When I grow up I'm going to get my ice cream truck," and that's what I did.

**00:04:47**

**SR:** Tell me what part of town you grew up in.

**00:04:50**

**MH:** Okay. I grew up in Uptown New Orleans, 12<sup>th</sup> Ward area, on Laurel right off Magazine Street, between the boundaries of Louisiana, Napoleon, Tchoupitoulas, and St. Charles. And I've been up in this area all my life.

**00:05:07**

**SR:** So when you were growing up, was there a sno-ball stand that you went to?

**00:05:12**

**MH:** Yes, SnoWizard. We grew up on SnoWizard because they're located on Constantinople and Magazine, but it originated from Delachaise and Magazine. And we all grew up on SnoWizard sno-balls.

**00:05:26**

**SR:** Oh, it was on Delachaise and Magazine?

**00:05:28**

**MH:** Yes.

**00:05:30**



**SR:** So that's right here.

**00:05:31**

**MH:** One block down. And I would buy my frozen cup mix—make my frozen cups—out of the SnoWizard mix. So that's why I'm just so accustomed to the taste of the SnoWizard sno-balls.

**00:05:43**

**SR:** Are your sno-ball flavors now from Snow Wizard?

**00:05:47**

**MH:** Yes. And the flavors they don't carry, I'll go to like Southern Snow and buy different flavors that they don't carry. But I love sno-ball mix from SnoWizard.

**00:06:00**

**SR:** I'm sorry, say that again.

**00:06:02**

**MH:** I love the SnoWizard flavor. And a lot of people in the Uptown area, they grew up on it also.

**00:06:09**

**SR:** What are some of the flavors that are in demand that they don't have?

**00:06:11**

**MH:** Lemon meringue, birthday cake, and like an apple pie.

**00:06:22**

**SR:** I forgot to ask you in the beginning: What is your birth date?

**00:06:27**

**MH:** December 9, 1961.

**00:06:31**

**SR:** What did your parents do for a living?

**00:06:34**

**MH:** My mom was a nurse and my dad—he worked at the bank there, Hibernia National Bank.

**00:06:43**

**SR:** Was there anyone in your family in the food business?

**00:06:45**

**MH:** No. My dad used to drive cabs and my grandmother, she cooked a lot, and that's where I learned a lot of recipes—from her. And I try to implement her recipes in the sno-ball stand.

**00:07:02**

**SR:** Well I'll say that I wanted to talk to you primarily because you have ya-ka-mein here—or ya-ka-meat. How do you say it?

**00:07:10**

**MH:** Ya-ka-meat. Ya-ka-meat.

**00:07:16**

**SR:** Your menu is more extensive than most sno-ball stands. Is that true, or did SnoWizard have a lot of food when you were growing up?

**00:07:24**

**MH:** No, only sno-balls and ice cream. But I try to stay open all year-round, so when it's cool and the sno-balls slow up I start doing the food like the meat pies, the crawfish pies, hot tamales, ya-ka-mein, hotdogs, smoked sausage. And I kind of jazz it up a little bit with the crawfish nachos and the barbecue shrimp nachos—just something I came up with, and it's a New Orleans thing, and it's working out pretty good.

**00:07:55**

**SR:** Do you serve all that food also in the hotter months?

**00:07:58**

**MH:** Yes, yes.

**00:08:01**

**SR:** How did you—I mean I really love your menu because it is so New Orleans. How did you decide what to serve?

**00:08:09**

**MH:** Well I had to come up with something to sell during the cool months. So I would just try different things. If I'm able to sell it, I'll stick with it. If I try it, it doesn't work, I'll just leave it alone. I had like a Philly cheesesteak nacho. I tried that. But that didn't work so I cut that off the menu and I tried something else, the barbecue shrimps, and that's working.

**00:08:35**

**SR:** Do you do all your cooking in here, or do you do some of it at home or somewhere else?

**00:08:40**

**MH:** I do most of it at the sno-ball stand, yeah.

**00:08:43**

**SR:** Well, tell me a little bit about your ya-ka-mein. What kind is it? Is it beef?

**00:08:50**

**MH:** Okay. It's a beef ya-ka-mein. I use like a beef broth. And I make my broth. I use the linguine noodles, the green onions and boiled eggs. And I use the beef meat. Real, real tasty.

