

Oral History Collection

Sandy Davis

Interviewers: Brent Bardin, Gabriela Whitmore

Date: April 14th, 2024

Location of Interview: Abilene, Texas

Sandy Davis: Is that better?

Brent Bardin: We can hear you. Hi, Sandy. How are you?

Sandy Davis: Can you see me?

Brent Bardin: We can't see you yet. Perfect.

Sandy Davis: All right, how about that? OK. Yeah, good. How
are y'all? Good.

Brent Bardin: Awesome. I like your glasses!

Sandy Davis: Oh, thank you. Eyekeepers.com. And you get 4
pairs for 25 bucks, no shipping. Yeah, it's good.
It's a good deal.

Brent Bardin: Oh my God.

Sandy Davis: That's a good deal.

Brent Bardin: Oh my gosh. Well, thank you so much for letting
us interview my friend Gabriela.

Sandy Davis: You're so welcome.

Brent Bardin: Yeah, we're so excited. We get to interview --

Sandy Davis: Much sunshine back here.

Brent Bardin: Oh yeah, no, it looks great. We can see you.
Great.

Sandy Davis: Okay, because I can move around the table.

Brent Bardin: Oh, no, you look great.

Sandy Davis: I mean, I'm in the dining room.

Brent Bardin: Perfect. Are you in Abilene?

Davis: Yeah, Yeah, yeah.

Bardin: Ohh, awesome. Are you seeing your mom?

Davis: She passed.

Bardin: Oh, she did? I'm sorry.

Davis: Yeah, she passed in March, March of '22. So, she's been gone. She's been gone two years.

Bardin: OK. Well, it's good to see you. Are you visiting my grandpa while you're there?

Davis: I haven't made a plan to do that. I'm here 3 weeks, so.

Bardin: Oh, that's awesome. He would love it.

Davis: I'm here because I'm more than likely going to sell this place, so.

Bardin: Yeah?

Davis: I don't know. I'm not, you know, of course, everybody's saying. Well, what? But this is a place that you could eventually go. And I was like, OK, you go to Abilene and live. I've done that. Not gonna do that again.

Bardin: Yeah, that's how I feel. I'm like, I don't need to go.

Davis: You are welcome to live in Abilene. All you want to. I don't want to.

Bardin: I get that it's hard. It's hard to go from New York City to Abilene.

Davis: Ohh yeah and the last because of my mother's health since 2011, I've done it many, many, many.

Bardin: So, you're probably retired.

Davis: And it's like flight. It's like flying from Venus to Mars.

Bardin: So, we have we have a couple of questions.

Davis: Let's see. OK, let me -- how do I get? Ohh. [unclear]

Bardin: Go. Perfect. So, we have some just about we're glad that you said yes because we had to interview someone that was like, interesting from the culinary world. And I have the perfect person. OK, good.

Bardin: But do you wanna do --? You wanna just alternate?

Gabriela Whitmore: Yeah.

Bardin: I can ask the 1st. One. OK. So, we're just curious like what drew you to like cooking in the culinary world originally?

Davis: Well, I always cooked growing up, and I spent a major portion of my time whenever we had family together. I was with my grandmother in the kitchen. All the rest of the cousins were outside throwing a ball and that bullshit. And you know, trying to hit it with a stick or something, ugly. So, I thought, no, I'm not going to do that. And what grandmother

was doing was way more interesting to me. So, I learned early on about, you know, she was one of those instinctive, instinctive cooks. She never measured anything. She never had to have a recipe. You just had to tell her what you wanted, and she'd do it. She knew exactly what to do.

Bardin: OK.

Davis: And on top of that, she had, in the depression -- the worst year of the depression, my mother was born, and she had already had four kids.

Bardin: Wow.

Davis: And she fed field hands every single day three times a day. And now you talk about a productive cook? You know that was something. And so, she was my example. I learned so much from her. But how about how did I get there professionally? I refer to myself as an accidental chef, primarily because I have a degree in English literature from Abilene Christian University. And if you're not going to go to law school, you better learn to do something fast, yes. And that's what I did. I went right into food. And I mean, I bopped around for a couple of years, but I ended up in food, and I ended up getting hired as a chef. And I never -- I was a

chef, and I had -- and you talk about by the seat of your pants.

Bardin: Wow.

Davis: It was, it was. But I was working for some really good people in Austin. Very fortunate the woman that hired me was the food critic. For Texas monthly.

Whitmore: Wow.

Davis: And so. But the -- we always approached it with just don't be insecure about not knowing. You don't know something -- I don't know how to do that. Mhm. And not be insecure about it. So that's kind of where that happened. And then it just grew. And then the next thing you know, I'm working with a guy from that was born and raised. In Lyon, France. And believe me, I watched every single move he made. Yeah. So, there you go.

Bardin: That's awesome. So, you start --

Davis: What?

Bardin: So you started cooking originally like in Texas, in Austin, was that your first?

Davis: In Austin.

Bardin: So.

Davis: Well, I catered friends weddings in college. You know, I did that in college, but when I got to Austin. I

got hired but. Chopped up story I worked for the Sergeant of Arms office at the Texas House representatives in 1979. And I met a woman there named Helen Baxter, who was the food Critic for Texas monthly. And she did all the entertainer entertaining for Speaker Clayton at that time. And so, we did all the entertaining behind the scenes in the House of Representatives.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: And so with big displays and this and that and I just sort of picked it up, I never asked anybody, oh, how? Do I do this? I just sort of did it. [Unclear]

Bardin: That's awesome. Just like your grandma.

Davis: What?

Davis: Kind of, yeah. Kind of the same way, you know, she just. Yeah, she --

Bardin: That's awesome.

Davis: She lived by the adage that, and I'll quote her "Son, you can do anything you put your mind to," and that's why she lived her life and that that left an impression on me. So, I guess that's how I live mine so.

Bardin: That is awesome. I love that that's a good way to be.

Davis: So, but yeah, I'm an accidental chef. It just sort of all the conditions came together and there you go. And then by the time that I, in 1987 -- I bought a one way ticket to New York with -- and I was on the plane with my last unemployment check.

Bardin: Mhm.

Davis: Yeah. And I bought a one-way ticket. And it's 30-some-odd years later, and here I'm still in. New York, so.

Bardin: That's more awesome.

Davis: Yeah, and that, that was the only thing I knew how to do. So, I went to work at an executive dining room on Wall Street. Prudential.

Bardin: Auburn, New York.

Davis: Yes, prudential based securities. On Water, that way down in the Financial. So yeah, and. From that I met people until I got my first apartment. I'm still in the same building. Yeah, just, you know, things just happen, so. So, yeah.

