JEFF LANDRY AND JIM GOSSEN
Boudin for Peace—Lafayette, LA
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Date: June 15, 2008
Location: Gossen Family residence—Lafayette, LA
Interviewer: Sara Roahen
Transcription: Shelley Chance, ProDocs
Length: 1 hour, 32 minutes
Project: Southern Boudin Trail—Louisiana

[Begin Boudin for Peace]

00:00:00

Sara Roahen: This is Sara Roahen for the Southern Foodways Alliance. It's Sunday, June 15, 2008. I'm in Lafayette, Louisiana with the Gossen family, if I'm pronouncing that correctly. And could I get the two of you to say your name and your birth date, where you grew up, and where you live now?

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Jeff Landry: Jeff Landry from Lafayette. I live here now, and I was born on December 18, 1980.

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SR: We have the same birthday—not the same year.

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JL: [*Laughs*]

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Jim Gossen: I'm Jim Gossen. I was born in Lafayette on April 8, 1948, and I presently live in Houston.

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SR: And you have—you have a place here, though, in Lafayette?

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JG: Yeah, I have—

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SR: Where we are now?

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JG: And in Grand Isle, so we go back between Houston and Lafayette and Grand Isle because of my business.

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SR: Can you say, just for the record, what your business is?

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JG: Louisiana Foods is the name of my business, and we're in the wholesale seafood business. Texas and Louisiana, and parts of the East Coast we ship products to.

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SR: I'll probably ask you more about that later but we'll start with boudin, which is why we're here today. Let's just get into it: can you tell me, Jeff, what Boudin for Peace is and how you first learned about it?

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JL: Sure, Boudin for Peace is a gathering of just kind of friends who all love boudin. And once a year—usually the weekend before Mardi Gras, on the Saturday—everybody kind of gathers and you go to just the best boudin places in Acadiana. It starts at 7:00 in the morning and ends in the afternoon at 5:00 or 6:00. And the way I came across it was one of my best friends, Jacob Crouch—his uncle was one of the founders of Boudin for Peace, Paul Beaullieu, and I think it was probably around 17, 18, 19 years ago that six or seven guys kind of got in a Suburban, and it was a Saturday, and had nothing better to do, I think, and went and started at their favorite boudin places. And one guy knew of a couple maybe in Opelousas, and another guy knew of some in Eunice, and they just kind of hit all the good ones. And it really just was for fun and kind of a joke, and hence the name Boudin for Peace.

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So to kind of fast-forward I guess, seven or eight years ago was my first year and Jacob was the nephew of one of the founders. By that time, it had gone from seven or eight people to about 100 people, and the kind of—the un—unwritten rule was that once you were invited once, you were always invited. And so to be invited, it was kind of—it was just kind of difficult because, you know there's only so many spaces on the bus and if you knew of a couple guys not coming, there would be some spots opening up and—. So long story short, Jacob called me and another one of my friends, Blake, and we were invited. We were, I guess about 20 at the time, and by far the youngest on the bus. I think the—the next to youngest from us was in their late 30s. So we were definitely the green horns on the bus, but you know just as excited as all those

guys. And really that was the last year that the—kind of the founders came. They kind of almost turned it over to a new and younger generation, a lot of their nephews and cousins and—.

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But anyway, the day is a pretty simple day, very—it's a lot of fun. It starts about 7 o'clock in the morning. Everyone gathers in a—usually a halfway secret parking lot just so the crowd won't get too big and people who weren't really invited show up kind of deal. When I started it was three Carvel buses that they would bring and then a little 15-passenger, little bus and you start—you go—we start—and of course this is only from my experience. We'd start at Don's Specialty Meats in Carencro, which you know we're showing up to Don's at 8 o'clock in the morning. And on the buses, you can hearing them chanting *boudin—boudin*, and it slowly gets louder and louder until you get there and, again, it's like one of the funniest things to see: **[*Laughs*]** these very professional people in Lafayette having so much fun over boudin. And you kind of can't help but get sucked into chanting *boudin* and get excited for the boudin. And you eat your first link at about 8:00 in the morning, and Don's has been a—an excellent stop. We usually try and switch up the stops every year just to kind of add some variety. We actually gave Don's Specialty Meats last year the first and last Lifetime Achievement Award for—for overall best boudin. And that's, you know—to us that was a big honor to give him that. They had won Boudin for Peace two years in a row, and they just—they always have a really, really good and a consistent link of boudin.

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Usually you get back on the bus; you're not at each stop for more than 30 minutes, and it's pretty simple: you rate the boudin; you critique the boudin. And to be a critiquer of the boudin is kind of—that's also kind of a privilege. It's usually held for the older guys with the

most experience and there's usually some pretty good Cajun jokes in the middle of the critiquing of the boudin, so that's usually a really fun part of it. But in the past few years we've slimmed down to only about 50 people now because it was just getting too big, so it's only one bus now, which is really nice because everybody is on the same bus and everybody hears the same jokes, you know, and everybody is in on the same critiquing of the boudin. And there's five—there's five, I don't know what you'd call it—different categories, I guess. One is meat to rice ratio; mustard content; liver content; I'm sorry, not mustard, not liver; green onion content; girth; and presentation. And presentation can be key. Some—some people **[*Laughs*]** like Don's Specialty Meats have gone so far to like make—they've made us Boudin for Peace shirts, and in fact I meant—I meant to wear it here today. But I still wear it all the time. It's a great little t-shirt.

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Another—another place will—they'll take you in the back and they'll show you where they make the boudin, which is a lot of fun. They kind of take you on a little tour of the facility.

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SR: Who did that? Do you remember?

00:08:16

JL: Yes, Eunice Meat and Poultry, who has very good boudin. Pretty much we—we call probably the week ahead of time and let them know we're going to need 20 or 30 pounds of boudin and that we'll be coming, because it can be an overwhelming experience to some of these really small little tiny, you know convenience stores, who like I said earlier might see 20 customers in the day. But Eunice Meat and Poultry has been great. They have welcomed us in;

they get excited that we're doing this, you know, so whenever we come they—they'll bring us in the back and they have—it's a big slaughterhouse, and they'll serve us the boudin back there and that's part of the presentation. That, to us, was really cool. They had a bunch of heads of cattle hanging in the back and they were cleaning pigs and all kinds of stuff. And that was just a really interesting thing. If you ever go you can just ask them and they'd probably be more than happy to—to show you around.

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SR: So there were like 50 of you back there?

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JL: Yeah, and it's actually a fairly large facility. It doesn't look like it from the road, but again it's—it's a pretty nice slaughterhouse. But back to the tour. The next stop has been for the past three years Billy Ray's in Opelousas. And there's two recipes—one is Billy's and one is Ray's, and to be honest I can't remember which one is the best but there is one of them that is really good and they won it two years ago. I think it's Ray's, I'm not sure; so if it's Billy's, sorry Billy. I like Billy Ray's a lot because it's a drive-thru. Now we obviously get down [off the bus]. We've got 60 people or 50 people, but if you're passing through Opelousas and you want some boudin **[*Laughs*]** it's a drive-thru, which is kind of rare among the boudin places.

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From there we usually go to Eunice Meat and Poultry, and I kind of told you a little bit about Eunice Meat and Poultry, a great little stop. And then we move to Mamou, where we don't eat any boudin in Mamou but we stop there. We usually get there around 11 o'clock and stay 'til

maybe 1:00 or 1:30. The Boudin for Peace(rs) have reached like a celebrity status in Mamou and it's really funny. There's a bar called Fred's Lounge, supposedly where all the famous—where they have a Zydeco taping like every Saturday night, I think, and you know it's broadcast on the radio **[*Correction: it's a Cajun music radio show, not Zydeco*]**. It's all these really small communities that come to Mamou for the day. Not to shop or anything, just to come and hang out, and there's kind of like these little bars and stuff. So when we pull up it's 60 city slickers, you know, who have been eating boudin all day and it's really fun. It—that's a great day because we've ended up—we've met some of these locals over the years.

