



**Jeanette Meyer**  
**New Orleans, Louisiana**  
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Date: July 21, 2019  
Location: Pascal's Manale, New Orleans, LA  
Interviewer: Justin Nystrom  
Length: Fifty-eight minutes  
Project: Career Servers

[*BEGIN INTERVIEW*]

[00:00:22.18]

**Justin N.:** Perfect. Great. Thank you.

[00:00:23.13]

**Jeanette M.:** Cool.

[00:00:25.14]

**Justin N.:** Today, I am with Jeanette—last name. Jeanette Meyer. We are at Pascal's Manale.

Jeanette is an employee at Pascal's Manale, waits tables. We're gonna be talking, as part of the Southern Foodways Alliance Long-term Servers Project. My name is Justin Nystrom. I teach at Loyola University New Orleans. Today is July 21, 2019. We're here in the dining room at Pascal's Manale on Napoleon Avenue. Jeanette, thank you so much for joining me this morning.

[00:01:02.00]

**Jeanette M.:** You're welcome. Thank you for having me.

[00:01:06.01]

**Justin N.:** Now, you and I were talking briefly when we came in. I know that you are the youngest of six children, but can you tell me a little bit about yourself? Like kinda where you grew up, and . . .

[00:01:19.09]

**Jeanette M.:** All right. I grew up in western New York, one of six children. My father had a vegetable packing factory in western New York in a small town that employed about a hundred people. I learned a really good work ethic from my father. As a young girl, I worked in his factory, and then found my passion as a server in the service industry, being a waitress, maybe, at sixteen years old. Through my whole life, have been an artist, and have always done serving as a job because I absolutely love it. So. I'm still doing it. Sixty-three years old and still serving. So, yeah. Lovin' it.

[00:02:08.06]

**Justin N.:** What town in western New York?

[00:02:09.29]

**Jeanette M.:** Fifty miles south of Buffalo, near Franklinville, New York.

[00:02:15.28]

**Justin N.:** Great, great. Yeah, yeah.

[00:02:19.00]

**Jeanette M.:** I came to New Orleans about forty-some years ago and just fell in love with it. Moved everything here and worked in some of the greatest restaurants of New Orleans over the years.

[00:02:29.28]

**Justin N.:** Great, great. Well, I'm looking very much forward to talking about all of those. But first, I want to wind back to—you said you were sixteen years old and you discovered a passion for waiting tables and for art. So, I'd like to talk—I guess—which came first? The love of art?

[00:02:48.14]

**Jeanette M.:** My art. My art. When I was a young girl, I used to paint signs and things. My father had vegetable packing trucks and I painted those, ended up painting a lot of trucks. So, I travelled all over the country doing airbrush murals and pin striping on custom vehicles at car shows. Every winter, when there were no car shows, I would fall back on waiting tables. Well, it became such a thing to me, you know, meeting the people, talking to the people, taking care of 'em, food. It became more of a passion to me than just a part-time job. So, through my whole life, I've always worked a full-time job and done my artwork full-time, as well. I work sixteen hours a day, seven days a week, but that's what makes me happy. I look forward to comin' in here. I've worked at this job for fourteen years, and I ate here for twenty years before I started working here, because this was my favorite restaurant in New Orleans.

[00:03:53.23]

**Justin N.:** It's an institution, yeah. Absolutely.

[00:03:57.04]

**Jeanette M.:** It's an awesome restaurant.

[00:03:58.12]

**Justin N.:** So, when you were sixteen, where did you first wait tables?

[00:04:03.08]

**Jeanette M.:** At a little restaurant in my hometown in Franklinville, New York. Then, I went to another restaurant in Olean, New York, and then I travelled for a long time and would always fall back; wherever I would go, I would end up in a restaurant somewhere. Then I realized this is what makes me happy. I love servin' food, so I've always done it. When I came here to New Orleans, the first place I got a job was The Coffee Pot.

[00:04:40.16]

**Justin N.:** The Coffee Pot! Yeah, I've—

[00:04:42.17]

**Jeanette M.:** On St. Peter's Street. I was a hostess, bartender there; server there. Then, I was recruited . . . by Chef Paul Prudhomme to come work for him, so I worked for Chef Paul Prudhomme for . . . probably eight years.

[00:05:04.20]

**Justin N.:** So, what brought you to New Orleans?

[00:05:08.15]

**Jeanette M.:** Just the people and the food and the music and I came here . . . for a car show that was on the north shore in Covington. I came over here to see New Orleans, and I saw the French Quarter, and I just fell in love with it. Went back, and then I made sure that I scheduled shows here in New Orleans. Then I realized that this place is the greatest place on earth. [Laughter] I love it. So, I moved here in 1982.

[00:05:41.09]

**Justin N.:** Cool.

[00:05:43.13]

**Jeanette M.:** And have never been able to live anywhere else. After Katrina, I actually went up North and I thought maybe I could go back to New York and live, and I was so homesick for New Orleans that I cried almost every night to get back. It was amazing. So, I said, "This is my place. Right here." My family comes to visit me and we'll be, like, in a grocery store somewhere, and someone will talk to me. And my sister will say, "Do you know them?" I . . . "No!" Just New Orleans, that's the way it is in the South, you know. They just can't get over how friendly people are here. I think that's why I fit in so well here. I love this city because it's Southern hospitality.

[00:06:30.13]

**Justin N.:** New Orleans hospitality on top of that.

[00:06:31.18]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah. And then, being in this industry, you get to show people even more. Like, I get more than twenty percent tips a lot of times. It's only bein' real nice and courteous to the people and talkin' to them about our city, you know. Helpin' them with special needs for their diets and . . . you know. It works out great for me. I love my job.

[00:06:56.15]

**Justin N.:** I want to go back to The Coffee Pot, because of course, that's an old French Quarter institution.

[00:07:00.25]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, yeah. Right next to Pat O'Brien's. Yeah.

[00:07:06.01]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah. So, were you working, I guess, maybe lunch or dinner?

[00:07:09.28]

**Jeanette M.:** I worked both shifts there. That people would call out; I'd work behind the bar.

They'd call out as a hostess, I'd come in. I lived in the French Quarter at the time, so I could be there. I was always there for them.

[00:07:25.07]

**Justin N.:** This is back in the cash days, huh?

[00:07:26.23]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Nobody had credit cards then. It was all cash tips.

[00:07:31.29]

**Justin N.:** Did you feel like that was—I mean, you've seen a lot of change with regard to cash,  
and . . .

[00:07:39.15]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, yeah. Yeah.

