



**Rachel Poe**  
**Service Industry Employee**  
**Raleigh, NC**  
\*\*\*

Date: June 28, 2020  
Location: Raleigh, NC  
Interviewer: Ellen Brooks  
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs  
Length: Forty-seven minutes  
Project: COVID-19 Oral History Project

00:00:00

Ellen Brooks: Okay; today is June 28, 2020 and this Ellen Brooks interviewing Rachel Poe for the Southern Foodways Alliance Oral History Project on COVID19. So, for the recording, can you introduce yourself and tell us your age and your occupation?

00:00:18

Rachel Poe: Yes; my name is Rachel Poe. I am 28 years-old and I am a service industry employee, formerly mostly bartending, but recently it's been shifting towards other things a little bit.

00:00:31

EB: And for the record, you and I are neighbors.

00:00:33

RP: Yes; absolutely.

00:00:36

EB: So, we are recording this in my house in Raleigh.

00:00:39

RP: Yes.

00:00:42

EB: Cool, so tell me a little bit about what you were doing, like what work looked like before COVID19 happened.

00:00:50

RP: Yeah; so, I-- my primary job was a Locals Oyster Bar, which is in Transfer Food Hall, downtown Raleigh. And I was a bartender there. So, at that bar it's kind of set up; there is a volume bar and then there's like a food hall counter, and then there's like another kind of more restaurant side-bar. So, it was a lovely kind of like-- you could work all positions type of situation. And then I was like working one days a week-- one day of the week at State Rock because Ester, my house mate is the GM there, right. So, it was kind of like as a favor to her. And then I was working part-time at the Raleigh Wine Shop on Glenwood South; yes.

00:01:33

EB: So, three jobs?

00:01:35

RP: Yeah; three jobs. [Laughter]

00:01:36

EB: And about how long have you been in-- ?

00:01:42

RP: So, the Raleigh Wine Shop was probably my longest-standing job. I took like a brief hiatus from there, but it was always kind of like more of a part-time situation for me just to like learn more about wine and their amazing people that work there. Locals, I started working there, I think my first day was January 2, 2020, so right at the beginning of the year. And State Rock, I had only been working as a couple-- a couple months, I think. I think in mid-February I started; yeah.

00:02:14

EB: So, tell me about like how you first started hearing about COVID19 and you know either personally or like at work and kind of how like your first interaction?

00:02:28

RP: Yes; definitely. I mean obviously, I heard about you know like the cruise ship and China, right. That was kind of like the first, oh, it's happening, and I knew a lot of people at the time that were just kind of like dismissing that as like something that wasn't going to be a problem for us, right. And I remember one of my managers at Locals, she was like-- a couple weeks before, it was like I guess like right at the beginning of March; she was like I think this-- I think this is going to be something that we like really need to think about. Like, this is going to affect like everyone. I was like oh wow; like yeah, I think it will. And then so Locals was really good about letting us know. It was March 15<sup>th</sup> I think; it was a Monday. And they called everyone-- every employee in for an all-staff meeting and they told us about COVID19 and the closures that were about to happen and kind of that they were still trying to come up with a plan, but they wanted to keep everyone informed and that-- it was probably going to do a takeout situation if they could,

that type of thing. My colleagues at the Wine Shop, we-- they're very like politically active, like very engaged people, so it's kind of like that's like almost a part of our like daily routine is kind of like talking about what's happening in the world, right. So that was like-- that's kind of like an everyday shifting type thing. And the Wine Shop actually ended up getting a lot busier during the COVID situation, so-- yeah, yeah.

00:04:05

EB: So, tell me a little bit about like how it proceeded from there in terms of things shutting down and you know what type of work you were able to do and that kind of thing.

00:04:19

RP: Uh-hm; yeah. So, I was you know laid off from Locals and that was like you know official. Like, this is happening, but let us know if you want to help, right. So, I was like yeah; if you end up needing help doing whatever I'm here for it. Yeah; I lost my train of thought.

00:04:45

EB: Yeah; so well-- when were you laid off?

00:04:46

RP: Yeah; okay so that was-- yeah, the 15<sup>th</sup>, right. And so, I didn't work there at all for like two weeks. And then I was able to-- I shifted into like an expediting position, right, like expediting to-go food which is like-- it was such a problem-solving every day type situation and it's like

people trying to figure out where-even simple things, like where they pick up the food, like how to like keep the food fresh, that type of thing. A lot of new forms of communication I'd say.