**00:09:13**

**SR:** What kind of beef? What cut of beef?

**00:09:15**

**MH:** Oh it's more like fajita beef meat, yeah, like pre-cooked.

**00:09:21**

**SR:** And can you tell me a little bit about the broth?

**00:09:27**

**MH:** Okay. I make my broth with the water, and I put a little beef broth in there and put my little seasoning in there and get it to the taste that I want. And that's it. *[Laughs]*

**00:09:41**

**SR:** What do you mean by "seasoning"? Do you mean like vegetables, or dried seasonings and—?

**00:09:43**

**MH:** Oh, like Season-All, maybe a little pepper, salt. That's it.

**00:09:50**

**SR:** So you must have all of that prepared, and then when somebody orders it you assemble it?

**00:09:56**

**MH:** Yes. I will put the linguines in a cup. I will have the meat in a cup, the green onions, and the boiled eggs. And I would have the pot already hot on the stove, and I'd just get a scoop and put it in the cup and top it off. And that's it.

**00:10:13**

**SR:** It must get kind of hot in there.

**00:10:14**

**MH:** Well I have an air-conditioner in there and it's pretty cool. Pretty cool.

**00:10:23**

**SR:** Tell me: Like how many ya-ka-mein) will you sell a day?

**00:10:27**

**MH:** Well, it varies. Toward the beginning of the week they don't really buy it, ya-ka-mein. You know like maybe seven or eight. Toward the weekend, on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday, I will sell about twenty-five. Or twenty-five toward the weekend, because a lot of people are out drinking and then they'll come get a ya-ka-mein. It's called—a nickname—Old Sober, **[Laughs]** where they'll come buy the ya-ka-mein to try to come down off of their drinking.

**00:11:00**

**SR:** Well I've heard of that, but that's really true, huh?

**00:11:03**

**MH:** Yes, that's true. Yeah, that's true. In New Orleans it started like at bars, but people would drink and they would have a kitchen in the bar and they would make ya-ka-mein. Before they'd go home they'll eat a little bit, sober up a little bit, and eat the rest in the morning. So it's like a New Orleans thing.

**00:11:21**

**SR:** Uh-huh. Why do you think that over other foods? Is it particularly hearty?

**00:11:27**

**MH:** I think by it being a soup, the broth, it kind of smoothes your stomach and kind of gets them back to normal. [*Laughs*]

**00:11:39**

**SR:** Tell me about when you were growing up in your house. Did whoever cooked in your house make it?

**00:11:45**

**MH:** Yes, my grandmother and my mother. But my grandmother was the sole cook in our house. And that's where I learned how to make the ya-ka-mein from, my grandmother, Dorothy Gibson.

**00:11:56**

**SR:** I'm sorry, say it again?

**00:11:58**

**MH:** Dorothy Gibson.

**00:12:00**

**SR:** Did she live with you?

**00:12:02**

**MH:** Yes, yes. My mom, my grandmother, my grandfather, me, and my sister. We all stayed in the same house.

**00:12:14**

**SR:** Did she always make it with beef?

**00:12:15**

**MH:** Yes. A lot of people use pork, but we always did use the beef because that would give it the more beef flavor. Some people use shrimp, chicken, beef, pork chops; put all of it together as a combination. But we always did use beef.

**00:12:35**

**SR:** Some people will put all those things?



**00:12:36**

**MH:** Yes, and they will call that a combination. Like shrimps, chicken, beef, pork, all together, and that would be a combination.

**00:12:46**

**SR:** I've never had that kind. In your experience, does it always have the egg?

**00:12:50**

**MH:** Yes, yes. Some people want the egg and some people, they don't like the egg. But most of my customers, they want extra eggs. Yeah.

**00:13:00**

**SR:** So when your grandmother would make it, when would she make it? I mean I'm guessing it wasn't an Old Sober dish when you were growing up.

**00:13:08**

**MH:** She would make it mainly during the winter months when it's cool, on a Saturday afternoon, or maybe on a Wednesday, but it wasn't an every week thing. Just occasionally she would make it on a weekend, like on a Saturday afternoon.