Bardin: That's so awesome. That's so cool.

Davis: So next.

Bardin: Perfect. We have quite a few, one of them, our professor. It might seem a little out of order because our professor just wants to --

Davis: That's all right.

Whitmore: So how do you see the future of food in North Texas
or in just Texas or New York, even in general?

Davis: The future of food? Well, that's a tough one, you know.
Four years ago, before the pandemic and before all
this rampant inflation.

Bardin: Mhm.

Davis: I would have said the future of food is going to be
farm to table. Really organic, groovy, groovy.
Hippy. Dippy, but. Now I think people just want
food they can afford.

Bardin: Yes, definitely.

Davis: And that's the future of food finding food you can
afford. Yeah, I mean, it's just you know. People
can stand there and say, oh, well, these are the
best source ingredients and this is all non-GMO
and this has not been sprayed with any kind of
stuff or not any harm, and none of that.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: Well, that's great. Tell me, who can afford it?

Bardin: Yeah, exactly, you know.

Davis: And so, the future of food that's. Two level questions.
If You've got a lot of money. Then the future of
food is going to be all this organic, hippie-dippie

-- the chicken that was massaged. And sent to a psychiatrist and all this crap. If you can't afford that, the whole goal is going to be, find food that you and your family can afford to eat.

Bardin: Yes, for sure. Yeah, it's hard right now we're in college. We just started buying groceries. And like it's it gets crazy right now.

Davis: Now.

Whitmore: Like --

Davis: Ohh, it's awful. It's just awful and I've been in New York. Luckily, I live near a little store called Western.

Bardin: Yeah, I understand, couponing and all that.

Davis: On West 16th St. between 9th and 10th Ave. and it is kind of the local ghetto place, for lack of a better term -- please don't quote me on that, for lack of a better term -- and I end up getting better deals there.

Bardin: Yes, for sure.

Davis: Than I do anywhere else, I mean. Stores along the major avenues like Steve's or. What is the one that's called it? That's. West side West side market, that kind of thing, it's.

Bardin: Mm-hmm.

Davis: All really bougie.

Bardin: Mhm.

Davis: And you know, and you just walk and I walk in and I look at those prices and I laugh and turn around, walk out. I just -- I will not. Primarily, 'cause I know what it costs wholesale.

Bardin: You know --

Davis: Ship cost from the farmer to the seller to think. And I know that somebody is screwing somebody bad.

Bardin: Because you, you know -- Yes, for sure.

Davis: So, I just, I just don't, I mean -- like the first. remember when the first Whole Foods opened in New York and I walked in the door, first thing I saw was 1/2 pint of raspberries, Driscoll. Famous brand and it was \$3 more than anywhere else on the Ave.

Bardin: Wow.

Davis: And I thought. What? And I started laughing and I turned around and walked out. I didn't go look at the rest of the store. I get it, and sure enough, it wasn't a month until people were calling Whole Foods "Whole check."

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: Because you have to spend your whole --

Bardin: Check.

Davis: When you went there so, so the future of food back to that question is going to be what we can afford to feed. I mean, there's, you know, there's all kinds of movements. When I, ten years ago, it was the scientific movement of food, you know, and all the different ways you can manipulate it and put an olive in it smokes out of your mouth and all this crap. And that looked like it was a very promising future.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: Achatz was one in Chicago. Ohh, who else? There was one here in Texas. But they were doing all this, this scientific experimental food. And I thought, OK, that will last until people can afford to eat, and then they're going to be looking for chickens.

Bardin: Mhm.

Davis: You know, so again it goes. I think it goes back.

Bardin: To --

Davis: A question of affordability.

Bardin: For sure.

Davis: So yeah.

Bardin: That that makes a lot of sense we that it's like crazy inflation is crazy right now, yeah.

Davis: It's awful. It's just. However, I do expect that to back down. Because I think the people will leave a lot of stuff on the shelves and it will rot. And once that happens, you can bet that price comes down. That's the way supply and demand works. So anyway. All right, what's -- what you got next?

Bardin: So, I was just curious, like, speaking about, like, inflation in, like, both Texas and New York, like, what's the difference between, like, the prices of New York and versus Texas and then the quality of the food in like Texas and New York, is it kind of the same?

Davis: OK, it is cheaper across the board. Cheaper across the board, one thing that separates -- now I'm speaking specifically of the five boroughs --

Bardin: Mm-hmm.

Davis: Of the city. I'm not speaking of upstate. I'm not, you know, upstate is a whole 'nother land. It's a whole another culture.

Bardin: Mm-hmm.

Davis: The city, however, uh, you know, we paid 3 levels of income tax. We pay city, state and federal.

Bardin: Wow.

Davis: And Texas has one federal. That's it. So, Texas is, I mean, in fact, it always takes me about four or five days when I go to the grocery store to look at the prices and go, OK, who made this? This is a mistake, this can't be right, you know, because I'm in New York, I pay \$13 for a chicken, and here it's \$6 for a chicken. So, you know it's a, it's a whole another. That's the difference. That's the primary difference, in Texas and New York -- Texas is much cheaper now. The quality is a multi-layered question. Because it totally depends on what you're after. Uh, for example, most of the produce departments in Texas and now I'm speaking of things like Central Market of the whole HEB chain, most produce sections are -- they're prettier and fresher than the ones in New York. Because they don't have. Let's see, I'm trying to remember --

Bardin: Everything.

Davis: Because they don't. Are you there?

Whitmore: Yes. Yeah, still there.

Davis: Still there. Because they, uh -- it's in -- the produce in Texas is closer to the source. Yeah, for sure. And then, but then you flip that over and get out

of the produce department and go to the meat department.

Bardin: Mhm.

Davis: And you would think, being in a cattle raising state, you're going to get a great brisket for not a lot of money. Uh, I -- think again, my friend, think again. In fact, the beef prices here in Abilene rival the beef prices in New York.

Bardin: Wow, yeah. So that's not it's not really like.

Davis: There's not. You can't go. It's not. You can't go across the board with whatever you, for example, I say that about produce being prettier. Unless you're in Union Square farmers market in June, July, August, September, and October, you're never going to see more beautiful vegetables and fruits.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: Because they're grown right there. Peaches, corn, tomato, Jersey tomatoes. My God. You know, just it's just over the top. Delicious. It's -- You can't put food is not a monolith, you know it's it, you. You've got to break it up and say, OK what are you buying? So, you know. I mean, there's nothing better than Parker County Peaches, but that happens in June. And by August, they're all bad

because of the heat -- ohh, we don't have that in New York, so. We have much we have a much longer summer. You know, in terms of and also it's still cold up there. So, we're still wearing sweaters and we'll wear sweaters until June the 1st.