Yeah; so then at the Wine Shop I actually-- I went from working there like 12 hours a week to like almost like 30-- like 25-30 because they were very busy. It's almost like everyone went into like panic mode and they're like we need wine, right. So, [Laughter] there it was like okay we have to get an online store happening. Like, we have to figure out what the community wants and like how to help, right. So, people were just ordering lots of like bulk wine. And then we started like a delivery program for delivering wine, started doing deliveries at Locals Oyster Bar as well which is always fun to like coordinate when that's happening. But yeah; obviously, it was a very-- a lot of uncomfortable situations, right and just like trying to make sure everyone feels safe that's involved, yeah.

00:06:13

EB: Yeah; what-- can you talk about-- about like those uncomfortable situations, like anything that kind of brings to mind?

00:06:19

RP: Yeah; I mean I think just in general the world is very uncomfortable. Like, let's see; hmm, can you pause for a second?

00:06:39

EB: Sure.

00:06:41

RP: Sorry.

00:06:41

EB: No; that's okay.

00:06:44

So, were there--so the Transfer Food Hall has what like 10 businesses in it or something?

00:06:49

RP: I think it's eight different independent vendors, yeah.

00:06:53

EB: Okay; so, were a lot of them kind of doing the same thing that you-- as far as you know, like were there a lot of people there?

00:07:00

RP: Yeah. Some businesses immediately like-- immediately said no, we're not going to try to do anything with this. And then kind of slowly reopened, you know kind of what mid-May or something like that. But yeah, it was us and like Bench Warmers Bagels kind of were doing to-go the whole time and it was actually-- there were times it was actually very busy because like there weren't really many other places that you could get food, like very limited especially like you know fresh, like fresh food, yeah.

00:07:37

EB: And did you-- did you do any of the delivery yourself or were you mostly in charge of like coordinating that?

00:07:42

RP: Mostly in charge of coordinating. So like, as-- like, as an expo at Locals you know you put together the food and you make sure that like everyone in the kitchen like knows what time it needs to be ready, where it's going, any like modifications, and then like managing--so there is like one delivery driver. So, you have to figure out like if he can take-- he or she-- it was all men just in this case, but--. So yeah, if they can take like multiple items on the same run you know. Is it like hot food that like needs to get there immediately? Is it like you know kind of like stuff that can be refrigerated-- that type of thing? At the Wine Shop delivering wine was like you know wine is a lot more stable. It's not as like time-sensitive so not nearly as hard to coordinate that, but-- yeah.

00:08:32

EB: Yeah; so, and so tell me about like what your-- like, what your workday will look like right now?

00:08:41

RP: Uh-hm; yeah, so I actually-- I have it set up where kind of like in four days of the week I work like just over 40 hours and then the next week I work like 50 hours. So, I-- I guess I have a kind of unique experience in that I've actually-- I've been able to work the whole time, you

know more like on a part-time level. I've just kind of got back into like being able to work full-time. So yeah; I work at the Wine Shop two days a week like all day and then like a couple mornings in the week and then I'll go to Locals on like the weekend nights and work there. And yeah; I kind of had this moment where I was like I'm going to retire from bartending forever because this is like-- this is great because I-- I haven't really been bartending except like when I needed to just jump in and help somebody because it was really nice to just like have a break from interacting with people after doing it for you know years and years. It's like-- it can be a lot, you know. So, in that way it was actually kind of a-- kind of a-- a break from that. But now, I'm-- I realize I do kind of miss bartending a little bit, you know, so--.

00:09:53

EB: How long have you been bartending?

00:09:54

RP: I guess probably I think eight-- seven or eight years, yeah. I-- I did catering when I was in college and then I went to work at Tazza Kitchen in Cameron Village. That was my first restaurant job. And I started off as a server there and then I shifted into like bartending and serving and then being like a floor manager and bartending. And yeah, and then I went to Crawford and Son after that and just like exclusively bartended for--I was there for like a year and a half. And then after that I went to Cortez and I did like bartending and serving again. And then yeah, Locals--Locals Oyster Bar is very much kind of like--there are a lot of different moving parts there, and it is in a Food Hall and like also you know Locals Oyster Bar has the only like--maintains the only bars in there. They have all like the porter staff, so it's kind of

maybe like the largest organization in there. So, it's kind of like you get to do a lot of different things, which I enjoy a lot about that job. But, obviously it's different now but still a lot of moving parts [Laughter], yeah.

00:11:02

EB: What does it look like in there now, like what is--?