[00:07:40.02]

**Justin N.:** Is it better or worse?

[00:07:44.02]

**Jeanette M.:** Uh, I'd say it's about the same. I mean, it was nice to have cash in your pocket  
every night, but then again, I like the stability of getting a check every week now with  
your cash charges on it.

[00:07:58.20]

**Justin N.:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah. So, when you're back at The Coffee Pot, that's a pretty big  
restaurant, right? That's—how many tables is—



[00:08:06.28]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, actually, small, 'cause they had a patio and then an inside. It wasn't really a big . . . but they did a lotta breakfast and a lotta lunches.

[00:08:17.01]

**Justin N.:** Yeah.

[00:08:18.17]

**Jeanette M.:** And just being right next to Pat O'Brien's, it was crazy. I was always an avid gardener, and I grew culinary herbs in my backyard. So, one of Chef Prudhomme's head chefs lived next to me. I had given him some herbs. So, Chef Paul Prudhomme came right to The Coffee Pot one day and said, "I need to talk to you." So, he hired me to grow herbs for him. So, I would grow herbs for Chef Paul and deliver 'em to him. One day he said, "Why don't you come wait tables for me?" I said, "Well, I like The Coffee Pot." He said, "Well, my waitresses do very well here. Come work for me." So, I was hand-poached by Chef Paul Prudhomme. I worked for him for eight years.

[00:09:10.02]

**Justin N.:** This is at K-Paul's?

[00:09:10.02]

**Jeanette M.:** At K-Paul's, yeah.

[00:09:12.06]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:09:12.09]

**Jeanette M.:** And that was in the day when we had a line around the block. We opened up at five o'clock, we clapped everybody in. Everybody came into the restaurant. Community seating. You were a two-top, you were forced to sit with another couple you didn't know because we had to fill the restaurant. That was probably one of the most challenging jobs I've ever had as a server, working for Chef Paul Prudhomme. And his wife Kay, which they've both passed away now. She ran the front of the house. Chef Paul ran the back of the house.

[00:09:51.28]

**Justin N.:** What kind of manager was Kay?

[00:09:53.11]

**Jeanette M.:** Ah, I don't really wanna talk about that. [Laughter] Not a conventional, let's put it that way. Not a conventional manager, let's put it that way. I travelled with them a lot, went to New York City. They opened up a restaurant there in SoHo. I went up ahead of time, helped Chef hire the staff. Then everybody came back down here and I stayed up there for a while. But then, I was very homesick for New Orleans, so I asked Chef, "Can I please come back?" So, I came back and worked here for another couple years for him.

[00:10:33.18]

**Justin N.:** So how, with the community seating, would you work, seating you with customers?

Like, did you have a section? —

[00:10:39.05]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah, like, "Oh, you're two? Right here." No, we all, what we did is, every table had a number. Every table had a seat letter. So, we all waited on you. It was community waiting. We pooled our tips, and each got equal amount every night.

[00:10:57.11]

**Justin N.:** That was pretty ahead of its time then, huh?

[00:10:59.25]

**Jeanette M.:** Well, it was ahead of its time. Some people didn't pull their weight. Some people made other people mad. Then there were people like me that would schmooze 'em over. They'd be like, "Jeanette, that table's mad. Go over there and schmooze 'em." But it did work out okay. I mean, nobody got a good section; nobody got a bad section. We all worked together. Came in at the same time, did the same amount of work. That was the only time I ever pooled tips with anyone in the restaurant business, besides maybe working a bar. I tend bar as well.

[00:11:34.20]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:11:36.15]

**Jeanette M.:** Sometimes two bartenders, yeah, you pool your tips. But this was every waitress.

[00:11:42.07]

**Justin N.:** And was it all women?

[00:11:43.26]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah. Yeah. All women. And they were hand-picked, and a lot of them stayed forever. There were girls that were there twenty-five years. You know?

[00:11:55.00]

**Justin N.:** Are you friends with any of 'em still?

[00:11:56.24]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, yeah. Yeah.

[00:11:59.19]

**Justin N.:** So, you're coming in, you're doing this sort of group waiting at K-Paul's. You're pooling your tips. Did you have benefits there?

[00:12:12.24]

**Jeanette M.:** I did have great benefits, yeah. That was the only thing that I would change in this job. I wish this job offered me benefits. Been here fourteen years and I've been without insurance, so I need to get some kinda insurance. It's so expensive. But I wish this did have benefits. We had really good benefits with Chef Paul.

[00:12:34.22]

**Justin N.:** What about some of the customers? I'm really curious about this time here at both Coffee Pot and K-Paul's, 'cause I do want to talk about Manale's, as well. I understand you also worked at a casino—

[00:12:47.28]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, yeah. For a long time, yeah.

[00:12:49.09]

**Justin N.:** So, what were the customers like? I know K-Paul's, it was a hot, hot place at that time, right?

[00:12:56.00]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. People were just so happy to come in there. Chef would sit at a back table and watch the whole dining room and just watch everything goin' on. Really, nobody, he didn't want people to approach him, but he would occasionally sign a book. He just watched everything go on. He watched the food come outta the kitchen. You know. Like, we would go to the kitchen; expediter would say, "The tenderloin's 13-A."

So, you go to Table 13 and go right to A. Medium rare, people would be like, "How did you know that? You didn't take my order." So, it was very chiseled, the way everybody did everything one way and one way only. That's what made that restaurant so good, and that's what makes this restaurant so good, is we do everything one way. You're gonna come in here, Pascal's Manale, and you're gonna get the same meal that you got five years ago, because they do everything the same way and one way only. I love that about it. It's consistency. That's what makes a good restaurant a good restaurant.

[00:14:04.19]

**Justin N.:** So, Chef Paul was more than just an active chef. He was a pretty active manager, too, huh?

[00:14:09.10]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, yeah. He was in the back of the house most of the time, but Kay ran the front of the house. Chef ran the back of the house. He did spill over into the front, as well.

[00:14:19.24]

**Justin N.:** Yeah. Keep his eye on things. That's interesting. So, were these diners mostly—did you have locals? Did you have people who came in to see you? That would be hard to do—

[00:14:33.00]

**Jeanette M.:** Not really. For lunch, we did. At first, we started lunch upstairs only, and a lot of the regulars—the locals would eat lunch there. But dinner, mostly tourists. That was in the height of Chef Paul Prudhomme's blackened redfish craze, and everybody had to have it, you know?