**00:13:28**

**SR:** Because it took more time, or why on the weekends?

**00:13:33**

**MH:** No, it was just—well, we had like different food we would eat during the weekday, and on the weekend it would be like, “I’m not cooking. I’m going to do something real quick and real simple,” and the ya-ka-mein was real fast.

**00:13:48**

**SR:** Okay, so it’s a quick dish?

**00:13:49**

**MH:** Yeah, it’s a quick—yeah, a quick cheap dish. [*Laughs*]

**00:13:53**

**SR:** Did you, and do you, eat it out?

**00:14:00**

**MH:** I don’t because they don’t have the flavor I like. They just make it real plain. It’s not really tasty out in restaurants that I have been at. Yeah, but I eat it at home, at the second lines, yeah.

**00:14:20**

**SR:** Do you need to get that? [*Phone Rings*]

**00:14:23**

**MH:** No.

**00:14:24**

**SR:** I've heard different theories about whether it's a New Orleans or an Asian dish—or [about] when people started making it here. Have you heard anything or do you have any theories?

**00:14:37**

**MH:** Well, what I've read up on it, it's like a Chinese soup. And it originated like in Vietnam, from what I read. But in New Orleans, we started making it here and just jazzing it up a little bit. Which, they still sell ya-ka-mein in Chinese restaurants, Asian restaurants, but it's not tasty like we fix ours. It's more like an egg soup—noodles. The broth is not really tasty; it's like real plain.

**00:15:16**

**SR:** More watery?

**00:15:16**

**MH:** Yeah, more watery, yes.

**00:15:19**

**SR:** What about the noodles? They seem different, too than the Asians'?

**00:15:26**

**MH:** Okay, the original noodles are the linguines for the ya-ka-mein but some people use spaghettis, angel pasta. I guess it's up to the individual who is fixing it, but I like using the linguines because they're real flat and it gives it a better look.

**00:15:47**

**SR:** Is that what your grandmother used?

**00:15:48**

**MH:** Yes, linguines. Yes, uh-hm.

**00:15:53**

**SR:** Did you grandma teach you how to cook when you were growing up?

**00:15:57**

**MH:** Well I used to sit in the kitchen with her and watch her cook. And I always liked baking and cooking. And I make some pretty good pecan candy, candy apples, brownies, and I learned all that from my grandmother.

**00:16:15**

**SR:** Do you sell any of those here?

**00:16:17**

**MH:** I sell candy apples, yeah.

**00:16:19**

**SR:** Can you tell me—because that’s a real New Orleans thing—can you tell me what that is?

**00:16:24**

**MH:** Okay, it’s an apple with a stick on it, and it’s a pile of the candy mix that you cook to like 300 degrees in a pot with sugar water in the mix. And once it reads the temperature to the hard crack, you dip the apples, put them on the table, and then wrap them up. It’s a big thing for during Halloween and in the fall months.

**00:16:55**

**SR:** So you use a candy thermometer?

**00:16:59**

**MH:** Yes, yes.

**00:16:58**

**SR:** It seems to me that that would be so difficult in this climate with the humidity.

**00:17:03**

**MH:** The key is you have to make the apples in a cold atmosphere, because you’re right. If it’s real humid they will stick when you’re wrapping them up. They will be real sticky. So it has to be a cool environment, and that’s why people make them during the month of October,

November, December, and January. But you can make them during the—you *can* make them during the summertime, but—as long as it’s cool you’re all right.

**00:17:33**

**SR:** Do you make them during the summertime?

**00:17:35**

**MH:** Yes. I made fifty apples last Saturday for my little niece’s birthday party. And that was a giveaway, and people are beginning to get candy apples for parties and wedding receptions and you know different little things like that. Little giveaways.

**00:17:54**

**SR:** So when you made fifty, did you use one batch of sugar or did you make a couple different—?

**00:17:58**

**MH:** I used one batch of sugar, and that one batch actually made like seventy candy apples. I put the sticks in there, I buttered the circles at a table, and I dipped them and wrapped seventy.

**00:18:15**

**SR:** What kind of apples do you use?

**00:18:17**

**MH:** I use the Washington apples. Yeah, the Washington apples.

**00:18:20**

**SR:** Those are red, huh?

**00:18:22**

**MH:** Red, yes. Now you can use—for caramel apples you use the yellow apples. The more sour apples for the caramel. But with the red candy apples you use the red apples.