00:11:05

RP: Yeah; so, the Food Hall opened, which was I would say debated among the vendors, but they were like it's opening, so it's happening, right. So, basically, I think most of the vendors are just still serving like food to-go. Like, everything is coming in bags, you know and it's like perceived to be like safer that way anyway. But I would say the past week like people have started like coming into the Food Hall, getting drinks from the bar, like getting their food, and the patio is obviously like a--a great asset to have there. And everything is six-feet apart, all the tables. But you know with the--with the mask requirement that can like definitely--that--those are the uncomfortable moments for sure, most recently because I mean some people obviously have very different ideas about what it is to wear a mask and--what it means to wear a mask. And it turns into this like political statement, right instead of just like a basic safety thing. And you know I--when I work at you know the Wine Shop and then at Locals, you know I have to wear a mask all day, right. Like, I actually--I got like a bacterial infection on my nose, yeah, like from wearing the mask, you know whatever. But I'm like I think yes, wear the mask, right, like try to protect people if you can. And obviously like, I'm legally required to working. So, people will come into the Food Hall and we have masks available if you don't have a mask and so you just

like ask people and most times people are like oh yeah, sure. Like, thanks for the mask. But yeah, every now and then there's somebody that's like you get into like a confrontation with them and they're like I won't wear a mask, or you know they're like I have health problems. I can't wear a mask, you know. And it's like I--I guess like--I guess maybe that could be true but I think you're probably just saying that you know. And then people will be very shiesty about it and just like hang it on their ear or something like that. And it--I mean it is infuriating at times, and I'm also you know not to just be like selfish but I'm like I--I have to wear this thing all day. You can't wear it for the five minutes that you're in here to like help protect those around you? Like, you're not with it, yeah.

00:13:28

EB: Does it--I mean aside from like kind of the like social discomfort, do you feel--do you feel safe?

00:13:33

RP: Yeah; I mean I feel like because I've been working--like, when the--the Hall first opened I was like very nervous and like scared of like what it was going to be like. But at this point it's almost kind of like normalizing in my mind. And we have a lot of you know precautions set in place. You know we have a lot of like plexiglass--plexiglass screens, you know we wear gloves and masks, and you know hopefully patrons will be wearing masks. So, I mean I--I feel--I feel like as safe as I could be you know working in a restaurant setting. I did see you know the meme the other day; it's like if you want to know what it's like to work in the service industry during

COVID, just like imagine you know the band on the Titanic when they're sinking. And I was like oh, [Laughter] that's--that's too real.

00:14:33

EB: Yeah--

00:14:33

RP: Yeah; no, but also, I mean I have enjoyed kind of like--I'm not sure if enjoyed is the right word--but the problem-solving aspect I think has promoted a lot of growth within myself. So that's great. I also, you know I--I go through moments of being like really optimistic and then like really just like upset, as I feel like the world is. But I mean there's obviously good things coming out of this. It's kind of like a lot is being unearthed you know obviously like--yeah, like Black Lives Matter Movement has taken off during this time which I think is incredible, obviously. So, I'm just like--I try to tell myself this is like society leveling up if we can just like figure out how to get through this pandemic situation, yeah.

00:15:20

EB: And when did the Food Hall reopen? Was it like--most stuff was reopening at the end of May, I think?

00:15:28

RP: Yeah; yeah, it was--what's today?

00:15:30

EB: The 28<sup>th</sup>. I know it's like--

00:15:32

RP: Yeah; I know, right. It's a flat circle. Yeah; I feel like-yeah. I think it was a month ago it kind of opened. And yeah, so people are coming in now like asking for like oysters and stuff like that because we're an oyster bar, right. But it's like we don't have a-a shucker there and we can't really let people shuck their own oysters there because that's a liability so it's just kind of like we have to-go oysters. So, like this past weekend, a lot of people have been coming in like expecting oysters like a dining experience, and like--almost like can be upset that we don't have those things which is you know I--I understand that, of course, but you know it's like I--I don't think I like--I call the pet store you know before I go to like make sure they're even open, because I just feel like everything is so uncertain.

00:16:24

EB: Yeah; I think the expectations right now--

00:16:29

RP: Right; yeah, yeah. There's going to be a lot down for you.

00:16:33

EB: I don't know anything about oysters, so you don't have a shucker there, which means you don't have a person doing the shucking?

00:16:38

RP: Yeah; exactly.

00:16:39

EB: And typically, if you're doing dine-in you would--?

00:16:42

RP: Yes; yes, exactly. So, yeah like to shuck an oyster it's kind of like--you know it's an acquired skill, right like--unless you're just trying to like break it on a rock or something. So, like you put it into the back joint, and you have to like wiggle it in there and then like separate like the muscle from the shell. And then like you make it like look like nice in there and clean and make sure there's like no grit and stuff. And it is; it's kind of like you know you could easily just like stab your hand, right. So, it's not like a shuck yourself type activity unless you're like ready, willing, and like know what you were getting into. You know and it takes time. So yeah, when--previously it would be okay, like you order a dozen oysters, you get--they're freshly shucked. You put them on ice and like you get you know your sauces, meaning cocktail and that type of thing.