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One really good story about Mamou: We're standing on Main Street; it's a very, very small city. And I was asking one of the locals where the nearest ATM was. I had run out of money and as I'm asking that, another kind of local guy comes up on horseback and he said—I don't remember his name—he said, *Man, he's looking for the ATM*. He said, *Oh yeah, hop on*. So he puts me on the back of his horse and I'm—the whole time I'm crying laughing. I'm like, *Am I riding a horse down Main Street in some city?* And we pull up to the little local bank about two blocks away. We're in the little ATM lot and I'm pressing the ATM buttons and the horse is so high that I'm like reaching down, you know. I get my money; I go back to the bar, and by this time I tell my friend who was the original one who invited me on the trip, my friend Jacob Crouch, about the horse and the whole story and he's loving it. So before you know, about an hour later he's got the horse, but now it's just him on the horse, so he's just riding some guy's horse around and **[*Laughs*]** you know just hanging out. I mean that's Mamou. I mean little things like that happen every year and you can't like predict them or explain them really.

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SR: And you're hanging out in Fred's Bar, or like in the town square, or—?

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JL: Fred's Bar is so packed at noon on a Saturday you can't even stand inside. I mean it's literally people coming out of the building. So they have actually like an outdoor area where they serve beer and drinks and stuff. And the best thing about Fred's Bar really is it's just kind of in the center part of the city. But the owner is a lady by the name of Tante Sue. And she's well into her late 80s and she has a gun holster, but instead of a gun she has Hot Damn Peppermint Schnapps in it. The brand is called Hot Damn. And she walks around with this and she's kind of the life of the party. She's making sure everybody is having fun and you know being safe and all that stuff and—but has more energy than anyone else there and it—that in itself is kind of wild. And every year she'll like autograph our shirt. In fact on my Boudin for Peace shirt that Don's gave me, we got them in '02 and the reason why I know that is because she went around and autographed all of our shirts. And I don't think any of us asked her to but she decided to **[*Laughs*]**. And she wrote Tante Sue De Mamou, 02-02-02, because it was February 2, 2002. And we still all have that written on our shirts and it's so funny. But again, Mamou is not really a place for boudin but it's just part of the experience and it's one of the fun(ner) parts of the experience because you get to stop and, you know, you get off the bus and you just kind of hang out with the locals.

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Then from there I really can't remember where we stop **[*Laughs*]** after Mamou except I know we used to stop in Mowata but we don't stop anymore. We've started going back to the

Best Stop, which for years was—they had the best boudin and we stopped going there for a couple of years, and then the past two years they weren't even really on the tour but we were all just still wanting some boudin at 4:00 in the afternoon and we decided just to kind of go to Best Stop and not really tell them we were coming, which is not always the best thing to do because they just usually don't have that much boudin ready. But they have great boudin, and you know kind of sneaking up on someone like that is a good thing because they're not expecting us, so you really get to taste their everyday boudin. And **[*Laughs*]** it's kind of a joke but it's kind of serious: there are some establishments that want to win it so they'll try to, you know, stand out just by the taste of the boudin. And we call it *spiking* the boudin; they spike the boudin and they put a lot of red pepper in it so you—you know, you taste it and you remember that taste. And it's what—we watch out for that, you know, because that's kind of an unfair advantage. You know we want—want to taste the everyday boudin; you know that's the important—we want the consistency because at the end of the day we're giving the trophy to the best boudin, and we—we want people to go and taste the best boudin every day.

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And the Best Stop is usually the last stop there in Carencro. And—and after that, you know we just come home and it's usually late and we've had a lot of boudin. And then there's a lot of like extracurricular foods that we eat like, you know, quail eggs; or you might even find some fried frog legs at each one of these little places. They all have something you know—pork rinds, or they have just some homemade stuff, and of course you're buying this and that and trying—trying it all, you know.

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SR: So you're not hungry after this?

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JL: No and you don't want boudin for a while after. I mean you—and you have to kind of pace yourself throughout the day. Some people get excited if it's—if it's their first year and they go to Don's and they get like four or five links and they eat all these links, and you've got to—you've got to eat maybe one full link each stop because if you eat more than that by the last stop, you know, your palate is just—it's just got too much boudin on there. **[*Laughs*]**

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SR: That's still kind of a lot even if you have one.

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JL: It is; it is **[*Laughs*]**.

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SR: So that's about five stops maybe?

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JL: Yeah, I would say five to six, again just kind of depending on the year, and each year there's kind of a different organizer who kind of calls the boudin places and sets up the buses and calls everybody. So you know, it's kind of open to that person to, if they want to change their route a little bit. It's easy to go north and hit Carencro and Opelousas and Eunice because we

always want to go to Mamou for around lunchtime. So you know, we've always taken that route; so you're kind of limited I guess to those boudin places, but we feel that those are the best boudin places around because this is kind of where it came from. And I don't know what else; I'm trying to think of some—some other really good details.

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SR: Well I have some questions that might—

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JL: Okay, maybe that will spur it.

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SR: Yeah, I have a lot actually. So I guess one thing I was going to ask is, like, who is corralling everyone then? It must take a lot to get people on and off the bus and make sure that everyone gets on and—.

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JL: It's not that bad because it's a convenience store in the middle of nowhere, so there's only so much you can do. **[*Laughs*]** And there's only so much stuff you can buy and you know, everyone is—your first year you're kind of just going with the herd, you don't really know what's going on, you don't really speak up too much; so when people are getting on the bus you get on the bus. And so it kind of engrains in you that you just—you taste the boudin and talk to the people and get back on the bus because, really, on the bus is a really fun part of it, you know.

There's people standing up telling jokes the whole time and then critique(ing) the boudin, which—that's a fun process. And then you got to look forward to the next stop. So it's not that bad, although some people have been left in Mamou on accident. I think a few have been left at—at a few of the stops but, you know, no problem; the locals are very nice **[*Laughs*]** and they'll really bring you wherever you need to go. So that hasn't really been a problem. And for the most part everybody kind of contains themselves or—as best they can.

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SR: What about the critiquing of the boudin? You said that not everybody gets to take part in that. How does that work exactly? How many people will be—how many people's votes count?

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JL: Well I guess I didn't mean it that way. I meant it from the standpoint that the person actually stands up, takes the mic on the bus and says, *All right, we're going to critique the boudin. The first category is...* That person who stands up and just kind of starts the process and the conversation is usually an older guy, or maybe someone who is just really funny because it—that is a really, just a fun part of it and they'll add what they feel about the boudin and supposedly it doesn't influence others. But you know it probably does just because they're funny. **[*Laughs*]**

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And you know everyone has a say-so, but it's kind of more along the lines of how many people yell for—for this one and yell for that one, and then—but at the end of the critique, you know, you rate the boudin and then you get kind of an average. And we don't have any

calculators on the bus, so if you get a five in this category and a nine in this category, a you know seven in this category, it comes out to about a 7.25. No one is really adding or subtracting the numbers.

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SR: So the voting happens just like by sort of yelling out?

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JL: Yeah, more or less. The person on the microphone kind of gives their critique and says, *I'll—green onion content, I'd give it a six*, and if the bus doesn't agree with that everyone is pretty open and will say *No, no*; *it should be a nine,* or *It should be a two*. And then it's kind of a discussion, you know. And you finally come to the—the number that probably it should be; everybody kind of agrees on it and then you move onto the next one. And it's really not that difficult a process. Pretty much everybody is kind of—you kind of just go with the flow and at the end of the day when you really say, *All right, who has the best boudin?* It's really just the boudin that stands out. I mean you don't—we don't really bring up the numbers; it kind of just gives you an idea of where they kind of stand throughout the day. But usually there's one link of boudin that really stands out, and when you eat it you know; you're like, *I think this is it*. **[*Laughs*]** It's kind of funny but you do.

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SR: Do you think Don's might win because you're not sick of eating boudin yet when you eat it in the first thing in the morning? **[*Laughs*]**

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JL: I don't think so because I really think their boudin is really good. I eat it all the time. But you know, a lot of people could think that's a disadvantage because eight hours later, I mean that's a long time ago. That's a lot of links of boudin ago. And like I said, usually one just kind of stands out and you just kind of know, *I think that was my favorite*, so—.

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SR: And so you said that one of the categories was meat to rice (ratio).

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JL: Yeah.

00:23:15

SR: What's the ideal meat to rice ratio—more meat or more rice?