Bardin: That's awesome. So it just depends on like the group and --

Davis: So yeah. Today, it's nice they're predicting not.

Bardin: Everything.

Davis: They're today, they're predicting 95 for Abilene, OK. It's April. Thank you.

Bardin: Oh my word Yeah.

Davis: Yeah. So I'm going to have. To close out here very soon and turn on the cooler which I regret. Anyway, OK, what's -- Yeah, you can't. These food questions are tricky in that you can't put food in one box. You've got to divide it up. What am I looking for? What am I buying? Am I vegetarian? Am I vegan? Am I?

Bardin: For sure.

Davis: So that's kind of how that all works.

Bardin: I get that. That's awesome. Thank you so much. Yeah.

Whitmore: Yeah. So how did you grow relationship with the cooking channel? That first.

Bardin: Or like the Food Network.

Davis: Oh, how did you find out about Chopped is that? One
you're asking me? Yes.

Bardin: Yes, we're super interested.

Davis: OK, it was May of 2008.

Bardin: Pardon.

Davis: And I was as busy as a cranberry merchant. I did not
know my name. I was so busy and a friend of mine
from college who was a professor at Vanderbilt sent
me a link and said this is perfect for you and
that's all I saw. And I clicked on it and I realized
it was an application for a food competition show.
And I went ohh Terry I said thank you so much. And
I cause number one. I don't believe cooking is
something like a football game, and the competing
and that's not what it's about, and sadly, that's
what America thinks it is.

Bardin: Yes, for sure.

Davis: And it and they think that. Because of the food chain.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: And bravo and on and on and on. And all these guys
that cuss and make the girls cry and blah, blah
blah. It's not like that in a kitchen in New York
City. It's not like that. And I, you know, it's

been it's sort of being misrepresented. So I deleted it.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: Hmm. Well, towards the end of the summer, I wasn't busy. And I was broke. So I went to Craigslist looking for catering work. Freelance chef work and. I got about, I don't know, five or six days in and there was that post and I clicked it and I went, wait a minute. I've seen this and I thought, OK, two times is I'll do it. So, I'd had a couple of drinks and it was Sunday Night around 10 o'clock and I filled out all the papers and I sent a picture of me in a chefs coat with a glass of champagne and a flower over 1 ear -- And I sent them the picture. I pressed send at midnight at 10:00, my phone blew.

Bardin: Up.

Davis: The next morning, who are you? Where are you? What do you do? We've got to film you, blah, blah, blah, blah. And so, they came to where I was, my kitchen, which was at Union Theological Seminary at the time. Which is part of Columbia, the Columbia system. And they shot me, you know. And of course, what? This was a brand-new show. They had only done

a pilot and on the strength of that pilot, they said, OK, we'll take two years, but we get final judgment on everybody.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: So. Ohh, they have to film everybody, every contestant. What they do, what is called a sizzle reel.

Bardin: Mhm.

Davis: And they do it. And then they edit it down and it goes up the chain. All the way to the director of programming because they want to be sure that they're not hiring a psycho, that the guys not going to drool on camera. You know this happened. So yeah, I mean it's pretty basic when you think about it and so.

Bardin: Uh-huh.

Davis: I got the OK and it was a series of green lights. And the next thing you know, I'm at 6:30 in the morning at Union Square and they picked me up in a van.

Bardin: Wow.

Davis: And we head off to the Wilds of Queens. I have no idea where that studio was. I could not find that to this day. And off we went. And I didn't leave until 3:30 in the morning. The next morning.

Bardin: Why?

Davis: Because it they had just started shooting so they didn't know what they were doing. So they would come out in some set tech would come out and move the tape and say now stand over there, OK. And then come back. Move it again. Now stand over here. And so this went on all day long.

Bardin: Mm.

Davis: And so it just, you know, like for example. I'm kind of think of things like once they start OK on the finished product, once they start the clock it doesn't stop, but that's not how it works when they're shooting it.

Whitmore: Really?

Davis: I got my basket and they started the clock and I opened it and I laughed and they said cut. Sandy, we want you to open your basket and laugh and they got me to do it four more times.

Bardin: Wow.

Davis: So, they could use the best laugh, see what I mean so.

Bardin: Mhm.

Davis: Here's what I -- Would say about all of that and food television and this is this is you can sort of. Encapsulate it this way.

Bardin: OK.

Davis: The people that are making those shows do not give a shit about the food. It is all about living and all about eyeballs watching the screen. It is not about the food is simply the sideshow.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: That's kind of, like the carnival hawker out front that get you to come in to see the fat lady. You know, or whatever it is like that they're Hawking. So it's all about television. It's all about food. It's a mistake. People mistakenly think, oh, but didn't you? What about this? Taking that piece of pork and this and that? No, it's not. That does not matter. And also when they're looking for personalities on the Food Network, it does not matter if you win or not, they don't care. It's how you read on camera.

Bardin: For sure.

Davis: You know that that's what that whole thing is about, so. What was the original? What did you --? I think I got off track here.

Bardin: No, you honestly, we had a lot of questions about Chopped, that's we're really interested.

Davis: Oh, OK, all right.

Bardin: In that, so we just asked, like, how did you, like, grow your relationship with the Food Network? But I think we understand that now, like.

Davis: Well, I'll tell you. Exactly what happened on that. They were after me and they were contacting me and they were telling me that I was the next big thing. And that they were gonna -- They've got a lot of ideas for me and Bobby Boop. Boop got invited to some parties, blah, blah, blah, where all the judges would come up to me and go. You're our favorite contestant. Why are you here? And so, yeah. And I was like, because they asked me. Uh anyway they. I was. I was the next big thing until I wasn't. And then all of a sudden, no more phone calls. No more, nothing was not going to spend valuable time pursuing those people. I was not going to go looking. I'm the talent. And I did very well for you guys. I was the first chopped champion on television. I was the premiere episode. I opened up a successful franchise y'all want me on TV? Come get me. Yeah, I'm right.

Bardin: Yes, that's awesome.

Davis: Here you got phone number, baby. So I just. I dropped the whole thing I just said, you know what? I. No.

No, no, no, no. That's not how. This is going to play out.

Bardin: For sure it's really like a pickle.

Davis: So that was what laugh was. I was the next big thing until I wasn't. And it happened almost that quickly.

Bardin: Yeah. Wow. So.

Davis: And I developed a -- I developed a distaste for people in the television industry across the board. How's that for a generalization?

Bardin: That's so -- that's so interesting though. It's like, it's so cool to hear, like, the behind the scenes. Like, it's not. It's not everything. You think it is like on the screen like it's a lot more work.