00:17:34

EB: Yeah; so, what--but people do order them to go and then shuck them?

00:17:40

RP: Yeah; yeah, no, so we--we started doing like a lot of different meal kits there because it-- you know it's a lot more stable than just like fried food and also people have the time to cook at home, so it's really nice if you can just like have it really nicely set up and have instructions and then it can be like enjoyable time. But yeah, the--the oyster kit like you get a dozen oysters, you get crushed ice, and like trays to kind of like set it up and make it like look nice and get ready for it. And then you get sauces and then you can like add an oyster knife if you don't have one, yeah.

00:18:11

EB: Cool.

00:18:13

RP: Uh-hm; yeah.

00:18:13

EB: So, if you're willing and able to talk a little bit about your finance situation? You and I chatted a little bit--

00:18:22

RP: Yeah. Yeah; absolutely. So, excuse me, okay so when I was laid off, I had--you know March 15<sup>th</sup> I'm like okay. Well, I am unemployed. You know at that point I had no idea if the Wine Shop would be able to stay open either. Any of it; it was just all uncertain. And all of my you know-- my community is very tight within the service industry, right as it goes. And everybody is like okay, we're filing for unemployment. This is the thing, right.

00:18:54

So, I filed for unemployment and basically I made like a clerical error because I ended up continuing to be able to work at the Wine Shop where like my initial claim like was kind of like I've been laid off from everything, which like I don't know. It was all very convoluted. It's a very confusing process. And so, I kind of saw that I had like maybe made a mistake and so then there was like an option to like do like an addendum form kind of thing, right. So, let's--let's jump to now and then I'll go back. So, on--on July 2<sup>nd</sup> I have a hearing. I have a hearing with Unemployment. I filed for unemployment on March 15<sup>th</sup>, so yeah--so July 2<sup>nd</sup> it's the hearing. It's over phone conversation and it is--the ultimate issue is that the right business wasn't like claimed as my like last like employer [meant employer] basically. Like, does that make sense?

00:20:03

EB: I mean as much as it can.

00:20:05

RP: Yeah; yeah, it really has-- oh my god. I have like wept over this, like and when the website was like not working, I would enter the same information over again, over and over again for like two hours. It was--it was so frustrating. And I--I mean I understand like no--DES is like doing everything they can. Like, I--I absolutely understand that the system was not built for this at all. And it was like everything was constantly changing. So, it's like what do you even put on there? So, you know you fill out your weekly certification saying how many hours you worked because I ended up being able to work at the Wine Shop right. So, and then eventually you know at--at Locals, a few weeks later. And you know you put in how many hours you worked--

whatever. So, I ended up getting all this correspondence by mail and--as with the Wine Shop since they were in the eyes of DES the ones responsible for laying me off, which was like not necessarily the case. So, you get a--so you get a form, right and it says oh, here's this issue, right. Get it back to DES by this date. And that date has already passed when you get that letter. And so, the Wine Shop because they had never fired anyone before, they don't have an account with DES. So, they didn't have any way to access digitally--digitally the website until maybe a month ago. So yeah; I mean it's been a wild experience and it's--it was weird because you know if I was making under the amount where I could still--like I would still be able to collect some of the unemployment although I was working, right, which is great because you know it's horrible to be working, like trying to like do your best you know and other people are just getting \$900 a week for being unemployed, which you know I understand not everyone has the opportunity to work and I'm very grateful for that. And that's like-- I feel like that was so important to me to be able to work, like coming from like completely losing it you know to have like a goal in mind and like still be able to like engage with people [Laughter] in some amount. But yeah, so I don't necessarily want to get into the specifics of it since I still have that hearing happening, and I mean the worst--the worst fear is that somehow like I'm going to be charged with unemployment fraud because I made like a mistake. But you know fraud requires intent and I did not intend to do that. It was just so convoluted and so confusing and so overwhelming, but hopefully it'll work out.