**00:18:33**

**SR:** Do you use food coloring in the sugar?

**00:18:37**

**MH:** No, all that comes in a pack of the apple mix.

**00:18:39**

**SR:** Oh, okay. So you don't just use Domino sugar. You use a specific mix?

**00:18:45**

**MH:** Well you use any type of sugar you want, but with the sugar mix you have an apple pack that you put in the water in the mix and that makes it red because the coloring is already in the apple mix.

**00:18:59**

**SR:** Is there also flavoring in there?

**00:19:01**

**MH:** Yes, yes.

**00:19:03**

**SR:** What does it taste like?

**00:19:05**

**MH:** Like a cherry. A cherry candy apple. Cherry.

**00:19:10**

**SR:** In case that bus was too loud, it tastes cherry. [*Laughs*]

**00:19:13**

**MH:** Yes. Yes.

**00:19:15**

**SR:** Okay, so you must have grown up eating those as well.

**00:19:17**



**MH:** Yes, during Mardi Gras time. That's real big at Mardi Gras. You will see the guys pushing the baskets of candy apples, caramel popcorn, peanuts, and everybody will buy a candy apple during Mardi Gras time.

**00:19:35**

**SR:** That's one New Orleans thing that I haven't really experienced yet.

**00:19:40**

**MH:** You have to try it. When I make some more I'm going to let you know.

**00:19:43**

**SR:** Do you have any today?

**00:19:44**

**MH:** No.

**00:19:47**

**SR:** So you don't have them every day?

**00:19:48**

**MH:** No, only on occasions.

**00:19:50**

**SR:** Okay. Tell me what kind of person orders ya-ka-mein?

**00:19:56**

**MH:** Everybody. When they see the sign they know it's a New Orleans dish, and a lot of people from out of town, they want to try it. A couple of them said they noticed it on the food channel. They saw it on the food channel. And a good friend of mine, Miss Linda, she's known for selling ya-ka-mein at the second line, and a lot of people have eaten it out there. And when they see the sign they come over here and get it. I mean everybody—locals, out of towners, everybody.

**00:20:34**

**SR:** I know that it's sort of historically an African American or black dish. And I spoke with some people this morning who had like two white people order it the whole time they were making it. Do you have black and white people ordering it?

**00:20:48**

**MH:** Yes, everybody—black, white, Chinese, Vietnamese, everybody.

**00:20:54**

**SR:** And the out-of-towners, when they order it, what is their reaction?

**00:20:57**

**MH:** “Wow, this is good. You made it? You made this?” Yes. And they’re, “I’ll be back to get another one.” A lot of blacks buy it, but a lot of whites and you know Asians—everybody. Everybody buys it.

**00:21:16**

**SR:** Well you’re on a really busy strip here that gets a lot of foot traffic.

**00:21:22**

**MH:** Yes.

**00:21:24**

**SR:** How do you like this job?

**00:21:27**

**MH:** I love it better than teaching. It’s relaxed. I meet a lot of people. Just last week I met a guy from Ireland, a lady from Amsterdam. I mean every day I’m just meeting different people. And I mean good conversation, nice people, and all of them want to move here. They say they love New Orleans: “I would love to move here.” And I just—I love it. I love it. I love my job.

**00:21:53**

**SR:** You’re not going back to the school any time soon?

**00:21:55**

**MH:** No. I don't plan on going back. I can continue to do this as long as I can. But if I have to go back, they need me, I'm going to go back, but I enjoy doing this.