[00:14:53.14]

**Justin N.:** Was that the most ordered thing on the menu?

[00:14:57.00]

**Jeanette M.:** That was. It was very strange working there, because there were so many rules.

But, in a way, I think it's good. If you had four people at a table and they all came in and they said, "We all want the blackened redfish." You could not let them order the same thing. You had to make them order something different. It was like Nazi waiting. "No, you're not gonna get that. You don't wanna get the same thing. You wanna have a bite of his; you want to have some of the tournedos 'cause they're served with a sauce, a *dupuis* sauce that it takes twenty-four hours to roast prime rib bones, and it's over that potato puree." You'd have to entice them to get something else, you know, when they had in their mind what they wanted. 'Cause Chef would not accept it. "You're not servin' four blackened redfish at that table."

[00:15:47.22]

**Justin N.:** You couldn't walk back with a ticket that had four blackened redfish?

[00:15:50.00]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, no. No. You'd have to say to the next girl, "I couldn't get 'em to budge. Go get 'em." Finally, people then would be—when they'd get their dinner, they'd be, "I'm so glad we got to try this. This is the best thing I ever had." So, they had a thing that was called eggplant pirogue—a mirliton pirogue, and it was a deep-fried piece of mirliton with an andouille, tasso hollandaise fried oysters, and then sautéed mirliton on top. So, you would bite into it—oh, and andouille sausage as well. So, you'd bite into it, and you'd take a bite of each thing, and it would be a layered bite. It would be just the most incredible thing. People would be like, "Oh, my God! I can't believe this!" So, it was kind of funny waiting tables there, 'cause you had so many rules.

[00:16:46.15]

**Justin N.:** That is weird. The illusion of kind of like . . . very informal, but paradoxically, there are many rules to the way it was run. Interesting.

[00:16:59.00]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah. And they only served things like . . . a Cajun martini was the only liquor you could get there. Beer and wine, that was it. That was jalapeno peppers and vodka or gin. Eww! [Laughter] But that was a big seller.

[00:17:15.27]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah. Well, he was definitely quite a showman.



[00:17:20.01]

**Jeanette M.:** Um-hm.

[00:17:21.23]

**Justin N.:** Chef Paul.

[00:17:23.05]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah.

[00:17:23.05]

**Justin N.:** So, what was your favorite thing at the restaurant?

[00:17:26.00]

**Jeanette M.:** My favorite thing about that job? I think all the employees that worked there, and then maybe Chef and Kay. Just everything about it, just sayin', "I work for Chef Paul Prudhomme." That was enough right there. Not many people get asked to come work for him.

[00:17:44.14]

**Justin N.:** Um-hm, um-hm.

[00:17:45.18]

**Jeanette M.:** But yeah. I was really lucky. I got to work for him only because I grew this mammoth curled parsley in my garden, and he had these two beef tournedos specials. He would deep-fry a piece of parsley—nobody in the world probably deep-fries parsley—but he would deep-fry it, and it would come out so beautiful. It would crown each of the turnadeaus. I was the only one that could grow parsley that big, so that's how I got my job with him. It was kinda weird, but . . .

[00:18:21.11]

**Justin N.:** Parsley's trickier than it seems.

[00:18:21.28]

**Jeanette M.:** Parsley is. [Laughter]

[00:18:23.13]

**Justin N.:** No, I know.

[00:18:24.20]

**Jeanette M.:** Especially when you deep-fry it. Have you ever heard of anyone deep-frying it?  
No?

[00:18:28.29]

**Justin N.:** I've heard of deep-fried herbs, but not big parsley like that. That's interesting, yeah.  
Deep-fried basil, a lot of deep-fried basil, I've seen.

[00:18:36.18]

**Jeanette M.:** Never thought of that.

[00:18:39.08]

**Justin N.:** Yeah. Leaf on top. So, what drew you away from K-Paul's?

[00:18:46.03]

**Jeanette M.:** Well, I decided . . . I found a twenty-acre farm on the north shore in Bogalusa, that some people just wanted someone to live in it. So, they charged me \$100 a month to live there if I wanted it. So, I said, "Of course!" And I moved to the north shore. I knew that I could not drive back and forth and back and forth, and at the time, I was going to start an herb business. So, I moved to the country, and I lived there about five years. But one of the head chefs at K-Paul's was hired as the Vice President of Food and Beverage at Grand Casino in Gulfport, Mississippi in 1993. So, he called me and said, "I need you to help train the staff. Hire the staff for there. You did a great job in New York and I need you." So I said, "That's quite a ways to drive, but I'll drive back and forth." So, I started in May of 1993 and loved my job. Stayed, hired the staff, trained everybody, and then decided to just stay. So, I kept working there till the day Katrina took that away, 2005.

[00:20:15.12]

**Justin N.:** So you were twelve years?

[00:20:15.13]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah, yeah. And I was the Head Server. I trained everybody that was a cocktail waitress in the casino. And I trained bartenders, as well. So, I trained them, but I said, "I want to work the floor. I don't want to just be a manager." They kept tryin' to make me a manager; I'm like, "I do better with a tray in my hand. I'm a server. I'm not a boss. I'll show 'em how to make money, I'll show 'em how to give the people good service, but I want to do it myself." So, they're like, "Okay." So, they made me the Head Server. I was there for twelve years until Katrina.

[00:20:54.11]

**Justin N.:** Now, I've understood that that can be a fairly intense job, working in a casino.

[00:20:59.28]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, it was. It was eight hours, eight-hour shifts, as opposed to a lunch or dinner shift, which would be a few hours in a restaurant. Yeah, it was pretty intense, but it was fun. I loved it. Loved it. And could have gone to the restaurants; any of the fine dining restaurants. Or, any of the restaurants in the casino. But I just liked the difference of carrying a cocktail tray and just givin' out drinks free and watchin' people win money. You know? It was a very friendly environment at the casino. We loved everybody we worked with; all the dealers. Everybody was just . . . it was a great place to work. Really was.

[00:21:44.13]

**Justin N.:** Would you say that—so, the people are kinda your main attraction?

[00:21:48.19]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah. Oh, yeah. Same way with this restaurant; same way with this restaurant. So, then, Katrina hits. I have no job. The casino wants to put me in any casino over the world, because they had a point system there. If you were late, you didn't show up for a shift, you ever got written up, they would take points off. Well, I was never late in twelve years, and I never called out sick in twelve years of working there, even though I lived—I had a hundred and fifty mile commute every day. I never was late. So, they said, "You have the highest score of any employee we've ever had. So, you can pick wherever you want to go." I said, "No, I'm gonna sit out for a while." You know? Went up to New York. Came back down here to muck out my house. The girl that I was staying with, I just one day said, "I want to go work at Pascal's Manale." And she said, "My best friend, Bob, owns it. You've got to be kidding me." I said, "I love that restaurant! I eat there all the time." When I go to a restaurant, I look around, I see, are the employees happy? Are they smilin'? Are the customers happy? I'm lookin'. I sit where I can watch everything. Does the food look good comin' out? I grade it, because it's my job. It's what I do for a living. I said, "I want to work there. Everybody looks happy." She got on the phone, she goes, "You've got to hire this girl right now. You will never be sorry." And that was fourteen years ago. I love my job. My business is very busy with what I do. So, I could've quit a long time ago, trust me. But I don't, because I love it here. I love everybody I work with. All of the customers that come in here, love 'em. Am I rattling on too much?