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JL: Well it's kind of personal preference. I prefer a little bit more meat, like a 60/40 split. You know if you have too much rice it's just—it's just too much rice. It—it's kind of like filler, you know; you feel like you ought to have more meat in there than rice. So I think everybody kind of weighs a little bit more to the higher meat ratio, but it's got to again have a little bit of a balance. It can't have too much meat; you want it to kind of just taste right, you know like—.

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SR: Same with the green onion content.

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JL: Sure, it's—again a lot of it's a personal preference. A lot of people like maybe a little bit, a hint of liver, the taste of mustard, or even like they—some people like it to be spicy.

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JG: Normally when you put too much rice I find that it—the boudin will become drier; it's not as moist because it absorbs too much of the moisture for my personal preference.

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SR: So Don's is pretty spicy, huh?

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JL: Don's has been—they've done really good. I mean I think their daily boudin is what we eat. And it does have, you know, very good flavor but it's not overpowering. Again, it's got a good balance of what a boudin—or what we think a boudin should taste like, or—it's just a good link of boudin, you know.

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SR: And it sounds like your—the final tally really counts for these places that know you exist. Like there's some clout. They're making t-shirts for you and inviting you on tours.

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JL: Well I—I mean I'm sure some of them don't really care **[*Laughs*]—**really, you know, if they get a little plaque or not, but some of them get into it like we do and they realize that it's just a fun thing and that if we're going to show up anyway they might as well have some fun with us. And—and that's part of it. And you know, that goes back to kind of the presentation part of it. The people being hospitable and welcoming you in, it just makes the whole experience a lot of fun. And the places that aren't hospitable—they give you the boudin and they say, you know, *$ 100 bucks*, or whatever—that's not fun, so we're not probably as likely to go back. But you know, we do go back; usually it's the week after, [and] three or four guys go back and actually hand them the plaque, and some of them have it on their wall, and we love to see that the next year when we go back. It kind of validates what we're doing I guess a little bit, but you know again, it's all in good fun. There's no real—I mean we're not some organization; we're just friends and guys getting together and having fun. And that's all it—it's meant for.

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SR: Do you know of any places offhand that might have it hanging on their wall?

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JL: Don's definitely has theirs. Billy Ray's has theirs hanging on the wall. I don't know if the Best Stop has theirs but they have definitely won a few years. But—but yeah, I mean Don's for example, they've been really great and you could go there tomorrow and it's hanging up there. So that's, you know—it's kind of fun.

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SR: What does the plaque look like?

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JL: A really simple plaque **[*Laughs*]** that you would see for like a tee-ball tournament for an eight year-old, nothing special; just the year, the date, and the winner of best boudin from Boudin for Peace, and—and that's it. Just keeping it simple.

00:27:23

SR: So can you tell me a little bit—we were talking earlier about the rules of this day, or this organization.

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JL: The rule—well none of them are written down for sure, until now maybe. **[*Laughs*]** But there's kind of some unspoken rules. Cameras really aren't encouraged, and I haven't been in any photos I don't think, just because there's just—just a lot of people there having a good time and you know, just one more thing to worry about…really getting photos and stuff. It's just a group of—it's all guys; there's no—no women that come, and **[*Laughs*]** you know, so guys—.

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JG: There's no beer or anything either, huh?

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JL: There's a little bit of beer going on, drinking. You've got to wash the boudin down, you know, especially that dry boudin.

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SR: You can have beer on the bus, right, or—?

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JL: Yeah, you have beer on the bus.

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SR: What kind of beer?

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JL: Each person kind of brings their own little ice chest. Some people might drink mixed drinks. I'm a Coors Light drinker myself. I can't drink anything too heavy because it—it will kind of wear on you a little bit. A lot of people start their day off with a good Bloody Mary or a screwdriver, but those are usually the—the people who it's their first couple of years. It's a marathon of a day, not a sprint, and in fact the little short bus that I was telling you about—15 passenger—is for those people who can't make the whole day, and usually that bus leaves—leaves around noon from Mamou, and they get made fun of a little bit and take some flack for it, which they should. You know, if they can't handle the day of boudin and drinking—.

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SR: It's like an ambulance?

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JL: Kind of **[*Laughs*]**. I guess you could say that. It's just a bus that brings home the guys—

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JG: Or a paddy wagon, boudin wagon. **[*Laughs*]**

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JL: And so yeah, I don't know.

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SR: So anymore—any other rules? No cameras, no women, bring your own?

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JL: No fighting. That's a big rule. You know, we want to make sure everybody is nice and we get to go to the same spots over again and stuff like that. I'm trying to think: what are some of the other rules? There's really not many other ones. That's about it.

00:30:09

SR: Sounds a little bit like a—a secret society or like a Mardi Gras krewe.

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JL: It is kind of like a Mardi Gras krewe. In fact a lot of the people on the bus are part of the same Mardi Gras krewe and there's actually a float—or there's a parade that runs that Saturday night every year and a few of us are in the krewe, and we ride in the float. So when we get back off the bus we go straight to the float and the float starts around like 6:00. We get off the bus about 5:00 and the floats go from like 6:00 to like 10:00 and they run here in Lafayette, and that's a tough—that's a trying day. But it's a lot of fun.

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SR: What parade is that and what krewe?

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JL: That is Rio En Carnivale ***[Correction: it's called Krewe of Carnivale En Rio]***. It's a new krewe; it's only about maybe three—four years old, and it's actually the first parade of the Mardi Gras season around here. So it's a fun parade because everybody is kind of wanting to kind of get in the Mardi Gras spirit. And then you know those of us who Boudin for Peace(d) it all day are having a whole lot of fun, and you kind of have to just suck it up and have—you can sleep Sunday and Monday.

00:31:29

One other thing that I forgot to tell you about—I just remembered it—is every year in the morning before we leave we name a Mr. Boudin, and that is given to someone who—who **[*Laughs*]** how do I put this? —just did something extraordinary the year before. That could be along the lines of organizing the event and kind of going the extra mile to make sure that

everyone was at the right place and all the boudin stops knew we were coming—to being the best critique(r) we've ever had, or you know just cracking up the bus the whole time they're telling jokes, or—or you never know. Or—or getting a horse and riding it around the city. I mean, just things—you never what it's going to be, but again it's kind of like the good boudin. You just kind of know when that—whoever that person is stands out a little bit from the pack, you know they're probably going to be Mr. Boudin next year and—.

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SR: So like the person who got it this past year, what—what did he do that was extraordinary?

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JL: Well like I said, it kind of—the guys who started Boudin for Peace have turned over the reins to the younger guys, and—and again it's a lot of their nephews and—and—[they] said, *Look, we're kind of getting a little old for this*. *Why don't you all take it and have fun with it?* And I can't remember who exactly won it this past year or the last year, but they basically took the ball and ran with it and really did a good job of, you know, organizing the thing. It was really the first time trying to do it, and while it sounds pretty simple, you know it does take some time out of your day to do it and then just to track everybody down—*Are you coming or not?* It can be a pretty big task especially for some people, and—and it really went off without a hitch. It was one of the smoothest days we've had in a long time and no one was left in Mamou and all the boudin was good and I think that was—might have been the first year we had a tour of the Eunice Meat and Poultry which was really cool, and it was—he just did a really good job. So that's—that's the only story I'll tell you about Mr. Boudin.

00:34:01

SR: For the record? **[*Laughs*]**

00:34:01

JL: Yeah, for the record.

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SR: But what—if someone is Mr. Boudin, does he get to wear something fun for the day, or—?

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JL: No, there's nothing. There's no uniform or no—. There is a little plaque that he gets. Again he—he receives the award that morning for the past year, you know, so it kind of encourages everyone to be on their A-game for the rest of the day because they could get Mr. Boudin the next year.

00:34:32

SR: Oh, so this is something that people angle for?

00:34:34

JL: Well maybe; it might be. But after a few links of boudin, you know, you're just there to have a good time. But speaking of that there is a traditional garb, if you will, that some of the older guys started wearing; some of the newer guys are starting to get them. That's either one of

two things—is the old-fashioned overalls, and they'll get maybe Boudin for Peace embroidered on it, and if they were a past Mr. Boudin it will say *Mr. Boudin 2003* or something; and—and then also like a mechanic's jumpsuit you know, but a red one, and it's got to be red. And again, some people might just have their name on it, it might be plain, or it might have, you know, embroidered *Boudin for Peace*. It's really up to whatever they want to do.