**00:22:08**

**SR:** For now you're making a living? You can survive?

**00:22:10**

**MH:** Yes, yes. Not bad. I can't complain.

**00:22:15**

**SR:** Do you have children?

**00:22:17**

**MH:** I have one little boy, twelve years old. He's in sixth grade at Benjamin Franklin. Yeah, yeah.

**00:22:25**

**SR:** Does he ever come around here? I'm going to pause for a moment. Does he ever come around here to work with you?

**00:22:37**

**MH:** I try to get him to come around here, [*Laughs*] but he's lazy. He just wants to play the games at home. I mean I've been trying for the last two years but it's not working. [*Laughs*]

**00:22:49**

**SR:** It's the age.

**00:22:52**

**MH:** Yeah, hmm.

**00:22:52**

**SR:** Another thing I wanted to ask you about ya-ka-mein: Do you put condiments on yours?

**00:23:00**

**MH:** Well I have soy sauce, hot sauce, and ketchup. I let the customers put the condiments on the ya-ka-mein because a lot of people say they don't need the soy sauce because it tastes so good. It has a good taste and I let them put the soy sauce and hot sauce and ketchup—whatever they want on it.

**00:23:24**

**SR:** What about you personally? What do you put on yours?

**00:23:27**

**MH:** I just eat it just like that. No soy sauce, not hot sauce, no ketchup. I just like it with the beef flavor.

**00:23:33**

**SR:** Does your son eat it?

**00:23:33**

**MH:** Yes. Love it—he loves it. My wife, my whole family loves it.

**00:23:39**

**SR:** When you have it at home, who makes it?

**00:23:41**

**MH:** My wife. [*Laughs*] She made a pot Monday. Yeah, she made a pot Monday.

**00:23:48**

**SR:** What is her name?

**00:23:51**

**MH:** Darlene Haynes.

**00:23:52**

**SR:** And does she make it like you do?

**00:23:56**

**MH:** Well she doesn't use the broth that I use. She uses cubes, the bouillon cubes, yeah. That's how she makes hers. But it comes out pretty good. It tastes pretty good.

**00:24:10**

**SR:** Do you think that it's—that dish is sort of as prominent or as important in New Orleans culture as something like gumbo?

**00:24:20**

**MH:** Yes. Yes, I think so. But it's—just like gumbo, they don't really cook gumbo when it's hot. The same thing with ya-ka-mein. I mean cool months it's real, real popular like gumbo. But I'm surprised people buy it when it's hot. That's why I still make it, because they still ask for it.

**00:24:44**

**SR:** Well I'm always surprised when I see the lines at Jazz Fest.

**00:24:46**

**MH:** Yes, yeah, hot, yes. And it is a hot dish, yeah, yeah.

**00:24:53**

**SR:** What do you think is—if there's one element [*Laughs*]*—oh, somebody can't get out of the driveway. There's a truck trying to get out of the driveway and there's somebody blocking it. If there's one element of ya-ka-mein that you think is the most important, what is it? Is it the noodles, the—?*

**00:25:23**

**MH:** The broth. The broth. It's the broth because that is the heart of the ya-ka-mein. That's where the taste is at, the broth.

**00:25:34**

**SR:** Do you think for most people it's an at-home food or a go-out-for-it food?

**00:25:40**

**MH:** It can be both. If they frequent bars, lounges, and nightclubs, they all look for ya-ka-mein or somebody selling it. I mean they will actually buy it at night. And at home if you just want to really cook something real quick, it could be an at-home dish. You know any day of the week. So that could be both.

**00:26:04**

**SR:** Do you think there are a lot of bars here now where somebody is making it at night?

**00:26:12**

**MH:** I know of a few, but it's not real big like it used to be when I was coming up, when I was a little kid. Just about every bar that had a kitchen, they were selling ya-ka-mein at night.

**00:26:24**

**SR:** I wonder why it's less now.



**00:26:27**

**MH:** I think a lot of bars, they don't have kitchens and they can't really prepare the food in the bars. But some people will like set up this thing outside and sell it, but they don't put their heart into it like they used to.

**00:26:45**

**SR:** Maybe they figure if people have been drinking they don't need to.

**00:26:48**

**MH:** Right. [*Laughs*]

**00:26:52**

**SR:** How did you decide on—I mean there are many different spellings for it. When you were making your sign, how did you decide how to spell it?

**00:26:58**

**MH:** Well the way I pronounced it, ya-ka-mein, so ya-ka--m-e-i-n. Some people say “ya-ka-meat,” but it's really “ya-ka-mein.”