[00:23:45.18]

**Justin N.:** No, no. This is fine. This is fine. I'm happy to listen to this. I'm here for you to rattle.

[00:23:51.26]

**Jeanette M.:** Okay, I'm rattling. [Laughter] But it's like we have a great clientele here. Our customers, they come back, you know? Like a lot of the people that come in, we know exactly what they want. They don't even have to look at a menu. I'll say, "Your usual?" They'll be like, "Yeah." They come in once a week for the barbecued shrimp sandwich. We can remember all the quirky things people like.

[00:24:18.09]

**Justin N.:** So, I'm gonna come back to Manale's because I have a question, but I want to know a little bit more about this casino, because—how many people? How many—? They're big.

[00:24:28.22]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, yeah. It was big. They employed, I think, twenty-five hundred people at the casino.

[00:24:33.20]

**Justin N.:** Wow. And you trained a lot of the people on the floor.

[00:24:37.27]

**Jeanette M.:** All the people that were in the beverage department on the casino floor.

[00:24:40.25]

**Justin N.:** How many people would you say worked in that beverage department?

[00:24:45.27]

**Jeanette M.:** We probably had about two hundred people.

[00:24:47.05]

**Justin N.:** Wow.

[00:24:48.16]

**Jeanette M.:** You know, for three shifts: swing, split, and graveyard.

[00:24:53.01]

**Justin N.:** So, tell me when these shifts would start. 'Cause they're a little different everywhere.

[00:24:56.22]

**Jeanette M.:** I always worked swing shift. I liked that. That would be 4:00 to 12:00.

[00:25:02.28]

**Justin N.:** 4:00 in the afternoon to 12:00 at midnight?

[00:25:02.25]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah, yeah. Then midnight graveyard would come in and take over for us. Then they would stay till 8:00. Then the day shift would come in at 8:00 and stay till 4:00. So, there was always continuous coverage on the floor, and they were really good. I helped implement a rotation schedule, because at first, they didn't know what they were doing. It was a Mississippi . . . it was some men that opened up an Indian gaming casino in Minnesota. They came down here and opened up, ran Grand Casino Gulfport. At that time in [19]93, there weren't that many casinos on the coast, so nobody knew what they were doing. They would put the rotation, give a girl nickel slots all week, and then some other girl would have high stakes, table games, all week. So, it wasn't fair. People were quitting and unhappy. I said, "Let me work on a rotation. One day, you'll have slots; the next day, you'll have high stakes tables. The next day, you'll have poker; the next day, you'll have dollar slots." So, I helped implement a good rotation schedule for the waitresses, as well. Make it fair for them.

[00:26:31.03]

**Justin N.:** I was gonna ask you about that, because to me, anytime I've ever been in—it's very labyrinthine, and almost confusing layout, purposely, I guess. Confusing layout. So, they would work just—they wouldn't work a little section of the slots and then tables? They would be—?

[00:26:49.06]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah. You'd have a section, you know. Then you would just work that section.



[00:26:54.08]

**Justin N.:** Okay, yeah. That's interesting, yeah. What were some of the more memorable moments in there?

[00:27:00.10]

**Jeanette M.:** Mm. Boy, we saw . . . actually, I'll never forget. Donald Trump was gonna buy our casino at one time. I'll never forget. I was at the bar, everywhere, "Donald Trump's comin' through. The Donald's comin' through." So we're like, "Okay, okay." So, he comes through and he walks right up at our bar. I go, "Hi, Donald!" Like that. He just looked at me and just kept walking. But he ended up not buying our casino. But I did get to say hello to Donald Trump. That was a memorable one. [Laughter] But we did have a lot of scares with the hurricanes over the years, you know. One was coming, so we'd have to batten down the hatches and take all of the liquor and all of the money would be put up in a vault. And all of the gaming chips. It was always a hair-raising experience, closing up for a hurricane. Then, the year that Katrina hit, we had had three scares before that. Everybody—you know. When Katrina hit, nobody thought it was really gonna do anything. Then, when they saw the size of it, it was almost too late to do anything.

[00:28:15.01]

**Justin N.:** Wow. Did you get the valuables, I guess, out first? And . . . ?

[00:28:20.11]

**Jeanette M.:** I left my stuff in my locker, but yeah, I guess they got all the money out. I don't really know. Right after Katrina when it happened, I snuck in behind the lines and I had to see for myself the casino, the job that I loved so much, ripped away from me. I had to see it and I'll never forget driving up. It was like a war zone. There was nothing. Nothing left. It's just a mangled building. I had worked a lot of times for extra money, and because I trained all the bartenders, we had an event center where we had concerts. I would tend bar at the concerts, and I would say, "Well, it's my day off. I want the stage bar." So I could see the music show. I saw, like, Z.Z. Top, Three Dog Night, George Thorogood— incredible music, and worked it, too, and made money. And got to see the show. So, I would always ask to work that. When I came there, that building was mangled, but the disco ball was still hanging from the ceiling. It was teetering, but it was still hanging there. And I'll never forget that.

[00:29:29.21]

**Justin N.:** That's amazing.

[00:29:29.21]

**Jeanette M.:** Sight. You know, to see that? The disco ball was still hanging there. The whole building was mangled, and there was, like, one little thing holding the disco ball up.

[Laughter] And it didn't even lose a mirror off it.

[00:29:47.09]

**Justin N.:** That's tremendous.

[00:29:47.09]

**Jeanette M.:** Wasn't that weird?

[00:29:49.12]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah. It is funny. I've heard a lot of interesting stories like that, where a friend who had a beer stein collection—beer steins floated around in his room in Chalmette, and then eventually settled down and were all right-side up in his wrecked house. You know? So, things like that do happen a lot, yeah. Yeah. So, you decided—you said you laid low. How long were you away after Katrina? You said you tried goin' up to New York.