00:35:32

SR: Have you done that yet?

00:35:35

JL: I haven't done that, although—and this is kind of bringing up some other stuff. In Boudin for Peace there's a lot of sharing going on and a lot of times it's pretty cold, and so at all these little convenience stores they sell like gloves to work in the fields or whatever it may be, and **[*Laughs*]** occasionally what you want to try to do if you forgot your gloves—and usually everybody forgets their gloves or a huggie for their beer—is you find someone who is left-handed or right-handed, the opposite of you, and one person will get the left-hand glove and you'll get the other glove. So it's kind of like your—your huggie. Your hands don't get cold. And then some people have taken it so far as they don't—they're going to keep both gloves and what they do just so they can multi-task is they cut the fingers off of the gloves, so they can still eat the boudin with the glove on but they get to hold the beer and their hands don't get cold. Those are the really smart ones. I think every year for the most part I've bought a set of gloves and I've never come home with a set of gloves. I don't know where they go; no one does. So yeah, that's—that's another little part of it.

00:36:53

SR: That's a good one. When I thought [about] Boudin for Peace, I was imagining everybody wearing tie-dye shirts or something.

00:37:00

JL: No, I haven't seen any tie-dye but I could be wrong.

00:37:04

SR: Well also, you said that it started in the '70s. It sounds like it could have been like part of the peace—like a satirical part of the peace movement or something.

00:37:12

JL: I'm sure it probably had something to do with it because the guys who started it are really funny guys, and you know everything that they do is—is usually pretty good and pretty funny. So I'm sure it had something to do with that. I'm not sure, though.

00:37:31

SR: Can you tell me a little bit about how like you let it be known that you wanted to be a part of this group?

00:37:37

JL: No, it was pretty simple. Jacob's uncle was one of the guys on there, and we had heard about it and just heard what it was about and how much fun they had. And so me and a couple of my friends just really pestered him and pressured him to call his uncle as much as he could to see if we can come. And actually Jacob went the year before I did because there was only one spot open and you know, basically I think his uncle had to just test him out a little bit and make sure he was old enough because we were kind of young. And, but it really kind of came down to were there going to be any spots open, because the veterans of Boudin for Peace are not going to get kicked off the bus if you show up and there's too many people. The rookies will either have to drive their own car or they can't come, and that's kind of another little unsaid rule, just because it's kind of a seniority system I guess.

00:38:41

SR: Has that happened, that somebody has had to drive their own car?

00:38:44

JL: Sure. And you know, a lot of them they'll just drive a Suburban, and then they'll pile into a Suburban and they have a lot of fun too. But that—that has happened, and it's—no one is being ugly towards anyone. It's just one of those things, you know. And as a rookie you know that that's a possibility and you're perfectly fine with that. You're—you're happy just to follow the bus really. But that has happened.

00:39:16

SR: Is there any hazing that goes on with the rookies?

00:39:18

JL: No hazing. No, there's no really time for hazing between all the boudin, the critiquing, and the beer and Mamou and—. No, it's really a great mix of generations really. Older guys, and then now you know I'm not the youngest one anymore, which is a little odd to me but—but it's kind of neat that whether you're in your 40s, your 30s, your 20s, you know that everyone is there for the same common goal and that's just to have a good time and eat some really good boudin and have some stories to tell at the end of the day.

00:39:57

SR: I wonder about the bus driver.

00:39:59

JL: The bus drivers are really good sports. That's a good point. They put up with a lot. We try to treat them as best we can and we help them clean up at the end of the day because the bus is usually pretty dirty. **[*Laughs*]** But they're really good sports, and in fact they kind of buy into the whole thing too. I mean they—they—we talk to them and they're nice guys and they hear what we're doing, because they don't really know what they're doing when they get there. We—we let them in on what's going to happen that day and they really kind of take a step back and laugh a little bit. And then when they see us chanting *boudin* at each stop and getting off the bus, you know like we're going to play a football game or something, they—they can't help but kind of laugh. They'll even come in sometimes and eat some boudin. You really can't help but really

laugh and have a good time, so they—they're usually pretty good sports about it. They understand what we're trying to do.

00:40:56

SR: Well one thing I like about your story is that—or the main thing probably—is that it's funny but serious at the same time.

00:41:04

JL: It is. It's a fine line because **[*Laughs*]** you know (the shop that wins) gets a little trophy at the end of the day and so you do have to kind of focus a little bit in the critiquing, but after that it's all fun and games. And that's really what it's for. But there (is) definitely a little procedure that you follow to rate the boudin and to go to the next stop, and it—we just happen to have a really great group of guys doing it and they make it fun really.

00:41:39

SR: What about—tell me a little bit about the group of guys. Are these—what kind of people are they?

00:41:46

JL: Good question. They are all really, you know, successful guys in Lafayette, whether they be lawyers or doctors or just local businessmen. And—and that's what really, for us, you know when we started out why we had so much fun is because we got to kind of hang out with these older guys who we've all seen Monday through Friday in a suit. And you know they're working

and we got to kind of see them have fun like we do. We were in college at the time when we started, so that was really neat, you know, just to kind of be on the same level with those guys and just having fun at the same time. But all really good guys; most of them are from Lafayette. I know over the years we've probably picked up a few guys form Houma or Thibodeaux who moved to Lafayette and heard about it and kind of got worked in on it. But only the past few years as a new crop of people kind of come in, you know—but yeah, all good guys, all of them mostly from Lafayette and again, just a little—little fun on a Saturday eating boudin.

00:43:03

SR: What about you? What do you do for a living?

00:43:05

JL: I'm in commercial real estate.

00:43:10

SR: So it seems—I mean there's a cultural pride thing that—that's going on there too, I guess. I mean it's not—you're not driving around rating Big Macs or something.

00:43:22

JL: No, it's—well it's what we have here, you know in Acadiana. And it's good Cajun food. Boudin—and Jim (speaking to his stepfather, Jim Gossen), you may be able to shed some more light on it—but to me, or what I've been told, was that boudin was created as kind of a—like a Cajun snack if you will. Just like—it's like a little link of boudin that, you know, whoever was

stopping in at these little convenience stores would stop; it's just like—it's half of a meal. It's kind of like a little—it's not a lunch, not a dinner, just kind of a little snack. And you know that's just what these little stores around here do and that's what they do really well. So we've all grown up eating boudin, and so it only seems normal to us that we go around and rate the boudin and have a whole day of it.

00:44:14

SR: When you were growing up, in what context would you eat boudin?

00:44:15

JL: The only thing that I really remember being younger and eating a lot of boudin was when we'd go either duck or goose hunting. There was always a—a little grocery store called Stelly's; it is…I don't know the exact location. It's a little east of Geuydan. But you'd always stop to get supplies for the weekend—you know, soft drinks and ice, or fill up the truck with gas or something like that, and they always had boudin. And I just—I remember always getting a link of boudin either there or somewhere around that atmosphere—you know, around the hunting camp kind of deal.

00:45:03

JG: You know boudin today is much more plentiful than it was 40—50 years ago. You probably could—you used to not be able to get any boudin in the summertime. Nobody made it.

00:45:20

Audrey Menard [Jeff's grandmother]: Because of refrigeration you know.

00:45:23

JG: And you know—

00:45:23

SR: Okay wait, now I have to introduce you. Could you just introduce yourself?

00:45:26

AM: Audrey Menard. I was born January 5, 1929. Jeff is my grandson and Jeff you've done a good job. I've heard more—I've never heard so many boudin stories in my whole life.

00:45:45

SR: He's good.

00:45:47

AM: And Jim, you are right. In those days, I mean it was rare because of not—no refrigeration in—in the country and all and no electricity. So Jeff, you've done a great job; you've covered a lot of things I had never heard before.