**00:27:12**

**SR:** Or “ya-ka-ME.”

**00:27:17**

**MH:** Yes, uh-hm.

**00:27:17**

**SR:** And just for the record, how much do you charge for yours?

**00:27:21**

**MH:** Five dollars in a twenty-ounce cup. And I try to be reasonable because it's a cheap dish, and I think five dollars is pretty reasonable. I don't want to put anybody's eyeballs out. *[Laughs]*

**00:27:39**

**SR:** I mean that's a lot of food for five dollars.

**00:27:42**

**MH:** Yes, it is. Yes, it is, and they have people come: "Why you don't have the thirty-two-ounce cups?" Because I don't want to go up on the price because if I sell the thirty-two-ounce it will be eight dollars. But I just keep it at five dollars, and I'm just making the volume instead of just going up on the price.

**00:27:57**

**SR:** Is thirty-two-ounce—is that kind of a standard?

**00:28:01**

**MH:** Somewhat, but most people sell twenty-ounce for like seven dollars. But I sell it for five dollars, yeah.

**00:28:13**

**SR:** Tell me about your sno-ball ice. Do you make it here, or where do you get your ice?

**00:28:18**

**MH:** No, I go down to the French Market and buy my blocks of ice and just make them off of that. Some people make their own ice, but I just prefer to just go by it. It's easier.

**00:28:32**

**SR:** Do you get it in blocks that are already cut for the machine?

**00:28:35**

**MH:** Yes, they come in like a double—two blocks a bag. And I buy like ten--fifteen of them and just make my sno-balls.

**00:28:44**

**SR:** Just transport it in your car?

**00:28:47**

**MH:** Yes, uh-hm. And I have a deep-freezer on the back of the sno-ball stand. I house it in there and when I get low I just go get some more. And that cuts down on all the making ice and breaking it up.

**00:29:00**

**SR:** You do stuffed sno-balls?

**00:29:03**

**MH:** Yes, a lot of people love stuffed sno-balls. I stuff them and I also put the ice cream on top of them—whichever way the customer wanted. With the condensed milk.

**00:29:15**

**SR:** Talk about that a little bit the condensed milk.

**00:29:17**

**MH:** Okay, that's a New Orleans thing also. A lot of people like the sweet condensed milk on top to mix up with the sno-balls, giving it a sweeter flavor. And I sell a lot of sno-balls with condensed milk.

**00:29:29**

**SR:** And the “stuffed” means that there's ice cream in the middle, right?

**00:29:33**

**MH:** Yes, ice cream in the middle. That's called a stuffed sno-ball.

**00:29:36**

**SR:** Are there any regular customers that have crazy orders—a funny order?

**00:29:43**

**MH:** Yes. I have on lady, she always comes in and gets all the berries—blueberry, the blackberry, the raspberry, the strawberry—and puts ice cream in the middle stuffed. And I know when she walks up, I know what she wants: all the berries. So I call her the Berry Lady.

**[Laughs]**

**00:30:02**

**SR:** Do you have regular ya-ka-mein customers?

**00:30:04**

**MH:** Yes, yes, quite a few, yeah.

**00:30:09**

**SR:** Well I'm going to let you go here because I know you have a business to run, but one final question. I mean we've talked about it a little bit, but what right now do you like most about your job?

**00:30:20**

**MH:** I love the hours. I can get up in the morning and do what I have to do, come here, open up. I have good employees. I can depend on them, and when I need to go run and take care of something for the sno-ball stand I can. They're going to run it you know the way I like. And I just like the atmosphere, the location. Really I like just everything about it. I'm in heaven right now. *[Laughs]*

**00:30:51**

**SR:** Well that's great. I have a couple questions then to follow-up on that. You said you like the hours. What are your hours?

**00:30:55**

**MH:** One to eight, seven days a week. Yes.

**00:31:02**

**SR:** And when you were—how did it happen? Were you looking for a spot or did this come available and you thought, “Okay, this is the moment”?

**00:31:12**

**MH:** It's funny that you ask. I have been living in this area all my life and this spot has been here about twenty years and I always had a vision for it. I always wanted this spot. So one day I happened to be passing it and it was vacant. So I walked next door by the shoe store and asked the guy if they were leasing the sno-ball stand. And he said, “Yeah.” He gave me the number. I called the guy. We got together. And that was it from there. I used to have a bar before I got this,

Rock Bottom Lounge on Tchoupitoulas, and it's a whole lot different in a bar than a sno-ball.