Davis: And they're and they the producers phone it all the anxiety and they you know they're talking it up. Backstage. Mm-hmm. Now there's only 3 pounds of butter out there.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: You need butter. You be sure to get over there and don't you let that other person out there have it.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: I'm like, what are you? Who's gonna use a pound of butter? Are you stupid? You know I just. You know,

just that whole. You know, there's a whole. There's a whole level of TV people that deal with that, that are called reality producers. And in 1970, 80, 90 -- they did not exist.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: They exist now in multiple versions and they make a lot of money. So that's one reason they keep doing what? They're doing so because people watch it. Anyway, so there you go. Although I was in all fairness, reality TV has taken sort of a dive.

Bardin: That's it.

Davis: People are tired of that. You know, cussing in the kitchen and the Bachelor and the what is that woman going to get a divorce and --

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: They're just tired of it and nobody wants to do that, so, anyway.

Bardin: For sure. Well, thank you so much for your answer. That was so interesting. We -- me and Gabby and I were so interested in that.

Whitmore: I love Chopped. I grew up watching Chopped, like every weekend with my dad. So.

Davis: Well, I think I think what made Chopped such an attractive show. Was It set up a problem and

resolved it in 44 minutes. And you didn't have to.

Oh, what happened last week? I'm going to be behind. You know, it was not serial television. It was episodic television.

Bardin: It's super easy.

Davis: Meaning it was all everything was decided in.

Bardin: Mhm.

Davis: And that's people, about 40. If you can get 44 minutes of an Americans undivided attention, you've done something.

Bardin: That's so true.

Davis: Because we are definitely the ADHD people of the world.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: Anyway.

Bardin: So.

Davis: One of the questions was -- What about? How did I get to New York?

Bardin: Yeah. So yeah, we were. We were just curious like so was it you said like was it a catering opportunity that brought you to New York?

Davis: No, no, no, no.

Bardin: Was it just you just wanted to go?

Davis: I when I was 8 years old, I got bit by the bug. I would watch -- Ohh in fact. Times did a huge piece on this.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: And it was called did you get the? New York bug? and it was amazing piece.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: And the truth is I did it. At eight years old in 1962, three. I would wait for my parents went to bed. And I would close all the doors and I would get right in front of this zenith with a green glass. Yeah. And the tube was kind of almost round and I would watch Johnny Carson in black and white. And I would see guests like Truman Capote. Well, Johnny, you know. To one side and I think.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: Where is this magical place? Yes. That men can talk about books and ideas, and they're not talking about guns, cotton, oil, and football. Where can I go? Where is this magic place? And it took me till I was 33 to get there, but I did and I always knew I would.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: Because I got bit, I mean. I remember that he had Elaine, a very young Elaine Stritch. Drunk as a skunk on national TV. And they shot it. They shot it that afternoon and they aired it. I mean, they said, oh, well, that's just Elaine. Nobody thought anything about that.

Bardin: Uh.

Davis: OK, so she's had. A couple of drinks. So what? Because everybody else had had a couple of drinks too.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: You know, there wasn't there. Wasn't all this stuff. That you have to wade through and all you know all this stuff so that that was what happened. I got bit. And in 1970, mother was coming to Abilene. I lived way out in the country. Boca, Texas. There were 15 in my graduating class, by the way.

Whitmore: Oh wow.

Davis: And. In 1970, I was a sophomore, and she was coming to Abilene and I said would you please? There was one. Newsstand in downtown that would I'll never forget was run by a blind man. And there was 1 newsstand that carried The New Yorker for sale. And this was like, you may as well brought somebody a moon rock. You know, it was so rare.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: And mother brought me. I still have it. Mother brought me in in 1970. And the cover was Lauren McCall, and she was in Applause. Which wiped out the Tonys. I got that magazine and I memorized that thing from cover to cover. I knew every word I got and I went through all the little ads, everything I could get my hands on about New York. I was desperate for information about New York.

Bardin: Mhm.

Davis: And then of course, got to college and found a lot of likeminded friends in Abilene, Texas. You know one, in fact one of them. Whose dad was the vice president?

Bardin: Oh wow.

Davis: Two of them Bob Hunter, Kent Hunter, was the son and he and I are still friends. He lives in Connecticut. I go up there all the time.

Bardin: That's awesome.

Davis: Yeah, we're still buddies. He and they, they knew 2 alumni of Abilene Christian, a man named Darrell Osborne. And a woman named Twyla, Duncan, Twyla Duncan, and I talked just this morning. Kent he? Bob, Told Kent that for his graduation from high

school present he would give him a weeklong trip
in New York.

Bardin: Oh wow.

Davis: And Bob had called all the alumnus. In New York and
Kent got to see such things as get this. The
original Chicago, with Cheetah Rivera. Yeah, so
jealous. And watch them.

Bardin: Oh my gosh, I have such.

Whitmore: I have tears in my eyes oh.

Davis: God, he they took him to on the Upper East Side. Used
to be called Germantown.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: And Darrell took him to an [unclear], you know, oompah
band puts that serve Schnitzel and beer. Thought
that would be done. And it was. You had to go
downstairs to this place. And Kent was just
sitting. There and he just had gotten his food.
And looked up. And who was walking down the
staircase? Dragging a mink coat. Gloria Swanson.

Bardin: Ohh my word.

Davis: Yes.

Davis: I mean, he saw everything in that one trip, and when
he got back that summer, I had never been as

jealous of anybody in my life. I wouldn't talk to him.

Bardin: Wow.

Davis: I was so mad. I just said you little shit. And he was younger than me. So, I could call him that, see. But anyway. That's just part of the New York saga. I mean, the truth is, is that when you live there every day. I mean you. You can get into those situations every single day because that's what it's about.

Bardin: I'm so jealous. I want to go back so bad.

Davis: Do I when I tell me, will you?

Bardin: I would love to live there.

Davis: You were you, one of the grandsons that got the bed or the couch?

Bardin: I got the bed? I was older, so I got the bed. I was very lucky.

Davis: OK, alright, alright. Well you. I came in. Well, I got back in my bed. Pad was slid off to the side. I thought this this guy, this guy must have been having the worst.

Bardin: Ohh what? Right. Well, I'm so sorry.

Davis: Either that you found. Somebody that you were having fun with and y'all got in a fight or something.

Bardin: I wish so and I was like.

Davis: You got this. I mean the it had never done that it was
it was.

Bardin: Wow, I'm sorry.

Davis: No, it wasn't. It was not a big deal off to the side.

My God. What did they? Do in here.

Bardin: I got the fight with my grandpa.

Davis: It was fun. Oh, yeah, I know it. Yeah. That was that
conversation was so funny because the minute I got
up, he called me and I picked up. And the minute I
got his.