00:46:05

JG: Well when you grew up and you made it at your house you didn't go buy boudin at the store. Well no, you didn't make it but let's say the people at the farm—there were—there were

very few stores. I remember when I was young they had a few places you could get boudin, but in the summertime it wasn't that—they just didn't have it. It was—people didn't butcher hogs in the summer. I mean pretty much in general that I—that I know of, and maybe they did and they just didn't make boudin. But you know that's my experience, and I can remember when I was young you could buy it—every place had red and white boudin. They had blood boudin and one without blood. And I don't know what year—I guess the Board of Health made them stop making red boudin. And actually I never ate red boudin but my grandmother, that's—it was her favorite. She wouldn't eat white boudin. She only would eat the red boudin. So I—I couldn't tell you what the red tastes like.

00:47:21

SR: Well there are a couple places still making it. I think the restriction is that you have to have an inspector on site, and you have to kill your own pig, and there aren't that many places that do that anymore. But have you all ever eaten any blood boudin for Boudin (for Peace)?

00:47:34

JL: No. This is the first time I've heard of it, so no.

00:47:37

JG: I believe there's a place somewhere around New Iberia that you can still get it, but I'm not sure. And I mean you can make it for yourself if you want to make it for your family and give it to people. But you know probably commercially you're right. They probably have to have some type of FDA inspector and—or USDA, actually.

00:48:02

SR: But did you grow up eating blood boudin?

00:48:05

AM: No, not really.

00:48:08

SR: So when you—well on what occasion would you eat boudin growing up?

00:48:14

AM: Just buying it in a store because I'm from Lafayette and that was it. I mean you know, I didn't—that's what I say: I don't know too much. I don't have too many stories about boudin.

00:48:25

SR: But it was a seasonal product?

00:48:29

AM: Yeah. Like Jim said, you know in my time I guess—I don't know—I don't know. I just never—I never knew how they made (it) or any—you know, how it's produced or anything.

00:48:43

SR: Well I guess I mean the like farm families would make it when they killed the hog.

00:48:50

JG: Yeah, they would kill the hog. I know like my great-grandparents' house and all, they would kill several hogs and they would divide it up amongst the neighbors. In fact, I have a big crock that I have at my house in Houston that—it's over 100 years-old—where they would make sausage and they would put the sausage in the crock and after they rendered the hog lard they would pour that hot hog lard in there I think, and it would cook the sausage and seal it. And so they—they'd have that sausage all year long. It would be cooked and it could have been—they could have done it to the smoked (sausage). I don't remember; I was very small. But when they needed sausage they would pull it out of that—that crock and it didn't need refrigeration. It would just seal. The air couldn't get to it and it would stay—. In fact I have one of those crocks at my house in Houston that I—I got from the farm.

00:50:02

SR: Do you remember seeing them make boudin ever?

00:50:05

JG: I can't really remember what they were doing. I remember seeing them cutting up—we had a, my great-grandmother had a smokehouse and they would—they would have sausage and stuff like that at the farm, but I was too small really to remember. I mean I knew they were doing something, but I didn't—they would make cracklins. To me that stood out more than anything than making the—the boudin and stuff. And I'm sure they were making all that and they would cut up the hog and they would—. A story I asked my grandmother about—I could never find

sausage that tasted like my great-grandmother's and she said the difference was they took all the best parts of the pig. I mean today, sausage, they try to make it as cheaply as they can a lot of the times to compete with the big sausage producers. I mean when you go buy commercial sausage there is very little meat in there **[*Laughs*]** compared to (the old days). But they put—they put all good parts of meat in there (in the old days) and the would not put the fillers like they (do now). And they still have people that make it that way, but not in general. What you see in the store packaged, it's—if you read the ingredients, you get way down the line before you see any kind of meat. **[*Laughs*]**

00:51:40

SR: And if you're making it for yourself you know you want to make it the best.

00:51:45

JG: Yeah right, they're making it, and they—they really had to use all the meat and the scraps and stuff. So that was a way that they would cut the hams off, they'd smoke the hams, they would cut the—the bellies and make the bacon, and they'd make cracklins with the—the skin and I—I don't think back then they made cracklins with the belly like they do today. It was—well, I don't know. I would think they took the bacon—the bellies and made bacon. Now today they keep the belly on that skin and they—they make it; that way you have more meat on it today.

00:52:37

SR: Where was the farm—your great-grandparents' farm?

00:52:39

JG: Near about nine miles west of here in Rayne, Louisiana. Right on the outskirts of Rayne. I-10 passes through our farm in the north and south side. And well, my family had another farm which we still own in Washington, Louisiana, which is a little north of Opelousas.

00:53:04

SR: Does your family still own the Rayne property?

00:53:06

JG: Yeah, we still own both farms but we don't farm it. We do have farmers that farm it for us—for the family—and we get a piece of it. We supply the land and the water, and the farmer supplies the labor and the equipment and harvests it.

00:53:29

SR: And what are they farming on those pieces of land now?

00:53:30

JG: Oh, rice and soybeans mostly. And in Washington mostly soybean and I guess, depending on—you know now corn is going—it's going to be high so they'll probably—Washington will probably produce corn. But in Rayne we always produced rice and we still do, and sometimes they do soybeans. We have about 800-something acres in the family in Rayne and they—they

rotate the fields. They don't plant; they let it rest a year or two. I don't know, but they plant something else so that it doesn't zap all the nutrients in the land.

00:54:24

SR: What about ya'll, have you ever made boudin—anyone here?

00:54:27

JG: I have, yeah.

00:54:29

AM: You have? At home?

00:54:31

JG: Well not at home; at my kitchen at Louisiana Foods. And the way I make it—I told you before, I'm not really fond of liver and I know probably the real recipe that goes back is—has some pork liver in the boudin, maybe 15—20-percent of the ratio. But I use just the Boston butt or shoulder—a Boston butt because it's leaner, is what I use, but—. And I just cook that down in, you know onion and bell pepper and celery in a broth until the meat is tender, and then I grind it up. I don't make it a lot; I've made it probably 10—15 times over my—. But I grind it up, and then you put the rice (in), and you leave some of the (cooking) water (in) when you mix it together. And then you mix it all with green onions and rice and—and when I do it I would vacuum-pack it and then freeze it, because I'd make normally 200-300 pounds for—for our company.

00:55:55

SR: For yourself or to sell?

00:55:55

JG: Well I would eat some of it, but I would give it most away when I did it. We buy it (from other manufacturers) to sell because I'm not really setup to do that with the USDA. We have FDA, which is—inspects seafood, but we're not a meat inspected. So I can make it and sell it in retail if I want but not wholesale, so I never really made it to sell wholesale.

00:56:25

SR: Hmm, I thought of one more Boudin for Peace question—at least. I might come up with more. But do you pay dues, or—or what does it take to be a part of this club?

00:56:36

JL: No, it's just the simple—the cost of the bus and estimated cost of all the boudin. And before you get on the bus, you know it's—it's usually really not much for a whole day. **[*Phone Rings*]** It's—it's—that's really what it comes down to: you just divide it by however many people are there that morning. And you know it's very inexpensive—maybe $40-bucks for a whole day of a lot of fun.

00:57:14

SR: What about in your normal life, not on the Boudin for Peace day— how often would you say you eat boudin?

00:57:22

JL: During the hunting season pretty often, probably once a week. Which you know, that's in the fall and in the winter. But in the spring and the summer, not as much. Just you know, the only time I really come across it is whenever I drive to a specialty meat market like Don's or Best Stop to buy a roast or…I don't know, just something specialty that they might have. And when I'm there I usually get a link of boudin or something else that they have. So maybe once a month, you know in the spring and the summer, and then pretty often in the fall and the winter. Just kind of—when you're around it more it's hard to say no to boudin, you know. In fact I don't say no to boudin; I just get it every time, so—.

00:58:21

SR: So you're—you like to cook?

00:58:23

JL: I like to cook a lot. I don't have the, you know the expertise that this guy **[*referring to Jim*]** has, but I really enjoy being just in the kitchen. We were talking about it today for lunch: it makes the seemingly ordinary and boring task of eating a fun event, you know. And just from the—just going and getting the meat—. You know Jim and I went to the store yesterday to get the steaks, and that was fun just to go out there and just to look at it, you know, and talk to the butcher and—. And then the whole preparation thing is fun. I'm not—again, I'm not the most

skillful cook but I have a good time doing it. I have trouble following recipes, but I think that makes it fun too, just kind of throw some stuff in there and see how it comes out.

