

Jerry Jimenez interviewed by Fabiola Cohate, Maria Morales, Mia Acevado, Anna Smith, Garrett Delgado, Yuliza Genis
Queens, NYC
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Fabiola Cohate: The oral history has been conducted by Jerry Jimenez at Guttman Community College of the University of the City of New York by signing the form below you the interview would have granted. Si Puedes darles un chance para firma para la entrevista.

Jerry Jimenez: Okay

FC: La primera pregunta es Que es tu edad? (What is your age?)

JJ: Mi edad es 39 anos.

FC: De Donde Eres?

JJ: Mexico.

FC: La tercera pregunta es dilos un poco de tu historia como tu familia termino en Nueva York?

JJ : O "Uhm" Cuando tenia la edad de 14 anos tenemos que migrar a estados unidos por la situation que vivimos unos en el piaz. Muy pobrer por aya. En 1997 fue cunado migre.

FC: Okay.

AS: Fabby "Uhm" Sorry to stop you "Uhm" remembered to tell him he doesn't need to answer any question he doesn't want to answer okay.

FC: Okay dice que si una pregunta no esta "uhm".

JJ: Si lo entiendi que ella dijo si halgo que no quiera contestar que la diga yo que no quiero contestar.

FC: Si.

JJ: Si, esta bien.

FC: La cuarta pregunta es cuando comienzo ser dueño del restaurante. JJ: "Uhm" 2015.

FC: La segunda pregunta es sepas un poco de tu historia de tu restaurante. JJ: Ah si.

FC: Me puedes explicar un pocito mas sobre eso.

JJ: Yo tenia un amigo que era el tenia su restaurante y entonce el abeiero otro Y me invito a mi que hacemos socialals a y en el 2015.Por eso fue cunado me comperti en social porque el mi invito en el 201.

FC: Okay he said that he said his friend invited him to join the shop and from that moment on they became partners and he joined the restaurant in 2015.

FC: La proxima pregunta es que fue el significativo por hacer el restaurante y el motivo. JJ: Para salir adelante y tener un futuro major.

FC: He said "Uhm" the question I ask was how has business become a significant source of pride for you and your family. He said for the future to have a better future for his family.

JJ : Fabby si quieres dime las preguntas en ingles y si yo no la entiendo ya te digo. FC: Okay how long has the shop been opened?

JJ: Six Years.

FC: What are some popular items you sell?

JJ: Nachos, mixtec nachos (giggles) uh" what else burritos, quesadilla, those are the most popular.

Anna Smith: Are there any items you sell that are like a family receipt or anything like that?

JJ: 'Uhm' posole.

Maria Morales: Oh that's a good one.

JJ : And tamales, Mexican tamales

Yuliza Genis: Those are good like Mexican food is like a must-have I would highly recommend you guys like having it.

JJ: Ah yeah they have a new business from different countries. they changed, they changed a lot. Since we opened.

FC: Do you consider the restaurant to be in a safe neighborhood?

FC: Sientes que tu restaurante está en un vecindario seguro?

JJ: You can see it is a prison across, like two, three blocks. So the police are around.

FC: Cómo se ve el restaurante desde fuera y desde dentro?

JJ: Se ve bien, hicimos cambios. te enviaré fotos mañana.

JJ: Nosotros hicimos muchos cambios.

FC: Como se ve por dentro? como ¿qué hay ahí?

JJ: Tiene cuatro mesas, para que la gente se siente y coma. televisores para que vean y fotos de la comida que tenemos.

FC: Okay, he said his restaurant has four tables & TVs where you can see all the food he has.

AS: Hmm, I'm sorry, but do you guys think the zoom meeting is gonna end because I just got a message that we're running on?

Mia Acevedo: No. There's no time limit. It means we can keep on going without worrying about the time limit.

AS: Okay, good. All right.

FC: Anyone else want to ask my uncle questions? Regarding the restaurant?

AS: Which question are we up to now? I know you said the last one was inside of it, okay.

MA: Community? Um, I think we're on what does the store look like? what does the front of the store look like? Are there like trees or there?

JJ: It's a corner store and across the street It's a discount store. And the other side is a grocery store. They sale fruits and all the stuff. And there's a marshalls behind the store and P.C Richards.