00:22:43

EB: Yeah and have you had--are there other resources that you've used or any like--like assistance to--? I can only imagine--

00:22:53

RP: Yeah, well a lot of Googling which can be helpful at times. You know how that goes. But I would say--I mean it's definitely like it was community support as with like with all--all things happening during this time. You know there is--I have a lot of friends in the service industry that have all been like very helpful and you know--you know I had people; they were like oh, well if you go to the--the DES office and fill out this form like they'll get back to you. That's what happened to me last week. You know and so then I'd go do that and then it's like at that point, like that system has failed, you know what I mean. And then I found like-and like basically like an email request form on the DES website, but yeah, I mean the community has been like amazing. And when this first all happened, like so many people were giving us like produce, like everything. Locals Oyster Bar started doing family meals for service industry employees, like anyone that needed it, like and were willing to sign up. And it was like, you know you could get meals for like your whole week if you needed it. And I think some people really appreciated that. And yeah, and they--they were also very forthcoming with like when I worked there, they were like if you--like if you need anything, like if you need food, whatever like you just let us know. But I ended up being like so abundant because like so many people were trying to help so then it's like you know we would get too much produce and it's like you have to share with other people. So, it was great in--in that way. But--what was--what was the question? I kind of forgot.

00:24:23

EB: Resources that you might have used.

00:24:24

RP: Oh yeah unemployment, oh yeah. I went on a tangent. Yeah, because it was just interpersonal communication was probably the best guidance. The Wine Shop has been--they are just like we wish we could help more, you know. But I had a bunch of friends that just kind of like--they immediately got their unemployment situated but then I have also a bunch of friends that like me are still waiting on a result or like they just get it all deposited in like a lump sum, which you know has--they really enjoy that money when it lands in the account. But you know for the past four months, like--is that how long it's been--yeah, yeah four months. So, like unemployed for four months and unable to get the unemployment and not able to work at all, like--like I was you know. It was like that is horrible. So, yeah and I--it was just very clear the system was not ready for that, right. You know understandable, but yeah; so hopefully the hearing will be fruitful. And I hope--I mean the greatest thing is that it will be done either way.

00:25:40

EB: Right; that's got to be you know if nothing else--

00:25:42

RP: Yeah.

00:25:43

EB: --you'll know what your next steps are.

00:25:45

RP: Yes; definitely. [Laughter]

00:25:46

EB: Yeah and I will definitely have to check in--

00:25:49

RP: Yeah; absolutely.

00:25:51

EB: So, anything else you want to talk about in terms of like the community and like you know you were talking about how much--how supportive everybody is and everything? And it really seems like--I remember when is it so•ca--is that the name of the restaurant?

00:26:04

RP: Yeah, with the first COVID scare?

00:26:08

EB: Yeah.

00:26:08

RP: Yeah.

00:26:08

EB: And I remember like reading article about like how the service industry like really like pulled together to like promote them because you know everybody was like didn't know how to handle it and freaking about it and things. And then obviously--

00:26:20

RP: That was everyone. [Laughter] Yeah.

00:26:24

EB: Yeah, but I thought that was really neat.

00:26:25

RP: Yeah; no, it was, and I mean the service industry community is like very connected and very strong. And it's like it's a--it's a really great job and a good way to make money and if you, you know play your cards right you can end up in a situation that's like very stable financially, right. And so, a lot of people had achieved that it and then it's like wow--gone in like an instant, right. So, it was like so many people in the same situation, so like we're all coming together to help. So, as--I mean as you know, like I live with three other service industry employees. Well yeah, all either bartenders or former bartenders, GM of a restaurant, Head of--you know Tony is Head of Kill Devil Rum, yeah and Emily works at Whiskey Kitchen. So, we all started doing--I mean I'm so grateful for them. They're amazing people. So, we all started like cooking together and like that was like how we got through, like the days is just like making like really elaborate like meals and eating them. So, that was great and we're all very supportive of each other. But yeah, I mean the community as a whole has just been like whatever you need. So many people

are offering free meals and stuff. At the Wine Shop we--for like the Wine Shop Anniversary Week, it's normally like a big sale that happens, right. And so, we did a sale, but we also came up with the idea to like partner with different restaurants every--like every day of that week to kind of like promote like hey like we've got this wine. It would be delicious with like this dish or like most of the food. So, you know we did a day with like Stanbury, Lady Luck, who is like our neighbor on Glenwood, like one of my greatest friends like Liz Grand Champ of the shop, she like made meals for it. And I feel like it--it was a good way to kind of like get--like try to get people back into like buying food from restaurants. But also, just like it was really nice to like communicate with all those people in the community and I feel like it was a sense of like okay, like we can do something, like anything. Yeah; so yeah, the community has been really wonderful.

00:28:40

EB: Yeah.

00:28:42

RP: Yeah.

00:28:44

EB: And Lady Luck, they--they had just opened up right?