00:59:24

SR: So your lunch today sounds like it was a family event, everybody—?

00:59:29

JG: Yeah, we had a family event (for Father's Day). In fact my brother had emailed me, I guess it was Friday, and he said my dad had mentioned that he had seen on the food channel one of the celebrity chefs cooking a real, real thick Porterhouse steak, and they had cut it off the bone and I guess put it back and then served it, and he said it looked really good. So yesterday I picked him and my uncle up—my dad is 81 and my uncle is 78, I think—and took them to eat a pork chop sandwich at Don's and my father ate two hotdogs. My uncle ate a pork chop sandwich. And I asked dad again, I said, *What do ya'll—what do ya'll want me to cook you?* So I said, *Kevin said something you had said about a T-bone or a Porterhouse,* and he said, *Oh yeah*; he started talking about that again. I said, *Well I know I want to cook some ribs*—and I had ordered some ribs—*so let's go to Webster's in Cecilia and we'll go pick up the ribs*. So we went and picked them up **[*Phone Rings*]** and—went and picked the ribs up, and then Jeff—and then I came back here and Jeff and I tried to figure out who would have real good meat. And so we went and we got a three-inch—two three-inch Porterhouses, and we cooked them on my grill out there with the ribs, and we cut them off the bone and I put them all back on the bone. They were—we had fun and they enjoyed it.

01:01:14

SR: And where did you find that?

01:01:15

JG: What's the name?

01:01:17

JL: Fresh Market.

01:01:18

JG: Fresh Market. It's a new store that opened up here on Ambassador Caffrey (Parkway). And I'm sure they have other places, but I was looking to find either somebody that had top choice or prime. And I think they had certified Black Angus, which should be choice.

01:01:40

SR: So why—I don't want to keep ya'll here all night, but while we're on the topic of cooking can I ask you about gumbo a little bit? Because we're also doing a gumbo oral history project. So if—if you were getting together as a family to eat gumbo, what kind would you have and who would make it?

01:01:59

JG: Well I'm sure you made gumbo—well you made gumbo all—what do you make, seafood? Or chicken and seafood I guess, huh?

01:02:08

AM: Both.

01:02:08

JG: Yeah.

01:02:10

AM: Yeah, but I'm not very good at making gumbo. You could better than I.

01:02:17

JG: Well you were very good at making gumbo. But you know normally like for Christmas Eve, my family always has seafood gumbo. It's been a tradition for many years and—and I have three brothers and three sisters. All but one likes to really cook, and one is really—doesn't care about cooking that much, but all the other ones love to cook. And so really either—(any one of them), we could go over to their house and they could have—cook their gumbo, or—But normally for Christmas Eve I make the gumbo, and I make it in Houston and I bring it and make a seafood gumbo. Being in the seafood business—.

01:03:09

SR: And what do you mean by seafood gumbo? What's in there?

01:03:12

JG: Well I use—I put oysters, crabmeat and shrimp, and that's the seafood gumbo for us.

01:03:20

SR: Do you put—do you use any sausage or other meat?

01:03:22

JG: Not in the seafood, and only—now I do (put sausage) in a chicken gumbo. I use smoked sausage, pure pork, and I also make a gumbo without sausage. But most of the time like for—we make a chicken and sausage gumbo at Louisiana Foods, which we use—we start with 72 hens. We make a big one, 200 gallons. So a lot of times when I want to do a chicken and sausage gumbo I just bring that. You know after we—. And what we do, we cook the hens whole and—and make a stock, and when—we cook them three hours, and we buy the biggest hens we can get. And then we take them out and let them cool to room temperature, and then we take all the skin off and debone them all, and then we do the same thing with the sausage. We put it in the stock in rope links, you know the long ones, until they cook, and we take them out and then we portion everything. So when we pack it, it has the same amount of meat (to stock) ratio, or you know whatever portion of meat you want to put in it. So normally what I'll do when—if we're going to have gumbo here and it's for a lot of people I'll just bring some from there, and I do the same thing with the seafood. We'll make the stock and I'll just add the seafood here.

01:04:54

SR: That sounds really good. By *hen* you mean like an older—it's an older bird?

01:04:59

JG: Yeah, hens normally run six pounds. They're big and they're—it's not like a fryer. That way you can cook them much longer and get a richer stock and they don't fall apart. Chicken wants to—you know you cook it and it gets stringy real quick, and if you overcook it and you can't really get the depth of stock (as you would) if you would be making maybe a—a chicken soup or something; you would get a flavor from a chicken, but a hen will make it much more intense, and that's what we use.

01:05:43

SR: What about your—your seafood gumbo? Do you make that with a roux?

01:05:45

JG: Roux, yeah. And today we make so much seafood gumbo at Louisiana Foods we have someone that makes our roux for us. But for me, if I'm going to make it for myself I make it on the stove. I mean it's—you can make it just as quick. I don't really, I don't buy jarred roux. It's all good, but it's just as easy (to make yourself) and I like the smell. I mean to me, that's—browning that flour.

01:06:21

SR: And okra in there?

01:06:25

JG: I make an okra gumbo, but normally when I do an okra gumbo I put no roux. In fact, my mother used—some of the children didn't like okra so she would take the okra and smother it down and put it in a blender or a Cuisinart or something and you couldn't even see it. But I don't do that. Normally I'll take the okra and just smother it down real good to where the sliminess disappears and then make my stock and—and I do a shrimp and okra gumbo with a little tomato. But normally our seafood gumbo doesn't have any okra in it, unless it be a shrimp gumbo. And I think that shrimp and okra gumbo probably came around May when the okra was plentiful and the shrimp were in season, and the same as shrimp Creole, you know. The tomatoes were available, and that's probably how all that came about.

01:07:36

SR: What about Jeff—when you go hunting, do you make gumbo ever with your kill?

01:07:43

JL: My fellow hunters? Sure. I mean, you know a lot of times for me gumbo is—is just for an occasion where there's going to be a lot of people around hanging out, whether it be watching a football game on television or at the hunting camp or fishing camp. **[*Laughs*]** Because it's such an easy process and it's a lengthy process, so you kind of have to be around and have to be kind of watching it, but at the same time you can sort of set it (to simmer), and once it's got going you can kind of—you can do other things. And the smell is something that, it's just fun to—to smell that smell and to have that in the camp or the house. And it's just one of those meals also that you can, once it's done you know you can—people can just serve at will. If someone is hungry right now, go ahead and eat. And that's really nice because you know, for the most part at those

types of events it's a relaxed setting. You know, no one is sitting down at a table, and it's just when you're hungry you go and eat, and it's something you can just have on the stove and reheat. And everybody likes to help with the gumbo, you know. It's just an easy—you know, chop your—chop your vegetables and get your meat ready, and everybody has got a little something different to it and—. But those are most of the occasions when we're cooking gumbo you know, so—.

01:09:21

JG: It's normally for a crowd. Diane and I would never cook gumbo for ourselves.

01:09:27

JL: Sure, exactly.

01:09:28

JG: Because when I'm going to cook a gumbo I take out a big pot; I mean it's—because it's just as easy to make, and gumbo is better the next day, and it gets better and better every day after you have it refrigerated. So that's—that's something where I think—of course when I grew up, I mean a lot of the dishes we ate were cooked in one pot: shrimp stew and chicken stew and court-bouillon and sauce piquant. And it was more of a one-pot thing, and gumbo was something you could—. And all those were really geared to feed a large amount of people with not as much meat. So you could have rice and gravies and sauces or juice—you know, broths where you didn't have to use as much—. Or you could put one hen and you could make a nice sized gumbo where—and feed a bunch of people. And I'm—I'm the oldest of seven children, so my mother

made things like that because we had a big family. And we very rarely, you know when I was growing up—and as the younger ones grew up they would go out and eat and all—but when I was growing up it was very, very occasional when we'd go out to eat. There were just too many people.