[00:30:19.19]

**Jeanette M.:** About a year. About a year.

[00:30:22.09]

**Justin N.:** Um-hm. Did you wait tables up in New York?

[00:30:24.28]

**Jeanette M.:** What is weird is I tried to get a job up there and I could not get a job up there. I went up, had a resume and everywhere I went, I guess I didn't wear makeup. I didn't do my nails. In New Jersey, everybody has big hair and an attitude. Maybe I went in looking like myself, and I was not hired there. At all. I tried at four or five places, and I was never

hired, so that's when I decided I was gonna do my artwork. So, that's what I made a living on for that year. Then I came back down here and got my job.

[00:31:07.04]

**Justin N.:** Yeah. So, your artwork, what kind of particular artwork do you do?

[00:31:09.20]

**Jeanette M.:** I do polymer clay jewelry and stuff. I usually have a couple pieces in my purse. Let me see if I do. I always carry some in case somebody has a birthday here or somethin'—  
oh, yeah, I do.

[00:31:25.28]

**Justin N.:** Oh.

[00:31:27.09]

**Jeanette M.:** Voodoo dolls are my biggest-selling item, but I make all kinds of stuff.

[00:31:33.13]

**Justin N.:** I'm actually gonna, at this moment, take a picture of these.

[00:31:36.13]

**Jeanette M.:** Sure.

[00:31:37.10]

**Justin N.:** There's a strong possibility that I'll tweet it. [Laughter]

[00:31:40.23]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, cool. I have 'em in, like, twelve different stores in New York. Those are magnets. I have pins. I make all kinds of stuff.

[00:31:51.14]

**Justin N.:** Those are tremendous.

[00:31:53.08]

**Jeanette M.:** That's what enabled me to come back down here and to muck out my house, is making this stuff and then coming down here, selling it.

[00:32:04.19]

**Justin N.:** So where were you living at the time of Katrina? Were you still living up at the farm?

[00:32:08.13]

**Jeanette M.:** No, no. I had just moved back to New Orleans about six months before Katrina hit.

[00:32:13.16]

**Justin N.:** Oh, my goodness.

[00:32:16.05]

**Jeanette M.:** My boyfriend begged me to move in with him, so I moved in Gentilly. And then we lost everything: eight feet of water.

[00:32:24.19]

**Justin N.:** Wow.

[00:32:24.19]

**Jeanette M.:** And it was in the house for three weeks afterwards.

[00:32:27.22]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:32:29.19]

**Jeanette M.:** So.

[00:32:32.16]

**Justin N.:** So you came back to Manale's a year or so after the storm, I guess?

[00:32:38.15]

**Jeanette M.:** Um-hm. Came to work here.

[00:32:41.12]

**Justin N.:** Now, New Orleans right after . . . looking back on it now, we realize how different that time was, 2006, 2007.

[00:32:50.01]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, it was. Everybody was so unsure of what the city—was it gonna be built back? I mean, at one point, they were like, "Why should we rebuild it? It'll only flood again." It was so uncertain. It was so dysfunctional. There was not a mailbox; you couldn't mail a letter. There was hardly any stores open. It was . . . it was crazy.

[00:33:16.18]

**Justin N.:** Now there are some of—'cause I talked to Wendy, and she said, when she came here a little before you did, she was working here when Katrina hit. She said that, when she came, there were a lot of servers here who had been here a long time.

[00:33:31.18]

**Jeanette M.:** Um-hm.

[00:33:31.18]

**Justin N.:** Were they still here when you started working?

[00:33:34.07]

**Jeanette M.:** A few of 'em came back, but not really. I'm the fourth in seniority now. So, they've all left or whatever, I don't know.

[00:33:45.01]

**Justin N.:** Did Katrina send a lot of them away?

[00:33:47.03]

**Jeanette M.:** I wonder. I don't know about that. Or maybe they had gone other places; like a couple of them had gone other places. We even had a couple pass away, you know?

[00:33:58.02]

**Justin N.:** Um-hm. What were their names? Do you recall?

[00:34:01.22]

**Jeanette M.:** Well, I don't wanna really say, because you know. If you don't mind.

[00:34:05.05]

**Justin N.:** That's fine. No, I don't mind.

[00:34:08.21]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah. A couple of 'em passed away, not in savory—you know, a lot of times there's addiction involved in the service industry job. You know, and . . .

[00:34:17.19]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.



[00:34:18.14]

**Jeanette M.:** We'll just leave it at that, you know?

[00:34:21.00]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah. So, you got here, and what were some of the big differences between working here and a place like K-Paul's? I mean, there's gonna be some similarities, I suppose.

[00:34:35.01]

**Jeanette M.:** Well, yeah. The food's wonderful in both places, and I've never been ashamed to serve food in either place. I'm proud to do it. But I hear it's more—you have your table, they rotate tables. You have your section. You take care of your people the way you want to take care of 'em, and what's really funny is, there's a few people here with negative—I don't wanna say negative attitudes, but not as friendly as they could be, you know? They'll come back and be like, "Oh, look at this crappy tip. 12%." I'm puttin' in my tips here, and I'm thinkin', "Ooh. Here's 35%. I better not say anything. Or 30%." Like every night, I always do it at the end of the night, see my percentages, and I'm always over 20%, you know? It's only because I'm very courteous to people. I treat them the way I would want to be treated. And they know me. They know me by my name; I always introduce myself. The first thing I do when I go to a table is, some people, they don't wanna give 'em bread till they get the food. It's like, I come to the food and I tell 'em, I get 'em ready. I go, "My name's Jeanette. I'm gonna be taking care of you now. I'm gonna

get you a nice loaf of hot, French bread and I'll come back and tell you about the specials." So then they got that in their mind. "Ooh, ooh, I'm gettin' bread." Other servers like, "You want somethin' to drink?" You know, that's it. So, I always hit 'em with kindness. It makes a big difference. Really does. The service industry . . . I mean, I always go out and I think to myself, "I always get the crappiest servers." You know, they're not friendly; they're rude; they're so curt. I don't know. It's just the way it is.

[00:36:32.00]

**Justin N.:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I get that when I take my parents out.

[00:36:34.16]

**Jeanette M.:** I know. My sister, if I'll go out with my family, they'll go, "She's not a waitress like you!" I'm like, "Well, she probably doesn't love her job like me."

[00:36:43.21]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah. So, do you do a lot of call parties here?

[00:36:45.24]

**Jeanette M.:** I do. I do. I have a lot of call parties here.

[00:36:52.08]

**Justin N.:** Who are some of your—you don't have to name them, but—who are some of your, do you have favorite customers that maybe you can think of?