Like the time—everything.

**00:31:55**

**SR:** Now when did you have the bar?

**00:31:58**

**MH:** Right after Hurricane Katrina, from 2007 to 2010.

**00:32:06**

**SR:** So you were teaching during that phase?

**00:32:08**

**MH:** Yes. I was teaching and running a bar and that was hard. That was really hard and it worked out. It was good while it lasted. But this is much better. I like this better.

**00:32:23**

**SR:** Yeah, that must have been really hard. I've seen cooking out on the sidewalk there.

**00:32:29**

**MH:** It used to be me. [*Laughs*] I'd just sell ya-ka-mein at the bar, catfish po-boys with pasta sauce. I mean I did a lot of cooking around there, yeah.

**00:32:42**

**SR:** Seems like you've just had the bug to be in the food business.

**00:32:49**

**MH:** Yeah, somewhat. I would do the seafood—crabs, corn, turkey neck, pig feet, potatoes— n certain nights, and that would bring a lot of people to the bar. So I guess I enjoy cooking. I like cooking.

**00:33:06**

**SR:** I would see that a lot out there. But this is the thing that finally got you into your retirement career?

**00:33:12**

**MH:** Yes, yes. I really enjoy it. I really enjoy being here every day. I mean I just meet so many people. Look how busy—I mean the weather is nice. Sometime you watch the football games out here on weekends, and I mean basketball games. I just love everything about it.

**00:33:34**

**SR:** Well it's a very happy place, and I'm sorry. I know I told you I was going to let you go but I feel like I should ask about the hot tamales. Do you make those or do you get those from Manuel's or something?

**00:33:46**



**MH:** Okay, I buy them from a company across the river, Old Style Hot Tamales, and that is the closest thing to the Manuel Hot Tamales. So a lot of people see the cart and they stop. “Man, you have hot tamales?” I say, “Yes.” “Are they Manuel’s?” I say, “No, it’s the closest thing to them.” And when they taste them they come back.

**00:34:06**

**SR:** Because Manuel’s is no more? Is that true?

**00:34:09**

**MH:** Yes, they’re gone. Yeah, they never came back.

**00:34:12**

**SR:** Yeah.

**00:34:14**

**MH:** After the hurricane. But the sno-ball stand is open and somebody is selling hot tamales back there, but it’s not the original Manuel Hot Tamale.

**00:34:21**

**SR:** Did you grow up eating hot tamales?

**00:34:23**

**MH:** Yes. They had a hot tamale cart on just about every corner in the city. Louisiana and Magazine, Magazine and Napoleon, Jackson—yeah, I grew up on them.

**00:34:35**

**SR:** And can you tell us also, for people who aren't familiar with New Orleans, what they are? What's in them?

**00:34:42**

**MH:** Okay, it's beef hot tamale wrapped in—it's made in cornmeal and it's wrapped in a cornhusk. And they have juice like gravy on them and they're real tasty and real juicy.

**00:34:57**

**SR:** How do you heat those up? In the microwave or—?

**00:35:00**

**MH:** I have a warmer. I put them in a warmer, turn the warmer on with the juice, and when they order them I just put them in the Styrofoam container already hot.

**00:35:11**

**SR:** What's a warmer? Is that like a Crock Pot or—?

**00:35:14**

**MH:** It's like a Crock Pot but it's a long warmer with like a chafing dish pan that you can sit in there and put the water in there and put the pan in there and the hot tamales, and that keeps them warm without overcooking. Just warming them up.

**00:35:27**

**SR:** It seems to me that you're keeping a lot of New Orleans traditions alive here.

**00:35:32**

**MH:** Yes, that's my main goal to get the hot tamales, the ya-ka-mein, the Big Shot cold drinks, because that's a New Orleans thing. And stuffed sno-balls. I try to keep it New Orleans—barbecue shrimp nachos, shrimp nachos; you know something that just feels like home. A lot of people move away and when they come back and they see that, they really get excited.

**00:35:59**

**SR:** Thank you, Maurice, for giving me your time. I appreciate it.

**00:36:02**

**MH:** Okay, thank you.

**00:36:06**

**[End Maurice Haynes Interview]**