01:11:00

SR: Well it's special to be able to talk to, you know, three generations of one family about one dish. That's—I mean, here in Louisiana that's not unusual, but in general I think in America it is. It's such a communal thing here it seems just in general, cooking eating. I thought of two other questions about Boudin for Peace **[*Laughs*]** before we wrap up. So we were talking before I turned the microphone on about how I live in New Orleans, and a lot of people there—it's hard to find boudin there unless it's frozen in the grocery store. And a lot of people there don't relate to it at all; it's not part of their culture. And you told a funny story about being at college. I think you were in college, right? Could you tell that story?

01:11:51

JL: Sure. Again, it was one of those weekends. Probably I was coming back from the—you know duck hunting camp or something. And I had a next-door neighbor in Baton Rouge who was from—from New Orleans. Actually, Kenner (a suburb); he would want me to say Kenner **[*pronounced Kinner*]**, and **[*Laughs*]** he was pretty much a city slicker kind of guy. And we would—we would tell him we were going hunting, and he had never even fired a gun in his life, which we all—we thought was funny. But long story short, we had some leftover boudin. Came home, and decided just to give him some. We had plenty, and you know we were kind of just

probably sick of the boudin at that time. And a couple days later (we) walked next door and he is—he is barbequing and he is barbequing the boudin because he thought it was sausage and really had no idea what it was at that point. We kind of—we had to stop him, **[*Laughs*]** and we were like, *Man, it's boudin*. He was like, *What is boudin? Sausage*. But you know it's funny because they actually have places that have barbeque boudin, which is actually pretty good—just a little different—but we showed him how to heat up the boudin in the rice cooker. But that was a little too much for him, so he just did the microwave thing. But at the—at the end of the day, you know we introduced him to boudin, and he still laughs at us for bringing this foreign dish to him, but—.

01:13:32

SR: Did he like it?

01:13:33

JL: He loved it; he loved it.

01:13:33

JG: You know Jeff, you were talking about the—you know, take the different boudin and what in general do people like, you know—? I told you that I'm not a big liver fan, but in general do people like boudin with more liver, less liver, equal parts—?

01:13:55

JL: I think less.

01:13:56

JG: Less?

01:13:55

JL: I think—

01:13:57

JG: You know on the Boudin for Peace when ya'll talk about—?

01:14:01

JL: Right. Well liver is, you know, a very distinct taste and when you've had—you've had too much of it, and that's kind of when it comes up. It—it just—it's just an overpowering taste. So really when it comes up is whenever it's kind of probably too much. And to be honest with you I rarely notice it, but a lot of people do, and I think for the most part it's there but just in the right quantities.

01:14:37

JG: You know I'm wondering, like Don's Specialty Meats. I love his boudin. I love the boudin at Best Stop, and I never even asked them if they had liver in it because I don't want to know, you know because that—. And I'm just wondering if you think they have liver in it?

01:14:57

JL: I would think they do.

01:15:00

JG: It would be very little then because it's not a—it's not a taste that pops out, so it would be just as a recipe thing, or just to get—I would think anyway.

01:15:13

SR: What about Poche's? Do you ever go there in Breaux Bridge?

01:15:17

JL: We haven't—I haven't been to Poche's. I have heard a couple people say something about Poche's is pretty good.

01:15:22

SR: There is liver in that one.

01:15:26

JL: We just don't go east on I-10, you know. **[*Laughs*]** We haven't gone that way and maybe we should.

01:15:32

JG: Like one of the most famous, when I was growing up, boudin places was Comeaux's. And that was really, you know—they had Begneaud's You Need a Butcher, which I have their—when they closed it down, I have the—one of the butcher blocks that was in there.

01:15:57

SR: Where is that?

01:15:57

JG: Well it was **[*Phone Rings*]**—

01:15:59

SR: Well what was it called?

01:16:03

JG: It was called Begneaud's You Need a Butcher. It's been closed, and a friend of mine and I bought both of the butcher blocks out of there and they're like this **[*indicates with his hands that they are worn from use*]**. In fact one of them has been—you know they used to scrape them down with a steel brush every day to get the meat scraps off of it, so you could see the grooves in it. But normally a butcher block is, I think 24 inches thick. I'm not sure—18 to 24 inches. But this one—and one part of it is scraped all the way down to halfway until you can see the knuckle in there that holds the wood together. And I bought it from them; we bought both of them, and I have it. But they had good boudin back then. But there was not a lot of places and Comeaux's

was one which I didn't go to because they had a lot of liver in it. And I know a lot of people loved it. I mean that was what they thought boudin was supposed to taste like and—.

01:17:16

SR: What about presentation? Like what would get you knocked down, presentation-wise (during Boudin for Peace)?

01:17:22

JL: I don't know it would necessarily get you knocked down. I think for the most part anybody that is going to open their doors and serve us a bunch of boudin, that's good enough. What would get you knocked up, you know I guess, just someone kind of going the extra mile whether they were just being a little more hospitable and taking you around their little facility. Or some mornings I know they might just have extra workers there. You know just excited to see the Boudin for Peace people. Some of them have a really nice cutting board. You know usually we bring our own cutting board, but some of them will like— they'll cut the boudin for us and they'll put it on a little tray, which is easy and nice.

01:18:24

SR: Well that's a good detail. You bring your own cutting board—for what?

01:18:29

JL: Well because usually they serve us the boudin—you know there's 20 pounds of boudin and it's all kind of strung together really, and so we bring at least—well maybe more than one—

probably two cutting boards and two knives, and you pretty much cut all the links up into two or sometimes three, and you know, just to kind of pass it out. But yeah, one year we actually forgot a cutting board, and they didn't really have a cutting board there to cut 20 pounds of boudin immediately, and you know all these places have other customers there at the same time. So we try not to be too much in their way, but we are because this is such a large group. But yeah, actually, we have—we do bring our own cutting boards.

01:19:21

JG: Jeff, being a boudin aficionado, do you eat the casing or no?

01:19:29

SR: Good question.

01:19:30

JL: That is a good question. I don't.

01:19:32

JG: I don't either. I take it out of the casing. Now if the casing was cooked, you know like barbequed or something like you do a sausage—

01:19:41

JL: Right.

01:19:42

JG: —but I don't like—I mean it's like just eating the rubber, so I don't—.

01:19:48

JL: Right. No, I don't.

01:19:49

JG: And I don't think most—I don't know many people that do. I guess some do.

01:19:53

JL: Well I think since it's become that synthetic—.

01:19:56

JG: Yeah, well some of them don't use synthetic. Most of them don't, like Don doesn't use synthetic.

01:20:02

JL: Oh really?

01:20:03

JG: Yeah, I mean I don't think so. Most of them use natural casings. And I'm not positive but I think it would be natural casings. Synthetics, you can't hardly break them even in a sausage you know. It just doesn't want to—

01:20:22

JL: No, but no.

01:20:25

JG: Now you know I'll take them and pull out something, like as much as I can do with my teeth, and then I'll take my knife out and cut it out. But I was just wondering how y'all did it, if ya'll—?

01:20:32

JL: Well, you know most of the time the boudin is kind of cut in half, so it's only natural for you to—.

01:20:38

JG: Yeah, you can just kind of—right.

01:20:40

JL: Right, but then you know sometimes I think about it, if it's a little short piece you know that's basically in the middle—yeah, you'll eat it. I mean it's not something I dislike; I think you just kind of naturally do that and discard the casing.

01:20:55

JG: Yeah, I would think that they do too. I mean—

01:20:59

SR: This is sort of a silly question, but have you ever noticed anybody on the Boudin for Peace bus who doesn't like boudin? Is that even heard of?

01:21:08

JL: No, no. They wouldn't—there's too much—.

01:21:13

SR: Well it sounds fun.

01:21:15

JL: There's too much boudin to—no. You know part of it—not part of it; the whole idea is to eat boudin and to have fun; but no. Everyone on the bus has an extreme passion for boudin.

01:21:29

SR: Are you allowed to call yourself Cajun and not like boudin?

01:21:33

JG: I would think so, yeah.

01:21:35

JL: Sure. Yeah, I mean—

01:21:38

JG: I would think—I mean if you've a vegan, you can be a Cajun vegan you know, and—but I think it's a matter of taste. It's just like for me telling somebody, *Well that boudin is terrible because it has liver*. It—it could be world-class boudin, but I prefer—you know I don't like liver, whether it's liver and onions or beef liver or pork liver or chicken liver, really. I mean chicken liver I can handle more so because it's milder, but—. And I think it's just what you like. I mean I have a sister that loves liver, so—. And it's just, I think in—in general a place that sells boudin will be more successful with less liver than more liver because I think if you don't like it you're not going to eat it. If you love it you can still like boudin with(out liver).