00:28:47

RP: Yeah; yeah, so yeah, they were not able to get any of the PPP loans. And they--like they had literally just opened. And they're such hardworking people, like I'm good friends with some of the people that work there, and the food is amazing. And I feel like they're bouncing back in like an incredible way. But like, if they didn't have so much like strength and perseverance, like there's no way, like that is like--it's so hard. And they got no assistance, right. And like yeah, similarly like my--my friend Liz that I mentioned at the Shop. So, it's like her dream to open a sandwich shop, right and she makes amazing food. So, she--it was like just taking off. Like, it was amazing. She was like booking tons of catering orders, like all of this and then this happened. And it's like ugh, like it's so heartbreaking, right. So, then it's like how do you adjust? So, she started making meals from her house like for people to pick up and has been continuing that way. So, it's just--it's so much like every day like come up with a new plan, right.

00:29:55

EB: Do you--what do you think if you can look into like the long-term, do you have any thoughts on kind of like how this is--?

00:30:03

RP: Yeah; so I mean one of the things that I've noticed is I think like restaurateurs and owners of businesses have realized like how valuable their employees are and that they're going--like so I mean typically as a service industry employee, you know before this you'd get \$2.13 an hour plus your trips, right. So now it's shifting into like you're going to have to pay like an actual hourly amount and then split the tips in order to like keep your employees, which is great. I feel like that's something that people have been calling for, for a long time. So, I feel like that could

be a really good, a really good shift to make it more like--more of like a--a career almost, even if you aren't in like a management position in the restaurant that you know your business will--the business you work for will be investing in you like monetarily more, which is great. And yeah; also, they're you know not necessarily COVID related but just in the unearthing of all the things, right, so like you know I'm sure--sure you heard about like the sexual harassment allegations for Bida Manda and Brewery Bhavana. Have you heard about this?

00:31:29

EB: I think so.

00:31:29

RP: Yeah; so, amongst the service industry it's like still something that's being very much talked about. They're really serious allegations that I absolutely believe are true. And they clearly had a very toxic like culture of harassment there and it was like unearthed during all this. So, I mean I--like obviously it is a horrible situation. I am--I think it's awful that anyone had to go through that. But like, so many employees there have such similar stories and it's finally coming out. And you know they are pursuing like legal action, and which is--you know I mean it sucks because they were like--Bida Manda and Bhavana were kind of like leaders of like the--the Raleigh like food culture, right. And so then--for then this to come out it's like oh. Like, it's horrible but it needs to be known, yeah.

00:32:28

EB: Yeah; do you think it was like--it might be a big stretch but in terms of like you know how like the Black Lives Matter stuff is all ramping up now--

00:32:37

RP: Oh yeah.

00:32:37

EB: --like is it because people--not that people are bored, but because people are like home and their schedules are disrupted so like it's bringing new things to light--kind of more pay attention?

00:32:47

RP: Yeah; I do think that is part of it. But also, so specifically with the Bida Manda situation, this all--this all began to come out because of the Black Lives Matter Movement because there was a moment there where basically someone in management there called a person of color who was their employee a slave, right. And so this came out; Bida Manda did like a big apology thing about you know we are--you know we haven't been responsible enough with you know representing you know people of color and you know we are so sorry for this and we will be better--type thing. And this was like an Instagram post. And basically, a former employee commented on that and said, when are you going to address all of the sexual abuse that happened in that restaurant? And then you know it's like it takes one person to like tell their story and then it was like so many people. It's like everyone realized like oh yeah, it's like yeah. And this--and it was not okay, like what was happening to them was not okay. And I feel like sometimes in the moment, like it's--it's not clear until you like kind of get through it, but yeah. I know, right. And

it was--yeah, we were like--it was kind of like a whew, but I mean it was definitely an interesting time. And the women and men that have come forward with those allegations have also made it very clear that they're not trying to interrupt like the Black Lives Movement at all, although like the timing was like very interjected into that. But I--I think it's all connected. I think yes; that's what I want--what's what I want with the societal leveling up. That's what I want. Less--no racism would be--would be great. Obviously, and you know I've learned a lot about my own personal biases and stuff, and how to be a better human and how to like make space for people that need it. But yeah, so I try--I try to look at those things, although horrible as like--well, at least something is happening about it and like we can move forward.

00:35:05

EB: Yeah.

00:35:04

RP: I know right; it's a lot--2020, it's been so many things. It's like, what happened for the other years of my life? [Laughter]

00:35:13

EB: Yeah; well yeah, like--it does feel like it's been like five years, yeah.

00:35:20

RP: Yeah.

00:35:22

EB: What else? Is there anything more that you want to talk about? We covered most of the stuff that I know to ask about but then there's stuff I don't know to ask about--.

00:35:38

RP: Sure; sure. I don't know. I mean I feel like the theme--the theme of this has just been like get through it. I don't know. There's so many things to think about and talk about.

00:35:56

EB: How about besides like the community and your housemates and all, like how have you been like coping, just like handling all of this?