Bardin: Hello.

Davis: That I heard. His voice. I knew something was up and
he goes well. We're coming to New York on the 27th.
And I we would love to take you to Dinner. And I
said I'd love that, except I'm landing in Abilene
on the 25th. Yes. And then we just. There were some
niceties and I said well, next time blah blah. And
I said Andy, would you like to say here you didn't
miss a beat? Yes. And I knew right then. That he
had been looking at.

Bardin: Hotel prices? Yes, for sure. Oh, yeah. My apartment
is not New York fabulous by any means. No, it is.
I've loved it. We have the best time ever.

Davis: Yes. But when you could. But when? But when you consider the price, it becomes the Waldorf Astoria.

Bardin: Oh yeah.

Davis: For your very eye.

Bardin: Yeah. Well, there's.

Davis: Yes.

Bardin: Yes, there's these videos on TikTok that I've gone viral, where it's like people show off their New York apartment and there are so many that literally like the tiniest like 1 little closet. So it's like yours was so great. We had the best time.

Davis: I'm very, very, very lucky. Very lucky.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: I can, I can assure you that I would not be living in New York City if it weren't for rent stabilization. Thank God for blue states, thank God.

Bardin: Yes, for sure.

Davis: All I can say.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: I would not be there if. It wasn't, I mean. That apartment. What I'm paying you is not is not cheap by. Texas standards, but it's less than half by New York standard. That apartment would probably

they probably could get 5000 for that. And I can assure you I don't. Pay that. So yeah, so.

Bardin: And it's in such a good it's in such a good neighborhood. It's so awesome.

Davis: Well, yeah, see, that wasn't that way when I got the in fact. When I moved into the belly. OK, I worked with this. Guy named George Carlin. As God is my judge, that was his name. And yeah. And I walked into work one morning, not long after. I had worked there like six months and I said I am going to have an apartment in this city or I'm going back to Texas.

Bardin: Ah.

Davis: Period.

Davis: And George goes. Well, Nick and I put a bid on a condo yesterday afternoon and you can come in. You can have ours. It's in. The stabilized building and I went.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: My mouth has dropped.

Davis: I'll never forget my first rent for a one bedroom \$684.13 I'll never forget that number.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: But I got their I got their apartment. And they sold me all their stuff and I paid. My mother sent me the money to pay for it, and I had to send it. I.

00:39:03 Bardin: Oh wow.

Davis: Had to send it back to her. But that's I. Wouldn't be there if it wasn't for rent stabilization, so.

Bardin: Anyway, so awesome. Well, thank you so much for letting us dig in. It was so great.

Davis: We yeah, but we haven't. You got there's a bunch more.

Questions on there.

Bardin: Ohh yeah, we do. We have a lot. Let me ask you. Who in the flying Fudge told you that?

Davis: New York was. A food desert. Where in the hell did you get that tonight?

Whitmore: OK, I've only heard that in terms of like finding like grocery stores and stuff like that.

Davis: Could not be more untrue.

Whitmore: OK.

Davis: Could not be more untrue. There are three food cities in the United States. Do you want to guess it what they are?

Whitmore: OK. Well, New York, I'm guessing.

Bardin: New York, yes, LA.

Davis: No.

Bardin: Chicago.

Davis: San Francisco and New Orleans and New York. Those are the three that are considered the highest developed food. Cities in the world. Of all the cuisines in the entire world, you can eat them in the five boroughs, all of them, every single one. Every tribe in Africa.

Whitmore: Yes.

Bardin: Yes. Mm-hmm. For sure.

Davis: Every, every Russian, any anything. Davis You want is right there. Yeah, that's awesome. Now grocery stores, that's a whole 'nother kettle of fish as we spoke.

Davis: It. I am lucky that I have this. Little grocery store near me. But the but the produce has to travel so far to get to New York. First of all, we have a lot from California just like you do here in Hampton. And it has to travel well. It only has to travel 1600 miles to get to about 1500 miles. Then it has to travel another 1600 to get to New York. So, by the time it gets there, it's taking a beating.

Bardin: Mhm.

Davis: The time when New York's produce is the best -- it's in the summer and we grow it on the East Coast.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: Peaches, corn, tomatoes, squash, plums. Just amazing, amazing, amazing stuff, but a head of lettuce, that lettuce is going to come from California. No matter you can. Stop your feet and cry. And scream about a carbon footprint and that lettuce is coming from California, by God. So it doesn't matter you know it, it would be great. We could grow lettuce. Locally in New York, but we can't. So if you get a salad in the middle of winter. It came from California.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: And so that that's one of the big drawbacks. Hmm. But there's all the specialty stores that we. Have that have been there forever and ever. And they were all Italian immigrants. Green growth the you know up and down the avenues. Green grocers go to the greengrocer and get. Davis: Well, they became powerful families too. The Balducci's, the D'Agostino's, the Gristede's, the Citarella's. And to this day, they are the finest stores in New York, especially Citarella. Citarella is my

favorite place on the planet well. I like that he's no longer in business except one of the sisters got pissed off and her brothers weren't treating her nicely. And they were treating her like a woman. They treated women in those days and Grace just said screw y'all and went to the Upper East Side on 72nd St. and started Grace's marketplace. Her name was Grace Balducci. And she started Grace's marketplace and made a trainload of money. Because the Upper East Side was dying for somebody like her. And she, Grace's marketplace. And then she decided to start home goods. So, she started Grace's Home, which again made so much money. And she had little ladies on the Upper East Side wrapped around her finger. Yeah. And like, were the ones with money.

Bardin: That's awesome.

Davis: You know anyway, so, but I could go on and on about. That, but that has little. To do with what you're doing, OK?

Bardin: We think it's so interesting. We love just hearing you talk is so awesome. So we had a couple of questions like just about like your cooking style

that you implement like daily, so like what styles of cooking like do you draw from?

Davis: Well, you know, there are methods that are the same across the board. In fact, there are 13. As you probably know, there are 13 cooking methods.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: And that is stuff like deep frying, skillet frying, steaming, boiling. Braising I don't. In fact, I taught the class. And I couldn't tell you what they are. I don't because you know what, as you're doing it, you don't. You're not going to stand there and go well let me look at the textbook. No. Yes, you do it. And so, but they're -- Well, for example, I noticed in there you asked about Texas food. Do I use that? Well in Texas food is an amalgam of several different kinds. You had the Indians, which had the three sisters. Do you know what the three sisters are? Beans, corn and squash.

Bardin: Oh yeah, of course I.