[00:36:59.14]

**Jeanette M.:** I do. I have a lot. A lot of our clientele is older here. They're older people and lived uptown their whole lives and have been comin' here since they were children. A lot of my fellow servers don't have the patience for 'em. That's the worst part of this job is, we've lost a lot of our old customers. They come in; they're older. Then, all of a sudden, they're with a cane; then they're comin' in there in a walker. They're in a wheelchair. Then we see that they've passed away. I've gone to a lot of funerals here for customers. Not all the servers go to the funerals. Wendy and I are probably the most ones that go to all of 'em, 'cause we fall in love with our customers, you know? Been here so long, you fall in love with them. It's amazing that so many people that I wait tables when, at the holidays comin', they invite me to their house to eat dinner with them on the holidays. I mean, that's amazing, you know? That a complete stranger that you serve here at a restaurant will say, "Jeanette, you're by yourself." You know. "You want to come to our house for Christmas dinner? Or Hanukah?" Or somethin', you know. It's kinda neat. It's kinda heartwarming, really is.

[00:38:21.09]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, that is nice. Yeah, yeah.

[00:38:21.22]

**Jeanette M.:** Or I'll see 'em at the grocery store, and they'll be like, "You're my favorite waitress at Pascal's Manale." It's kinda neat.

[00:38:31.00]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah. So . . . what are, you know . . . do you feel like the income of . . . and you may not want to speak for other servers, but do you feel like the income level is keeping up with the cost of living in New Orleans, in this industry?

[00:38:55.28]

**Jeanette M.:** Not really. I think it's a darn shame that the state still pays us \$2.13 an hour. That, I think it should be more. We do make tips; yes, we do. But, I think for the amount of sidework and just being in a place, I think that our time is worth more than \$2.13 an hour. I'll never forget when I was at K-Paul's, the state made this big thing that the servers were gonna get a raise. We thought, "Oh, my god! This is great. This is great." And we were paid \$2.09 an hour. And we got a raise to \$2.13 an hour. Four-cent raise. And they made a big stink about it. I'll never forget, "Oh, we're gonna get a raise." Maybe at the time, minimum wage might've been \$3.50 or somethin'. I don't know. \$3.75, I don't know how much minimum wage was at the time. But they made a big thing, how the servers are gonna get a raise. Now, don't quote me on the year. I don't know. But I just remember thinkin', "We're gonna get a raise." And it went from \$2.09 to \$2.13 an hour, which is absurd, really. But.

[00:40:19.02]

**Justin N.:** That's—yeah. Don't spend it all in one place kinda moment.

[00:40:25.16]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

[00:40:27.22]

**Justin N.:** So you've seen—you've started in this business early enough that you've seen customer behavior change, I think, a lot, probably over time.

[00:40:35.13]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, definitely. Definitely. Nowadays, years ago, you would always see a couple come in on a date. They would interact with each other and talk and hold hands and look at the menu. Now, a date comes in. They both have their cell phones. They're both texting different people; who they're texting, I don't know, but they're on a date, they don't interact. A lot of times . . . it's just very strange now. Families, years ago, would make children behave. "Do you want to sit in the car? You go without dinner!" Now, people come in, their kids are throwing sugar packs, spaghetti sticking on the walls, throwing stuff around, screaming, and the parents are on their phone. I do see a big difference in people. People's etiquette at the table.

[00:41:31.25]

**Justin N.:** Do they feel like you interact differently with tables like this now?

[00:41:37.12]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, a lot of times—yeah, it is hard to interact with people sometimes with that. It really is.

[00:41:47.29]

**Justin N.:** What's your style? What's your style as a server?

[00:41:52.17]

**Jeanette M.:** Friendly. Friendly. I got this thing, I don't want to say it's a subservient thing, but when I put a dish down to someone, I just don't plop it down. I go, "Here you go, dear. Here's your veal piccata." And I'll, like, lean in. It's just the way I do it, you know. I like—when I used to eat here for twenty years, we had a server named Vincent. He was a server here when I worked here, too, and he ended up going somewhere else. But when he would wait on me, he would always do that, is bend down, like put it in and, "Here you go, dear." It just makes your dinner seem so much better than, "Who ordered the veal piccata?" Lookin' around like, I hate that. When a server has to ask who ordered that, I take my order in a certain way every time so I know exactly who gets what, and I don't have to say, "Who got the barbecued shrimp sandwich here? Who got this?" I think that's really very unprofessional. So, I guess I'm an organized server and a courteous server. That's what I would say I was, my style.

[00:43:13.02]

**Justin N.:** Do you ever read online restaurant reviews?

[00:43:16.05]

**Jeanette M.:** I don't, but everybody's always tellin' me, "You gotta read Yelp!" And they'll come in. I don't do it. I should probably do that, but they'll say, "Oh, somebody said somethin' nice about you the other day." They'll say, "Oh, somebody said somethin' terrible about me." I don't read 'em. I probably should.

[00:43:36.18]

**Justin N.:** You may not be missing out. I was just curious if you had.

[00:43:40.25]

**Jeanette M.:** I don't.

[00:43:42.23]

**Justin N.:** Do you think online reviews of restaurants change the way people come in and what they expect?

[00:43:50.08]

**Jeanette M.:** Um . . . probably. I don't know.

[00:43:55.06]

**Justin N.:** Say you have a table of people from Buffalo who've never been to New Orleans before. Is your approach to them different than a table that, maybe they're not, like, your regular-regulars that you really know, but you've seen them. You know they're from here.

[00:44:14.12]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah, I think it would be. Because I would be like, "Okay, now. We're the ones that invented the barbecued shrimp." You know, I'd be like, "You don't eat 'em up there. I'm from New York, too. Our shrimp came out of a freezer. But these are head-on, shell-on, cooked in a black pepper butter sauce." I'm gonna put a bib on ya. I will treat 'em different because there's something that they're not used to eating, but they need to eat it down here, because they're gonna see how good it is. Then, every time they come back, they're gonna be like, "I had that dish five years ago and I've not forgotten how good it was with the bread dipped in there." So, I think that has a lot to do with—I would treat 'em different.

[00:44:56.20]

**Justin N.:** Do you feel it's a performance?

[00:44:58.23]

**Jeanette M.:** Not really. Just heartfelt, tell 'em how it is.

[00:45:03.25]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:45:03:28]



**Jeanette M.:** Yeah. But I want to go back to something else, about you asked how it was different, waiting tables. I noticed one thing too is, the men, years ago, would remove their hat when they first come into a restaurant. Now, sometimes it takes an act of Congress to get that hat off their head. We don't allow hats for men in the dining room. Men will get, like, mad about it. It's courteous. Years ago, when you came into a restaurant years ago, you removed your hat. Any building. But I've noticed that's a big difference now, too, with the tables and etiquette.