00:36:06

RP: Yeah; I mean like I said, I was definitely very grateful to be able to work a little bit because it gave--you know anything that gives you like a little bit of a purpose during this time, something to focus on other than you know the world--the craziness of the world around us.

Yeah; I don't know. I mean I've been playing a lot of cards, hammocking, catching up on some reading, but I mean there's only so much to cope. I feel like it just depends on like my emotional fortitude of the day and whether I'm just going to like embrace being sad for the day or

[Laughter] if I'm like oh no, like let's do this, like let's--let me brainstorm like how we can come up with better processes today, you know. So, I mean I think that's it. And it is--I don't know.

It's just like a new--a new way of life. I feel like you know like my generation hasn't had that--like, this is like the thing that's happening. You know this is like the big event that like, this is

going to be like your grandchildren or whatever you know. It'll be like yeah, 2020, because it was like you know there was like 09/11 and then you know an ongoing war in the Middle East. But it's like you know this is like everywhere in--in the world, you know.

00:37:37

EB: Uh-hm and it's not--

00:37:38

RP: I don't know.

00:37:39

EB: --like an event, right.

00:37:40

RP: Yeah.

00:37:42

EB: Like I think that's the thing, too, like--like you know we were--I at least remember 09/11 and you know you knew the wars were happening, but they didn't necessarily have an impact on you.

00:37:50

RP: Yes.

00:37:52

EB: And you would have to follow them to be like involved, right, but like this is like--this is just happening, like it keeps happening.

00:37:58

RP: Yeah.

00:37:59

EB: Like it's happened and when we talk about it, it's still happening.

00:38:04

RP: Yeah; it's like it's going to be happening. You know I think--I think people are realizing like getting back to normal isn't really a thing. It's like coming up with a new plan for everything, which can be great if we do it in the right way and try to think of it as like a new beginning, you know phoenix--phoenix type thing. And just come up with better ways and like maybe this will--you know I feel like this has helped climate change, which is amazing, like that's--maybe that's the biggest blessing, like I don't know. Not the biggest blessing but one of them, like is that the earth got a little bit of a break because--yeah. I don't know. It's on the verge of imploding. So that's been good. So maybe it's a--it's just kind of like humans, can you not be so awful, maybe? Like, here--here is a warning; get it together and try to be better.

00:39:04

EB: Yeah; what about--have you--so North Carolina is like--we're not doing great--

00:39:11

RP: No; uh-hm.

00:39:11

EB: --in terms of the COVID. We're definitely not on the like terrible places like places in Florida and the west right now in terms of cases. But we're--we're not--we're not seeing the numbers we're supposed to be seeing, right. So, has there been--do you know if there's been any talk about like another shutdown or anything like that?

00:39:28

RP: Oh yeah; definitely. I mean I think a lot of people are in the camp that like [Laughter]--they could be the government is waiting for July 4<sup>th</sup> to pass so there can be some economic flow and then they'll dial it back again. I mean personally, I think that initial shutdown should have lasted like at least two more weeks and then maybe we would be in a better spot. I think it would just kind of like--aside from keeping people at home longer, it would have like--I think like just a couple more weeks and like those habits of like social distancing and like wearing the mask and just like being cognizant of like trying to give people space and stuff like that, like I think those habits could have attached a little bit better. Whereas now it's like you know don't go to Windwood South on a Saturday night because it's just like people everywhere. And they don't--you know I think some people don't think of it as like enough. They don't think of it enough as like you're protecting those around you, like not yourself. And so, it's kind of like-- I don't

know; at this point I actually--I got my first--it was a precautionary COVID test just because I found a free Wake County test which was a wonderful resource. So, I took--I went in there on Friday and it was like a drive-thru test. So, you pass like multiple stops with your window up and you like have a pre-filled out registration form. And basically, you just like drove up, some like really lovely people there, volunteers, or paid, I'm not really sure, and then you like swab your nose and put the thing in there. And they were like okay, well like the form that we gave you says two to four days you'll get your results but it's definitely more like five to seven. And if you test positive then you get a call from like a contact tracing nurse. And if you don't test positive then you just like--you can go on a website and check it out. And then they gave me like free disposable masks, I think like three of them, like a pamphlet with information about COVID and like a hand sanitizer, which I thought was great. You know if people don't like already have those resources, so--. Hmm; yeah what was--what was the question?

00:41:49

EB: We were talking about whether or not things were going to shut down again--building up these habits of like wearing a mask and all that stuff.

00:41:57

RP: Right; right.

00:41:59

EB: Anything that you--

00:42:00

RP: Yeah.