Davis: OK. Yeah, that they had the three sisters. So that's where we get. Cornbread. And that's where we get squash and that's where we get big Pop's Pinto beans. All that, that's not just Texas, it's when

it's what happens when different influences
cultural influences come together.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: For example, chicken fried steak. If you were going to
guess what nationality chicken fried steak guess
what would you say?

Bardin: Ohh that's a good one. I would say like German.

Whitmore: Yeah, because that's kind of.

Davis: Really. Yeah. And it? Yeah. It's on the nose. And
Texans, this grew out of the whole Schnitzel of
frying Schnitzel. They throw fried pork. They fried
deer. They fried meat. They fried chicken. That's
also where fried chicken came from.

Bardin: Yeah. Oh wow.

Davis: From the Germans and half bread with eggs and
seasonings and so forth. That's all very German.
Northern European. It's also very Italian. So you
had all kinds of influences.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: You always have to remember that every state in our
union is a bunch of mutt puppies. We're not
thoroughbreds. To a stretch neither is our food.
So you have all these cultural influences that come

together, the best example of that is New Orleans, French, slave, and Creole.

Bardin: Umm for sure. Yep.

Davis: And they all came together. In fact, the word gumbo comes from the African word for Okra "ki ngombo."

Bardin: Ohh wow.

Davis: And yeah, and the okra came over on slave boats to the Caribbean and then up to New Orleans. And the creoles were a whole different other group of people. And they had indigo plantations, but they also had their own kind of food. And it was spicy. And then there was the French. And then if you put all that in. A pot and stir it up. You get what, Cajun? And Cajun, you know, the Cajuns came from the mouth of Saint Lawrence River. And they came all they -- I Love this story They were at the Saint Lawrence River and the English ran them off.

Bardin: Uh-huh.

Davis: They were. They were French Protestants and the, the English ran them all because they didn't want the French. They England hated France as always and they so they sailed all the way down. Around the coast of Florida and landed at the. Mouth of the Mississippi River and that was they were called

and that area around the Saint Lawrence was Acadia.

Yeah. Well, if you corrupt that word to Cadia and then to Cajun, that's where the word came from.

Davis: And so, it comes all the way around. To New Orleans.

And the lobsters up in Maine and Saint Lawrence River were so sad to see the Cajuns go. That they followed them underwater all the way to Louisiana, and they were they by the and by the time they got, by the time they --

Whitmore: Wow.

Davis: Got to New Orleans. They were so small they became crawfish, and they backed up in the mud and that's where they come from, of course, a complete fairy tale. But it had a sweet story. Yes, it's just such a sweet story. I mean, it's almost like. It's almost like reading Evangeline or something you. Know that, yeah. But the English mistreated the French in in that part of Canada very badly. They sold their children. They killed all the kids.

Bardin: Uh-huh.

Davis: And but that -- that's how you, but --- That wherever people move their food goes with them.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: Always

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: And so, you know, we have this and that and this and that I mean. Ask me another question. I think I've exhausted this one.

Bardin: No, that was really we talked about in our in our class like food is it called food culture. Oh yeah, I think. It's called food culture, where it's like, just like people. There's no really, like, our teacher talks about like, there's no really like authentic food because food gets changed or every culture and every person that, like cooks it, it's like different. So it's really.

Davis: Your teacher is correct. The only the only thing I would argue with.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: Is that if you go up into the frozen regions they are eating the way they ate 2000 years ago.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: They're eating whale blubber and they're still Spearing fish and they're, you know.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: I mean. There are places where it remains unchanged. There are lots of tribes in Brazil who are they even have a name in Portuguese. For people that

have that don't have contact with the outside world
and they've been eating the same forever and ever
and ever and ever.

Bardin: That's for sure. Yeah.

Davis: But no, it changes it the very nature of cooking is
evolution. That's the very nature of it is to
evolve and either get better or worse at. What you
do

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: Some would argue that it's gotten worse. I would argue
that it's gotten better. That cooking techniques
have gotten better. That knowledge of techniques
and also it helps when you study other cultures,
not just yours, you know that I had five classes
here in Abilene at Texas State Technical College.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: Which is TSTC and it also stands for Too Stoned To
Care. But I had the hardest time getting these kids
to come out of their shell and. If once I said it
10,000 times, I would look at my student and I'd
say, you know, there's a world outside of Abilene.
Did you know that? It's big and it's beautiful.
It's got all. Different stuff in it and they would
look at. Me like I was speaking Greek. I mean,

right? They had no clue. What I was saying to them. And by the end of that we were together there, I could barely see a flicker of the. Light turning on. Some of them. You know, just like in any other class, about 25% are really good. The middle 50 are average and the bottoms are losers. It's just like any other class in the world. Well, there was always the top 25% and they got it.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: From day one they got it. And but it was that middle group. Well, I don't really like fish. Well, then you shouldn't be a chef.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: You're you. You tell me that here in a class you are wasting your money. Stop now. You know, you just can't. That you cannot approach food that way.

Bardin: Yes.

Whitmore: Yeah.

Davis: So and I said on top of that and you as a chef in the kitchen, whether you like fish or not, no, nobody cares. Nobody cares. They want to go into a restaurant and know that you know how to make a nice filet of salmon.

Bardin: Yeah. Yes, for sure.

Davis: Or a filet of halibut. Or that you know how to. Like linguine clam sauce, they. Don't care that you personally don't eat this. They don't care.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: But they- what they do care about is that you know enough to make good food. And if you can't pull that off because of your dislike of seafood, stop now. Stop now.

Bardin: Uh, for sure. Yeah, for sure.

Davis: Don't spend any more money. Now it's my turn. What? What is this class? What is this you're doing? I -- I'm not clear on what it is.

Bardin: So it's. Is it's for our Latin American food history class and we just had to interview someone that was in, like, the culinary industry. That was really interesting.

Davis: OK, but this this, this class is part of what curriculum?

Bardin: It's a history course.

Davis: A history course.

Whitmore: Yes.

Davis: That well.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: That's wonderful because I think. The history of food in many ways, is the history of the Western Hemisphere, yes, for sure. Oh, in the Eastern hemisphere too, for that matter.

Bardin: Mhm.

Davis: It's -- food and religion have dominated more of those topics, yes. And if you go, if you do, if you were to do a broad survey.

Bardin: For sure.

Davis: Food and religion you're going to. Find coming to the top all the time.

Bardin: For sure.

Davis: And sadly, we haven't learned enough that religion is still killing people by the thousands every day. I mean, I sometimes wonder if we've evolved as a species at all.

Bardin: Yes, yeah, for sure.

Whitmore: Yep.