[00:45:42.18]

**Justin N.:** Everywhere, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. How about dress codes? Or dress . . .

[00:45:49.22]

**Jeanette M.:** Well, I'm glad that we kinda uphold—a casual, we don't allow, like, cutoff tanks for men and flip-flops and cutoff shorts. But I'm glad we have a dressy casual.

[00:46:09.27]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah. 'Cause your door here says, "Proper—"

[00:46:13.16]

**Jeanette M.:** "Attire," yeah.

[00:46:14.00]

**Justin N.:** Yeah. "Proper attire required." So, when I come here, I'm usually in a jacket, because those are the people I'm sitting with. But you see a lot of that. But do you see people comin' in off the street, and they're like, "Oh." Do they get nervous when they see that sign?

[00:46:30.17]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah, they're like, "Are we okay?" You'll be like, "Yeah. You're okay, come on in." You know?

[00:46:36.12]

**Justin N.:** The other one, you're like—

[00:46:36.15]

**Jeanette M.:** Or, if they don't, then they will make 'em sit at the bar. Or we have t-shirts for sale, if a guy has a wife beater on. We got t-shirts for sale, you can buy one of our t-shirts, sit down and eat. [Laughter]

[00:46:50.00]

**Justin N.:** I didn't know. So your version of the Galatoire's—

[00:46:53.15]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah, the coat. The t-shirt.

[00:46:57.08]

**Justin N.:** That's great, that's great. So, in terms of waiting tables, how much sidework did you have at a place like K-Paul's?

[00:47:07.00]

**Jeanette M.:** Well, every night we—

[00:47:09.26]

**Justin N.:** Or Coffee Pot, for that matter. I'm interested.

[00:47:10.20]

**Jeanette M.:** Every night, we wrote our menus—hand-wrote the menus at K-Paul's.

[00:47:14.28]

**Justin N.:** Oh, wow.

[00:47:16.26]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah. We hand-wrote because whatever was available fresh that day, he made his menu from that. So, the menu changed every day. So, we hand-wrote 'em every day.

[00:47:28.11]

**Justin N.:** How many copies?

[00:47:29.13]

**Jeanette M.:** Well, about—all of us sat down to do 'em. We'd probably do about five each, you know. We'd just sit there. That was back in the day when everybody smoked cigarettes at work, so they'd be sittin' there, smokin', writin' the menus. Which I thought of a funny story I might want to share with you.

[00:47:46.22]

**Justin N.:** Yeah.

[00:47:46.27]

**Jeanette M.:** You said of memorable times. We were, one night, writing our menus, and there was a guy who knocks at the door. We're like, "We're closed! We're closed." He kept knocking, kept knocking. So somebody says, "Go see what he wants, Jeanette." So I go there, I said, "We're not open yet." He goes, "I'm the head of security for the Rolling Stones." This was 1989 when they were here for the Steel Wheels tour. I'm like, "So? You're the head of security for the Rolling Stones? So what?" So, he goes, "Well, I want to make a reservation." We're like, "We don't take reservations." He says, "Not even for me?" I said, "Well, listen, buddy, I'm the Queen of England. We don't take reservations." Chef always liked us to mouth off to people, so I shut the door. He keeps knockin' again. He goes, "No, really. I'm the head of security for the Rolling Stones." I said, "And I'm the Queen of England. If you're the head of Rolling Stones security, bring us some backstage passes for the concert tomorrow night." So we got done writing our menus and, about half an hour later . . . there's a knock at the door. This guy looks like he's some kinda

chauffeur or somethin'. So, somebody opens it up. He goes, "I'm looking for the Queen of England." "That would be me!" So I go to the door, and there's four backstage passes for the Rolling Stones, all-access pass for me because I mouthed off to him. So, that was my one memorable moment at K-Paul's, anyway. We had a lot of celebrities that we served there; a lot of celebrities. We have a lot of celebrities here that we serve.

[00:49:29.18]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's a tremendous story, though.

[00:49:33.21]

**Jeanette M.:** I know, isn't it? So, I got to go with three of my closest friends backstage. Drove a golf cart around, 'cause I went, looked him up—I said, "Hey, the Queen of England is here!" I wore a tiara, just to mess with him. He goes, "You didn't believe me." I said, "Nope." So, it was quite a thing.

[00:49:54.24]

**Justin N.:** Did they ever eat at the restaurant?

[00:49:56.03]

**Jeanette M.:** No, but Keith Richards' grandkids ate here, when they were supposed to come and play the Jazz Fest and they couldn't play. His family was still in town, and I think Keith Richards was still in town. Just came in for it, anyway. His grandchildren ate here, but no, they never ate here.

[00:50:15.14]

**Justin N.:** Or at K-Paul's, did they ever eat during that tour?

[00:50:19.20]

**Jeanette M.:** No, no. They didn't. [Laughter]

[00:50:23.10]

**Justin N.:** So, Chef Paul kind of encouraged this combativeness, then.

[00:50:25.19]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, yes. Definitely. Yeah. He used to like us to do things like—if somebody sat at a table and Chef would see it, they'd kick their shoe off maybe while they were at the table, our thing was, he would have one waitress distract 'em, the other waitress would get on her hands and knees, grab the shoe, take it in the back room, and hold it hostage. So then, when they were gettin' ready to do, the lady'd be lookin' around, "Where's my shoe? Where's my shoe?" Lookin' around. Then we would come out of the back room and say, "We have this shoe for sale." And we could sell it back to 'em. Chef would say, "Get whatever you want for it." Sometimes, people would have to pay us twenty dollars to get the shoe back. Ten dollars or whatever. It was hilarious, and Chef would sit there and laugh about it. That was a big thing, just mess with people. He loved that. He loved that.

[00:51:20.13]

**Justin N.:** Were people expecting this?

[00:51:22.19]

**Jeanette M.:** No.

[00:51:24.00]

**Justin N.:** Did you have—I could see somebody would be really outraged that they'd have to do that.

[00:51:27.20]

**Jeanette M.:** No, 'cause they would laugh. Then Chef would just shake his head, like, "Shame on you, kickin' your shoe off in my restaurant." He took that as a . . . you kick your shoes off at home; you don't do it in my restaurant. That's what he kinda took it as. So, we were enforcing his weirdness, and his wife, Kay, would go along with it, too.