01:22:46

JL: Yeah, I mean some people don't like oysters, and to me that is like a—a—I mean a staple of especially Cajun culture, eating raw oysters. But some people don't like it. I mean that's just personal—.

01:23:02

JG: You think a well-done steak, you know if somebody wants a well-done steak I'd cook it for them when I was cooking. I mean that's—because that's what they like. I mean and it's—well somebody can tell you well you…it's a taste. It's like Robb Walsh and Alison Cook (both Houston food writers) arguing over what's the best shrimp. She says that iodine is terrible shrimp. You know, it's like a red wine or white wine. I mean what's the best? Who knows?

01:23:39

JL: But you know, I think like as food lovers and I'm sure both of you do it—Jim I know you do; you know you kind of wonder, if someone doesn't like oysters for instance, you kind of want to push them to try it because you enjoy it so much. And you know if they just kind of get over that fear of the consistency of it that eventually they will like it too. And I mean, not to a point to where they—if they really don't want to try it—.

01:24:04

JG: Hold them down on the floor.

01:24:06

JL: No, yeah, you don't want to—. But you know—you know some people, I think, especially food-wise regardless of where they're from, just don't have as much experience eating. I've luckily got to grow—grown up in this family and always have great meals and be exposed to all kinds of really good food, so you know to me it was second nature. And to a lot of my friends, whether they were from New Orleans or Baton Rouge or even here in Lafayette, I definitely try to—if they don't like oysters or anything like that I try to get them to at least try it.

01:24:41

JG: Well like a fried oyster sandwich—to me there's no better sandwich in the world, but that's to me. Or maybe a soft-shell can be close, on white bread with over-ripe tomatoes. But I mean a good—a good oyster sandwich, and you stack up the oysters as high as you can before you put the lid on it, that's pretty good. And you know to me, if somebody tries that and they don't like

it, well like I tell my nephews and stuff, *Eat that. If you don't like it you'll never like anything that—you'll never—because this is the best you'll ever eat*. Remember I told you about satusumas? I had some Florida satusumas and I had some Louisiana satusumas, and I—I don't know what I gave you—you were little. And I gave him I think a Florida satusuma first, and it—it just wasn't as sweet because they probably picked them way ahead and all, and he ate it and yeah, it's pretty good you know. And then I gave him the Louisiana satusumas, and I said, *Try that one,* and I mean it was like night and day. I don't know if you remember that.

01:25:45

JL: I really don't; I do remember the oyster thing with Captain Hayman.

01:25:51

JG: Yeah, we—we had oysters with Captain Hayman (Pitre). I said, *You eat that; that's the best oyster you'll ever eat.*

01:25:57

JL: I was young.

01:25:57

JG: Yeah.

01:26:01

SR: Did he like it?

01:26:00

JG: Oh yeah. He used to eat when he was little raw oysters. I mean how old was he, Diane, when he—?

01:26:05

Diane (Jeff's mom; Jim's husband)**:** Four.

01:26:07

JG: Four, eating a dozen raw oysters and—.

01:26:10

JL: Yeah, and I remember that—that guy Captain Hayman, we'd stop at his house. We were on the way to actually Grand Isle and that was, I guess, one of your oyster fishermen that you had bought from and I had never had them before. I just remember he had them—he had them shucked already in like a gallon jug I think, and I guess he figured I'd eat like one or two, and I think I probably ate a couple dozen. Yeah, I was probably about four years old and he was flipping out. **[*Laughs*]** And I didn't think anything of it; I didn't think it was abnormal.

01:26:43

JG: In fact Captain Hayman taught me—back then I figured oysters were oysters, you know—Louisiana oysters are oysters—and he was just—. Like somebody that let's say is a backhoe operator even. If they want to be the best backhoe operator in the world, it's an air about them

you know, and he was that type of oysterman. He was going to be the best oysterman in the world or—whatever, Louisiana, his little area— he was going to be the best and he had the best. I have a picture I keep in my office of him showing me an oyster, shucking it, and he had—he had a reef. In fact the reef is still there: Hayman's Reef. He died of Alzheimer's, and Jules has his lease now. But he would plant oysters there and they would grow around— it right behind Grand Isle—so you had the current from Barataria Pass coming in and going out of Caminada Pass around the other side of the island. They had a lot of—lot of current; the eye on—the mussel on the oyster, that oyster could be this round and it would go around and the shells would be scalloped because of the current. So the shells—and there would be a round oyster, and the mussel would be that big on a little bitty oyster. I mean you know not an incredible oyster, but he always kept those for himself or his friends and family. But he taught me a lot about oysters. You know you figure an oyster is an oyster, but they're not.

01:28:15

In fact years ago—this has got to be over 25 years ago—Andre Soltner, he owned Lutece in New York which was one of the most famous restaurants at the time—this is going back—and he and his wife had really been nice to me and—and treated us really nice. And I sent him, when I got back—it must have been around November, and I sent him a gallon—a half a gallon of these oysters shucked. And he called—he was a Frenchman who had eaten oysters everywhere in the world and had never eaten anything like that. And these were, I mean it was like—these were really good.

01:28:54

SR: They were the best?

01:28:56

JG: Oh they were the best. Yeah, I mean it was some of Hayman's oysters that he fished that he kept for around Thanksgiving and Christmas you know, but—. So he called me wanting more, and I said they're really not for sale; we don't have those to sell them, you know. They're more of a—so I sent him a couple more over the, you know over the years and all, but—. You know I've eaten some real fine oysters traveling around, and in fact John Rowley had me go eat some Virginica oysters that are grown in Totten Inlet, which were incredible. In fact two weeks ago we went to the Southern (Foodways Alliance) thing in Chicago; we went to Shaw's (Crab House) and I called John and said yeah, Shaw's has them. So, and they were really incredible; they were Virginica oysters. They're a Gulf or East Coast oyster, but they're growing them in—. So I mean it just depends where that oyster grows, but Grand Isle is a great area because they don't have any pollution going into there because it's nothing really behind it—no cities. It all goes to Black Bay and Lake Borgne if the city has runoff, or—or Lake Pontchartrain. You know it has to go through Lake Borgne. And Grand Isle, I mean it's really nothing that goes back up…maybe Lafitte.

01:30:14

SR: I need to get there; I've never been to Grand Isle.

01:30:16

JG: It's a nice little fishing village. We were there a couple weekends ago—.

01:30:21

JL: I love Grand Isle—very unique.

01:30:24

JG: —and yeah, very unique. I mean no commercialization, no—not one red light, not a Holiday Inn, not a McDonald's. Unfortunately they don't have great food either, but the camps they all have—I mean that's where you—.

01:30:47

SR: Got to eat with the locals?

01:30:48

JG: Yeah, I mean they have—you know you would think a little island like that right on the seafood, but I mean it's a shame that it doesn't have better restaurants for being there.

01:31:00

SR: Well maybe everybody is cooking.

01:31:02

JG: Well and that's true; probably most people eat at their—their camps and—but maybe as time goes on and more people start going there and opening restaurants, because that labor is hard to get.

01:31:26

SR: I have one more boudin question and then we'll wrap this up.

01:31:28

JL: Okay.

01:31:30

SR: The girth—so is bigger better, or what?

01:31:35

JL: I don't know. It—**[*Laughs*]** yeah, it just can't be too small you know. You have to have a nice sized piece of boudin. And, but if it's too big it'll—it'll, when you cut it up it doesn't like get cold. So it just has to be the right size. I don't know what size that is.

01:32:02

SR: Yeah, okay.

01:32:03

JL: The only thing I can tell you is that you just kind of know it when you see it, and but that is definitely part of the critiquing.

01:32:14

SR: Thank you for giving me so much time.

01:32:15

JL: Oh I had—I had a blast. Thank you.

01:32:20

SR: Thanks, Jim. Thanks, ladies.

01:32:22

[End Boudin for Peace]