AS: Okay, so it's like in a, like a nice popular area.

JJ: Yes.

MA: Are there any changes you would like to make to the community or like the area that would make him more welcoming to customers?

JJ: It's nice and okay. It's a lot of friendly people. Everybody's nice. It's not buildings around it's only houses small houses.

AS: Okay, so it's like suburban.

JJ: Yes.

MA: I know you said that across the street is like that discount store do you communicate or talk to any of the stores around like the neighboring stores?

JJ: Yes, with the owners.

MA: Can I ask what you guys like? Discuss Do you guys like discuss like like like your businesses do you guys like help each other out?

JJ: Yes we have all the time well we changed and sometimes we don't have something so we asked. If they can help us out. sometimes they come to me and they they asked me for something

so we were a good relationship with them.

AS: That's good, good teamwork.

MA: Hmm What hours at the restaurant open?

JJ: From 11am to 10pm, seven days.

MA: Does the clientele change between those times that people walk into the store? Are they different depending on what time it is?

JJ: It's always, it's always different peoples and it's always people around there.

MA: Does like their ages change like during like the morning hours more like adults and then like after school? when school gets out around like two or three there's like teenagers or anything like that are in there or is a constant or is it usually like the same customers of the same age?

JJ: Same customer. sometimes teenagers come around after school. Well not too much.

MA: Okay, um.

MA: Have you been welcomed by the community? Like are they welcoming or anything like that?

JJ: Yes.

MA: Um, do you have anything memorable ever since you started your restaurant

JJ: Ahhhh well? It's too many things. It's a lot of things like the good memories I'm there.

MA: Do you mind telling us your favorite?

GD: telling us your favorite?

JJ: Ah No. When?

AS: He could also answer in Spanish and English.

JJ: We saw a brand perturbation there you know. Oh, yes. Birthday. Boys. Where do they say no? What was it? Yeah. Okay. Um,

FC: During the protests that happened this year, did any of them come by where you work or where they play much?

JJ: No. This far away from them will not happen around them. Because of that residential area.

FC: So what time is the shop most at its busiest?

JJ: In the evening, like after 6pm and lunchtime. Lunchtime at 4:12 or 12pm to 2pm. And then again Monday, like after six after seven? Whenever you wake up from work.

FC: Okay, like for dinner?

JJ: Yes.

FC: Okay. Have you developed a new bond with the people who enter the job?

JJ: Yes. We have a lot of regular customers, like it become every day, almost every day. Okay, that's good.

FC: These bonds helped your restaurant during the pandemic in any way?

JJ: Say that again?

FC: During the pandemic COVID has the bonds with these customers help your restaurant?

JJ: Yes. But once they come back, we've lost like a week left for one moment. And then after we open with they come back.

AS: That's good. So they're very loyal.

JJ: Yes, that's good.

FC: Has

GD: Has gentrification affected your business in any way? JJ: Im sorry. My English No, not that good.

AS: It's okay. It's okay. in a positive way. That's good. That's good. countries.

FC: So since COVID-19, have you had any anxiety or fears? about working?

JJ: We're always following the rules from the city.

GD: Okay, um, has has COVID affected the workforce at the restaurant? Meaning Have you had to lessen your employees or anything? Or some of them quit or anything like that?

JJ: No, we want to close for one month. That's it. Yeah. Now, go is now as maximum.

AS: Okay, so they were all able to come back after the month of closing.

JJ: Yes.

FC: That's cool. Um, so you don't have to enter any of these questions if you don't want to. Do you have like, any anxiety with your customers when they came back at first, or were they just right back to work as soon as the store opened?

JJ: Back to normal? Just we just clean the store all the time. to sanitize.

GD: I know you said you keep to the CDC guidelines. Are there any other measures besides the CDC guidelines that you take to battle against COVID? Or do you just stick to the CDC guidelines?

JJ: Just with the store keep it clean all the times and for us to wash your hands on the times.

MC: Okay, that's good. Cuz I know as as a restaurant owner in general, like the restaurant field. You guys have to be extra clean anyway, so I know it wasn't too much out of your way. Cuz you know, that's, that's regular for you guys.

JJ: Yes. Oh, it all came from bad customers. Because I'm like, thinking, Okay, good.