00:42:02

EB: Which I will talk to you about later. [Laughter]

00:42:07

RP: Yeah and it--

00:42:08

EB: I feel like with similar to like the unemployment stuff, like healthcare is just like it's a huge like--

00:42:16

RP: Yeah; of course.

00:42:17

EB: So, figuring out how to get tested and who should get tested? And like, and our healthcare system has already been like that but then you add onto the fact that like nobody--like we're facing this unknown challenge. So that's--but I'm glad that you have--

00:42:33

RP: Yeah; yeah, me too. And I am uninsured as well so it's easier I found--so there are so many different tests right and they happen--you get the results at very different speeds. It was really difficult for me to try to figure out like who had what test. So ultimately, you know I was like oh. Wake County they still have a spot open and it's going to be free, which like I don't know. It was like they're all supposed to be free or something but like from what I'm gathering not if you don't have health insurance. So, it--it was very convoluted in trying to investigate that. But you know it's also kind of like well, what does the test mean if I took it last Friday and I don't have the results yet? You know it's kind of like okay, so on Friday I didn't have COVID. That's great. You know and--and I mean part of me is like was I one of those people that like was asymptomatic and I've already had it? But the antibody tests are--I don't know, unreliable, I--so when I had to do my appointment for the bacterial nose thing, right. So, I asked about the antibody test and I was seeing like a really love like nurse practitioner and she was like honestly, I--it's probably not going to be worth the extra 100 bucks. It's not going to change like any of your habits and it's not necessarily going to tell you if you had COVID or not, just like maybe those antibodies are present. And I was like, okay; so, I'll skip that. *[Laughter]*

00:44:13

EB: Yeah; I've--I've been like really curious about it, too but like I feel like one, I don't want to pay for anything, especially anything I don't need--

00:44:20

RP: Yeah.

00:44:22

EB: --and two, it's like--it's still so unclear to the medical health professionals exactly like what things mean so it's like I'll wait. [Laughter]

00:44:30

RP: Yeah; absolutely.

00:44:32

EB: If I can, I will wait. Do you see yourself staying in the service industry?

00:44:40

RP: Yes; I mean I don't necessarily want to like do this forever, but I have worked myself into like a decent situation for right now and like the people that I work for are like really amazing people. Like, not--not even as employers but just like as humans, you know what I mean, which is really important to me. But I do--I really want to like learn more about the wine industry. Like, I feel like that's kind of my focus right now and like the Raleigh Wine Shop has like the most amazing, most knowledgeable people without like--they are like not pretentious at all, talking about wine which it sometimes can be--. So, I really like--I really want to learn more about that and just kind of like see if I can find like a--a niche like in the wine world that kind of calls to me. Yeah and I'm like really excited to travel again one day, you know--yeah. But yeah; so, I mean it is--I don't know. It's like wine retail but it's so--it just seems so close to the service industry you know and it's--there's also like, you know you do events and they've been doing really cool like virtual like wine-tasting classes and stuff. Like, they did like a blind tasting one

which has taken off. It's really fun. You get like two bottles and they're both like the same style from like different places and it's kind of like--you kind of like get taught how to identify which one is which. So it's been really cool and it's--you know I feel like because business kind of took off there, there's so many like new things to do, like new ways to like interact with the community and I don't know, sell wine to people. But yeah; so, it's been interesting.

00:46:38

EB: And that's definitely not going away any time soon.

00:46:40

RP: Yeah; no, no.

00:46:42

EB: People are going to need their wine.

00:46:42

RP: Yeah. [Laughter] Oh yeah for sure, so--

00:46:47

EB: Stability there.

00:46:47

RP: Absolutely; so, it's good, yeah.

00:46:49

EB: And you have to go there now.

00:46:52

RP: Oh yeah; I think--I think I do, yeah.

00:46:55

EB: Is there anything else you want to add?

00:46:59

RP: Hmm; I don't think so. Yeah; no, I think--I think that's pretty much I don't know--it for the moment. I--I do--yeah; it's like I feel like my life now is just kind of like me, like deep thinking about things all the time and then it's just like the everyday like activities just kind of like bounce off of that and then that's how it progresses. So, I don't know; probably--there's so much more to be talked about--. I can't even begin. [Laughter]

00:47:37

EB: Yeah; we-we can't cover it all.

00:47:38

RP: Yeah.

00:47:40

EB: But also, yeah, I think it's good to just kind of like have a chance to talk out loud.

00:47:45

RP: Yeah; absolutely.

00:47:48

EB: So yeah; I'm going to turn off the recorder if that's cool.

00:47:49

RP: Yeah; for sure.

00:47:52

EB: Okay.

00:47:52

RP: Okay; thanks, bye.

00:47:53

[End Rachel Poe]