Davis: But that's neither here nor there. Latin American. You know, the company that I work for when I work, I don't work. Much anymore, but when I work. I just in fact 2 days ago. The company that I work for is called ROXO Events ROXO and that is my owners, mothers, maiden name and except that it's

Portuguese and the way you say that in Portuguese
is.

Bardin: Oh.

Davis: Hosho. So because R is an H and Portuguese. And so and
it that so the. Whole company is Brazilian. And.
Again, I've asked them 1000 questions about food
in Brazil.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: It's the same thing. You've got the southern part,
which is primarily blonde, blue eyed Germans, and
I'd say that after World War 2 you really don't
wanna ask them why they're there. You do? Yeah, I
say so. So when you get together at Christmas,
you don't really talk about your grandparents much,
right? They go. Oh, no, we no, that's no. I know
why they were there. They were on the run.

Whitmore: Yeah.

Davis: Know why they're there so. And of course one of my
dear friends is named Luis Fernando Brixner.

Bardin: Oh wow.

Davis: Now that how's that for a clash of cultures? And he's
blonde blue eyed and he's lived in the South of
Brazil, the whole time well.

Bardin: Ah.

Davis: They have. They have a lot. Of the same influences here in Texas, the fried meats, the Schnitzel. But then the whole country that one of. The national dishes of Brazil is called feijoada.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: You know, have you studied that?

Bardin: I don't think so. Yeah.

Davis: You haven't. OK, well, it was brought by the once again the slaves. Dear old slaves brought up this dish with them to Brazil. But then they met. Whenever a culture comes into a country, it has to deal with what is being grown and hunted. So, if you don't have black beans in Africa. Guess what? You take the same ingredients and add black beans and. You make a pot of it, beans, and it -- and they -- and they say, well we got this idea in Africa.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: Yeah, you didn't get black beans in Africa like so. It's always a big multi mesh pot -- mesh.

Bardin: Yes, for sure.

Davis: But the slaves brought this and it's got pig ears.

Bardin: Mhm.

Davis: And a Brazilian sausage named linguica. Mm-hmm. And black beans and it's considered a main dish which

is a pot of rice, and I'm going to tell you it is delicious. Really. Really delicious. Yeah, in fact.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: For those for you students who are so cost conscious, I highly advise going looking up - feijoada, feij - - I think it's feijoada, or something like that. OK, if you put it in Google and go feij, it'll pop up.

Bardin: OK.

Davis: And try to find the ingredients -- I mean, of course I tried one time, and try to.

Bardin: OK.

Davis: Find a pig ear.

Bardin: That.

Davis: Yeah. Thank you.

Whitmore: No, those are difficult.

Davis: So I did not find the pig ears, so I use bacon. And I didn't find linguica, so I because I didn't find linguica, so I used Mexican chorizo.

Bardin: Found that. Yeah.

Davis: So that again, that's how food grows. You don't have any breeding, you approximate.

Bardin: That's awesome. Yeah.

Davis: And so we found. I made this beautiful pot of black beans, and I told my -- a couple of Brazilian friends of mine that it was feijoada and they came over and they stuck a spoon in and they looked at me like you've lost your mind. And I said, look. I know, I know, I know. But I wasn't gonna spend 10 hours going around New York trying to find all the stupid things.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: And now it's something small, like, oh, the market in -- And I said yeah, you live in Little Brazil I'm not going to go out there. No, no, I'm not going to get on the train.

Bardin: OK.

Davis: And go to Queens for. A pig ear. No, no, no.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: So, but we ended up having an incredibly good meal. It wasn't the feijoada that they knew as growing up, but we ate.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: It, nonetheless, yeah.

Bardin: That's so cool, because that's like a way that's a perfect example of, like, food culture. It's like you can make a dish without every aspect of a

certain dish, and it, like, combines the cultures.

And all that stuff that's really cool.

Davis: For lack, yes, that is the cool part. That is the very cool part. And. But what I would say to you about Latin American food is there's one word you need to pay attention to in every situation.

Bardin: Uh.

Davis: Colonialism. They took over the world. The reason that Brazil speaks Portuguese is both because these Portuguese took over and they have. They eat a dish to this day, that's cod. And they soak it for two days and then layer it with potatoes and capers and tomatoes and onions and bake it. Jump down, turn around, pick a bale of cotton. This stuff is so. Good. You just can't believe how good this is. And it's called a -- What do they call? Oh, Bacalhau. That's what. That's what they call a cod so. Once again, just like New Orlans.
you've got the Portuguese, which are the colonialists, and they brought the slaves which brought the feijoada. And then you got the Germans down at the bottom, man. So you've got all this going on.

Bardin: Uh.

Davis: Then you have these indigenous tribes that have. Never met anybody outside of the jungle. So they're eating the same way they ate. So you've got.

Bardin: Yeah, for sure.

Davis: This incredibly beautiful rich food culture. You know, yeah.

Bardin: I love it so interesting.

Davis: Well. And in fact, almost every country South of the Rio Grande River, you can say the same thing about yes. So because the colonialism matters it. I mean, we live with it. We live with it to this day. And not just in food, but in politics, in education and all kinds of things. We still live with the effects of colonialism.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: That's how okra, you know, Okra got to New Orleans and sweet potatoes and yams got to the South.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: On the slave ships.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: So anyway.

Bardin: It's interesting. It's like it's interesting, like.

Davis: Yeah. Look, look, look, look no further than the people
that colonized you and that's where you're going
to find the strongest. Culinary influences.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: So.

Bardin: Well, that's interesting. Thank you. We're running
good on time. So we don't want to keep you too
long, but thank you so much.

Davis: I know I listen. I'm. Are you kidding? It's a Sunday
afternoon. What else am I going to be doing?

Bardin: That's how we feel. We're like we just.

Davis: Want to talk? No. Yeah, no, no.

Bardin: Right.

Davis: No, there's nothing.

Bardin: Well, we, we. Have a couple more questions if you
have. Yeah, we have two more.

Davis: That's right.

Bardin: So we're just curious like just overall like
throughout like your culinary like journey like
what's been your favorite dish to cook and why is
it your favorite?

Davis: You know, everybody has chefs there. Yes, everybody.
There are two -- there are two questions that I --
the most annoying questions in.

Bardin: Oh, are those two?

Davis: Those are, what's your specialty? And it's assumed that we have to have one. And I always answer with, well, I want to make everything I make delicious. So, there is nothing special about it. I want everything I make to be good.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: And so that kind of deflates them because they want you to say and they want it to have a name, you know, like Auguste Escoffier, who was.

Bardin: Bye.

Davis: A real womanizer. He names -- for all his dishes. No, peach melba.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: Well, Melba, with somebody you probably slept with. Yeah, you know, I mean, it's just that's common. It was kind of common. Knowledge at the time. He was a real and then he hooked up with that guy named Ritz and they were a pair man.