FC: As the government stepped in to offer support during COVID when you had to shop shut down for that month or anything like that, or had? No, so you had to keep the shop open. You had to keep paying the rent on the shop. Okay. Can you tell us like what that experience was like Was it hard to keep the shop closed For a month but still maintain the rent or anything like that

JJ: Positive way... In a positive way. I'm sorry my english is not that good. MC: It's okay, it's okay, in a positive way. That's good, that's good.

JJ: Yeah.

:Um, so since COVID-19, have you had any anxiety or fears about working? JJ: No.

JJ: No, we're always following the rules from the city.

: Okay, um.

: Has COVID affected the work force at the restaurant? Meaning, have you had to lessen your employees, or anything, or has some of them quit, or anything like that?

JJ: No.

JJ: Yeah, we're only closed for one month and that's it. JJ: Yeah.

JJ: And we've also all of them have been vaccinated.

: Okay so they are all able to come back after the month of closing? JJ:Yes

:That's good

: So, you don't have to answer any of these questions if you don't want to... Do you have like any anxiety with your customers when they came back at first or were they just right back to work as soon as the store reopens?

JJ: Yeah, yeah, everything went back to normal.

JJ: Just, uh, clean the store all the times, use sanitizer all this time.

: I know you said you kept to the CBC guidelines, are there any other measures besides the CBC guidelines that you take to battle against COVID? Or do you just stick to the CBC guidelines?

JJ: Just what the city rules said. Keep it clean all the time, and have the employers wash their hands all the time... yeah.

M: Okay that's good cause I know as a restaurant owner in general like, the restaurant field, you guys have to be extra clean anyway. So I know it wasn't too much out of your way, cause you know that's regular for you guys.

JJ: Yes.

: Did all-

JJ: We'd bring back customers cause some of them like them clean.

: Okay good.

: Has the government step in to offer support during COVID, when you had to shut down for that month or anything like that? Or had you-

JJ: No.

: No? So you have to keep the shop open? Uh you have to keep paying the rent of the shop-

JJ: Yes.

: Okay, can you tell us like what that experience was like, was it hard to keep the store for a month but still maintain the rent or anything like that?

JJ: Yeah, works a little hard but its only for one month you know so. I guess when open back, its takes time to get back for another month.

: Okay yeah that's understandable.

JJ: Thats why we have that you know that savings account, just in case of an emergency, you know we use it.

: Oh okay tahts good. (25:37)

: Um did the relationship between your workers and you changed during the pandemic or have they remained the same?

JJ: No, we got closer.

JJ: We got good communication with them.

: Oh okay that's good. (26:10)

:Have the protest impacted your um store in anyway?

JJ: No.

: Um if you don't mind us asking, How did you overcome the obstacles or the problems that came your way the last two years? Like having to shut down for a month and follow these new guidelines, um, not being able to have as many customers in your restaurant as usual?

JJ: Uh can I answer it in Spanish?

: Yeah you can.

FC: Yes.

[Translating the question in spanish] JJ: Oh, okay okay.

JJ: Uhm, tiene uno que salir a de lante, so, I mean poco a poco hemos este... Hemos a sobre salido de las obstaculos y de esto pues nanda. Seguir a delante.

JJ: Yeah.

A: Um, FC do you mind translating his answer just for the interview purpose?

F: Sure. He said, just keep moving forward. Going- taking day by day, to overcoming the obstacles he had to face.

JJ: No buying too much stuff. Hmmm. No comparando muchas cosas, ir dia a dia. Justo antes que se vayan terminando las cosas, llevo uno comparando para no. Para salir delante.

F: He said not buying to much stuff. Saving more.

M: Yeah that makes sense. Like not overdoing it. Cause like you never know what's going to happen. So that's cool.

A: Uh, so we've come to the end of our questions. Are there- is there anything that we should've ask that you would like us to talk about or anything like that? Um, something that you wanted us to ask but we didn't.

JJ: Um, no.

JJ: Yeah um, you guys have a lot of questions so.

A: Um, okay, I think that's it, we just have one more question; Are you still comfortable with us donating this to the Oral History, um, to a public collection?

JJ: Mhm. Yes.

AS: Okay, thank you so much.

MA: Thank you.

JJ: Your Welcome. [End of the Interview]