[00:51:53.23]

**Justin N.:** Well, what about hats? At K-Paul's?

[00:51:57.10]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, you had to take your hat off. But he was allowed to wear a hat.

[00:52:00.15]

**Justin N.:** Well, he was the chef.

[00:52:02.21]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah. He wore his white hat, you know.

[00:52:03.28]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:52:03:40]

**Jeanette M.:** You had to remove your hat in that restaurant, too.

[00:52:09.20]

**Justin N.:** And this is, mercifully, before cell phones, really.

[00:52:12.19]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, yeah. Yeah.

[00:52:14.25]

**Justin N.:** When did you first start seeing people with cell phones as a problem in a restaurant? I mean, as a problem—

[00:52:23.10]

**Jeanette M.:** It is a problem, as far as I'm concerned. I guess after . . . I guess right around, before Katrina they had flip phones. People weren't on 'em that much. But now, the



whole mentality is, no one will pick up a phone and call you anymore. They have to text you. You know? My business, nobody calls me. They have to text me or e-mail their order. It's like, really weird. Everybody has to do everything online instead of—all the reservations are made online now. Nobody calls anymore. Everything's done by text. It's a very impersonal thing.

[00:53:09.26]

**Justin N.:** Does that make you sad?

[00:53:11.08]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah, it does. It really does. And another thing is, people cannot go through dinner without checkin' their phone or bein' on their phone? And my thing is, people not interacting with the person they're having lunch with, 'cause they're on their phone with someone else.

[00:53:28.18]

**Justin N.:** Do you ever ask people where they're from when they come in?

[00:53:30.21]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. People always ask me where I'm from, because they think I have a New York accent—which I do. My family thinks I sound very Southern. But I do still have my New York accent. So they'll be like, "Where are you from?" Usually, I can interact with them, 'cause I've travelled so much.

[00:53:54.13]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah. So, how long are you gonna do this?

[00:53:55.20]

**Jeanette M.:** I am sixty-three years old now, and I'm planning on workin' here three more years, till I'm sixty-six. Then I may retire, but I probably won't. I'll probably end up workin' still, a couple days a week, probably. 'Cause I don't wanna miss out. I love it. I want to pay as much as I can into Social Security, 'cause I pay my taxes. And I just wanna work three more years and then retire. That'll put me here eighteen years.

[00:54:23.26]

**Justin N.:** Now, let me ask you this, 'cause this has come up with other servers who are in kinda your age group. When you were a younger person making cash at the Coffee Pot, did you find that affecting your total Social Security earnings? Is that affecting your retirement?

[00:54:42.28]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah. I think it will. But I always did claim taxes, because I didn't want to owe money to the I.R.S. I've always got my taxes done and claimed my taxes. Like at K-Paul's, we did give a lot of cash, but every night, we claimed it. We all claimed the same amount. Everybody made the same amount.

[00:55:06.08]

**Justin N.:** Um-hm, um-hm. 'Cause I've talked to people in a wide range of restaurants, and some got themselves in trouble because—

[00:55:14.28]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, they will. Yeah.

[00:55:15.17]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah. Now, one of the people brought up Bob Dole and his underground economy. Did that change any of the way that you got the—'cause, now, at the casino, you got paid . . . was that a tip? Was that based on tips? Were you \$2.13 an hour at the casino?

[00:55:34.22]

**Jeanette M.:** No. We got paid minimum wage. We got benefits. And then we had to claim our tips every night. You know, we claimed our tips. When we cashed in our chips and everything, surveillance is watching. I claim my tips, trust me. I don't wanna have to owe the I.R.S. Every year I do my taxes.

[00:55:59.08]

**Justin N.:** Yeah. Well, I mean, just in terms of kinda like—you know, the mechanics of being paid. It affects how you live. But did the casino have pretty good benefits then, I guess?

[00:56:12.00]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, we had excellent benefits, excellent.

[00:56:14.13]

**Justin N.:** Yeah. 'Cause it was a big corporation, I suppose.

[00:56:15.12]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah.

[00:56:18.02]

**Justin N.:** Yeah, yeah.

[00:56:18.02]

**Jeanette M.:** I wish we had benefits here.

[00:56:19.28]

**Justin N.:** Do you have the duck? Wendy says she has the duck, Aflac.

[00:56:23.28]

**Jeanette M.:** I don't—I had it and it was not good. I never used it, and I paid way too much money for it. Then it was like, "Well . . ." But I tried to get off it, and they took forever. I just, it's not for me. I need to go get some kinda insurance somewhere, 'cause I have to go in the hospital.

[00:56:42.29]

**Justin N.:** Ooh. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

[00:56:46.03]

**Jeanette M.:** Yeah.

[00:56:46.03]

**Justin N.:** Well, great. Any kind of closing—we're comin' up on an hour, and I know you have .

..

[00:56:52.11]

**Jeanette M.:** Oh, I didn't realize.

[00:56:54.06]

**Justin N.:** You have, probably, some stuff to do here.

[00:56:55.26]

**Jeanette M.:** I'm jonesin' for another cup of coffee.

[00:56:56.21]

**Justin N.:** Oh, my goodness! I don't want to put that off too much. So, any kind of last thoughts about anything you'd like to observe or sort of opine about in your work as a server?

[00:57:12.01]

**Jeanette M.:** Anything I want to, like— I don't really understand the question.

[00:57:17.00]

**Justin N.:** Yeah. Any kind of closing thoughts you might have about . . .

[00:57:21.14]

**Jeanette M.:** Maybe that I've always taken this as my profession. A lot of the people that I work with, they're just doin' this to pay the rent right now. They don't love their job. Where I think of this—my whole life, I've thought, "I'm in the service industry." And I'm always happy to say that. "What do you do for a living?" "I'm in the service industry. I serve." And some people might look down at that like it's not a profession, but it is to me. I love it. It's my way of life. I take it very seriously, I really do. Some people are meant to do it; some people are not. There's a lot of people doing it that are not meant to do it, you know.

[00:58:07.07]

**Justin N.:** Yeah.

[00:58:07.07]

**Jeanette M.:** But it's my way of life, and I love it.

[00:58:10.10]

**Justin N.:** Thank you so much, Jeanette.

[00:58:11.11]

**Jeanette M.:** Thank you!

[00:58:11.11]

**Justin N.:** This has been wonderful.

[00:58:14.05]

**Jeanette M.:** It was fun talkin' to you.

[00:58:14.15]

**Justin N.:** I know I'm gonna stop this now—

[*End of interview*]