

Brandon Rodriguez interviewing Jin
03/13/2020
Bennett Park, New York.

Interview Transcript

Brandon Rodriguez: My name is Brandon Rodriguez and I am interviewing Jin at Bennett Park on 183st. Do you give me permission to record this?

Jin: Yes.

BR: Where did you grow up?

Jin: I grew up in France in Paris.

BR: Why did you leave France?

Jin: School over there wasn't good for me, my grades. I didn't get along with my mom. My dad lived here so I had the option so I just came here.

BR: What do you miss about our country?

Jin: The food. My friends.

BR: You guys had good food?

Jin: Yes.

BR: It's different from NY food?

Jin: It's healthier.

BR: So in France you would eat healthier compared to here?

Jin: Yea.

BR: What did your family and friends think when you told them you were leaving France?

Jin: So the thing is I didn't really know, they kinda set me up. They told me I was going for the summer to learn English.

BR: Then next thing you know you're here forever?

Jin: Yea I was like "when am I going back" and my dad was like "your not going back your going to school here."

BR: Coming to NY what were your expectations what did you think was going to happen?

Jin: I thought it was going to be like the movies like High School Musical, Glee, you know Glee.

BR: Yea those tv shows.

Jin: Yea

BR: Based on American life.

Jin: Yea so everything we knew about America was from tv and Trump.

BR: When you came to America, did you come alone or with people?

Jin: Yea, I came alone but my dad had already been here.

BR: Tell me how you came to NY?

Jin: I took a plane.

BR: I mean yea you took a plane, but what was your journey? What did you do? Did one day you woke up and "yea I'm going to NY."

Jin: So no, I was supposed to come for summer camp. I was supposed to come for the summer only, I just never went back; they didn't tell me.

BR: Did NYC meet or fail your expectations, or was it everything what you had expected it to be?

Jin: I was disappointed by the food, like the food was something that really disappointed me. I love food here, but I feel like it's not all that good. Something I like about here is that it's super diverse.

BR: Yea here you see all types of people and races everywhere you go.

Jin: Yea you cannot be on the subway and not hear another language.

BR: Speaking of languages, how did you learn English?

Jin: I had gone to International High School and I just had to catch up and I just did somehow also Netflix helped me like the subtitles I could see English and hear.

BR: You would practice?

Jin: I used to watch and write down all the words I did not know.

BR: Did you struggle coming to NYC or did you come here and just started your life?

Jin: It was hard like at first I didn't know English so it was hard to have and make friends.

BR: What struggles did you face or what got in your way besides making friends?

Jin: The papers.

BR: So the paperwork?

Jin: No, well actually yes.

BR: So immigration?

Jin: Yea because everything had taken some time, all of that takes time.

BR: Was you ever afraid of what could happen like being sent back since you were not here.

Jin: Yea because at first when I came here I was an immigrant, so if I got in trouble I would get deported.

BR: Where in NYC did you live?

Jin: Manhattan.

BR: Have you always lived in Manhattan?.

Jin: Yea.

BR: What was the hardest part coming here.

Jin: Leaving everything like my family, friends and my dog.

BR: You have a dog? What type?

Jin: I have a big dog. I don't know what the name is in English, but I will show you a picture you can put it in your thing.



BR: Is it a dog that you would only see in France?

Jin: No, if you want a dog to travel you got to do all the shots and things, but yea, no I couldn't do it I'm trying to get my chinchilla I had one in France, but I'm trying to bring it back here.

BR: I know someone who has one in NYC.

Jin: Really?

BR: Yea, I had no idea where they were from just to know about them.

Jin: They are from Peru.

BR: What is your favorite part of NYC?

Jin: My favorite part or something I like about the city?

BR: Both like favorite parts and somethings.

Jin: So I feel like NYC is so crowded, I don't really have a favorite place just now I hate Times Square.

BR: It doesn't have to be your favorite place coming to NYC. What is something you couldn't do in France that you can do here?

Jin: K-Town. So I'm Korean but I'm from France and was raised by a French family I don't know anything about Korea or my culture, but I look Korean people ask me where I'm from I cannot say I'm from France. They would ask why do you look Korean, so being able to interact with other Korean people and learn the culture was interesting. I couldn't do that in France.

BR: Do you think your neighborhood had any effect on you or has it made you change?

Jin: Yea so the people in this park. The people over there sitting down I used to be with them all the time. I used to chill here a lot. I used to be with them a lot, but as you see we don't talk anymore so I learned you cannot trust anyone, it's all about money in this city.

BR: What is something that you would bring to France from NYC?

Jin: The diversity and how open people are.

BR: I know France and NYC are very different. What do you think about the politics here compared to over there?

Jin: So I left France when I was 16 and I'm 20 now and I still don't know about politics so I can't answer.

BR: Do you feel being who you are from France you have to hide yourself from everyone else?

Jin: Uhh no I feel people are really attracted to French people like when you say you from France they would be like "ohh so fancy".

BR: Do you ever regret leaving France?

Jin: Yea, like it's not that I regret leaving France, I miss my friends.

BR: If you could change anything about NYC what would you change?

Jin: I don't know.

BR: If you had the chance to choose France or NYC would you stay here or go back.

Jin: I would stay in NYC... I actually don't know. I was supposed to be here for a year only and it's been almost four years. I kinda have stay here. I'm under the green card so if I leave the territory for more than six months during a year I lose my green card and I cannot come back here I cannot come back.

BR: Coming to NYC, what new opportunities or things that you were able to do and experience that you couldn't do in France?

Jin: So you guys have more activities to do. The city is bigger. For example, when I came here I did flying trapeze for like a few months and yea I don't have that in France.

BR: How is the culture different from NYC and France?

Jin: I feel like we are more sophisticated.

BR: Sophisticated how?

Jin: We care more how you look and all that stuff. Here you care, but it doesn't matter. In France there are certain stuff that you cannot do.

BR: Like what?

Jin: Like dress cuts and people are just going to judge you for things easily. I don't know if it's a French thing or just Paris.

BR: What do you think New York can take from France?

Jin: Definitely the food.

BR: You keep talking about the food, is it better out there?

Jin: Yea, the food is just so much better out there.

BR: Give me an idea of something that you eat over there that you don't over here.

Jin: Like it's not that you don't eat it here, it's just the way you cook it it's a lot different like the products we use is from France, which is a lot better.

BR: I wouldn't know, I never had food from France food in my life.

Jin: Really?

BR: Yea I've always been in NYC, only traveled to Florida so hearing your perspective of France is a lot different to me.

Jin: Yea it is because the culture is different in a sense we are not racist, but for example if you don't speak French and you ask someone for your way in France in English they might look at you weird or might not answer you.