Bardin: OK.

Davis: They tore through London and Paris and made lots of money. And screwed lots of women. So anyway. That's kind of off the thing. Uh, but uh. Well, tell me. Say it again. Say it.

Bardin: Again, so we were just curious, like, what's your favorite?

Davis: Oh, the special. And the other thing that we hate is after you've been on your feet 15 hours, standing at a buffet.

Bardin: Uh.

Davis: And somebody walks up and says, is it good? And you want to go no. I my feet are killing me right now and I did it just so I could make shitty food. That's. That's it. I did. Yeah. No, don't. And then of course they come up and then the third one that just drives you nuts, is it spicy? And you want to go? Yeah. And so now I've got to where I avoid it all together. I lie like a dog. I used to have this cute answer.

Bardin: Ah.

Davis: That I said, well, it has a. Bit of a kick, but nothing uncomfortable.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: Now that's for diplomacy, so, but now I don't bother. I say yes, it's spicy. Don't eat it.

Bardin: Uh.

Davis: Go to the next thing. Yeah, just don't eat it. Be better if you don't eat it. And you say something

like -- then they'll say -- and then of course lately, it's the gluten. What?

Bardin: Does this have?

Davis: And even if I know it doesn't, I say yes it does. Yeah, I don't want the trouble. I don't want the trouble, you know? And some lady comes up. Goes, does this have gluten? I'll end up in the hospital and I go. OK, then don't eat anything that's on this buffet. You should have brought your own.

Bardin: Yeah. For sure.

Davis: Brought your own food. I'm not going to be held responsible for somebody's health. I'm sorry. No, no.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: So. You asked me. It was a pinch. OK, my, my, you asked what my favorite is. I will tell you what I like to cook and eat.

Bardin: Ah.

Davis: I love to cook and eat duck.

Bardin: Hmm.

Davis: And I love to cook and eat beautiful fillets of fish.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: Those two, those are two of my favorites. It used to be lamb, but the way they're the little babies are treated. It's real hard for me. To do that.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: I served lamb. Rack of lamb. Matter of fact, real high in dinner and it was at the whole time. I was thinking of the way they're treated. And they're little babies.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: Anyway, so I used to but, but it's still delicious and I still ate some of it because it's so *****. Excuse me -- because it's so delicious.

Bardin: Uh-huh. For sure.

Davis: Yeah, but I love but. But you know, you can say that. I mean, I love ducks as animals. I think they're darling animals. They really are. They love to be. Loved, they love, they're domestic. But I love to eat them. God Almighty, I love to eat them. So delicious.

Bardin: They're too good. We went when we were in New York over the winter break. We got, like, duck in Chinatown, like the one that like. They oh, hanging in the window. Duck. Yeah, it was so good.

Davis: Peking duck. Yeah, you know.

Bardin: It was so good.

Davis: Right after I moved to New York. There was a big to do.

Bardin: Uh.

Davis: And the health department. Decided that it was going to enforce. All the laws. And it was going to go by the book.

Bardin: Uh.

Davis: And they started popping restaurants. That had ducks hanging in the window, weren't refrigerated, and so 2 duck 2 duck, two Chinese City Council people.

Bardin: Wow.

Davis: Went to the city to the mayor's office and. Said, you know, my people have been eating stuff like. This for probably 6000 years and we're fine.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: Nobody's sick. We're fine. And so the mayor had to send out a meeting.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: To tell the health department back off of Chinatown. Yeah. Leave them alone. Yeah, and that it was finally resolved in that way.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: I figured there was money that changed hands Somewhere
but you hey. Welcome to New York.

Bardin: That's so interesting. Well, ohh. My gosh. We, Sandy.
We love talking to you. Thank you so much for
agreeing to do our IT really helps us out. We.
You're such. You're such an interesting person to
talk to.

Davis: Oh, you're so welcome. Gabriel, Gabriela. Have you
been to New York?

Whitmore: I have not. I have been really wanting to go,
though. My best friend, she's from Connecticut, so
we've been planning a trip to go.

Davis: Ah. Where in Connecticut?

Whitmore: She's from Weston, yeah.

Davis: Oh yeah. Well, so it's a real short train ride.

Whitmore: Yeah, yeah.

Davis: Yeah.

Davis: Well, how do you reckon you do? That yeah, yeah. These
guys got to eat at the Italian place on New Year's
Eve.

Bardin: Yes, it was so good.

Davis: And that's where I ate on Christmas Eve.

Bardin: Oh, really? That's awesome.

Davis: And then flew to Texas the next day, it was.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: What? What was the name of it? It's a real popular
restaurant.

Bardin: Ohh gosh, I'm so bad.

Davis: I can't. I tell you about half of my vocabulary is
always right on the.

Bardin: Tip of my tongue. Me too.

Davis: That's as far as it goes.

Bardin: I'm traveling.

Davis: Yeah, but you're not 70. I'm going to. Be 70 in May.

How long did your grandpa?

Bardin: I'm trying to find. I took a picture. Sure. Let me
see. It was right here. It was right by Carrie
Bradshaw's apartment. I didn't take a picture of
the name. It was in the West Village.

Davis: Yeah, that's right. Yeah. Oh yeah, I. Know where it
is.

Bardin: It's on Bedford St. Yes, I can't. I can't tell. It's
West Village.

Davis: It's a tourist attraction. You see, but. But we locals
are real snobs, we. We have two shits about that
kind of thing, yeah. No, I mean we see like we see
movie stars we're like, OK, Big deal so. What?
Yeah, that was. And I'm you. Know you'll have

somebody tell you what when you have somebody from out of state and they visit, it's exhausting #1. You have to keep your eye on them the entire time, because they'll just turn down the street. And then walk out in front of cars, yeah. You had. I had a friend there in may went we went to. He and I went Abilene Christian together. He's friend. He knows your grandpa and I 2 times. He was only there for four days. Two times I had to grab the back.

Bardin: Uh.

Davis: Of his shirt this is a street. And there are cars now. Yeah. And they will run over you and you know and. He kind of just chuckled. But after a while I've got a friend that comes from Knoxville and you, you have to go. First of all, you have to keep your eye right on her.

Bardin: Uh.

Davis: And every time you come up to any intersection, go left and you'll go the other way. OK, go left the other left. And you have to. It's like.

Bardin: OK.

Davis: I mean, she's like herding cats. Yes, you know. And so at one point I thought, you know what, I'm still let her go.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: Roam around and then she'll look up and tell I'm lost
and call me on.

Bardin: The phone, yeah.

Davis: So I'm like, well, you know, hey.

Bardin: You gotta get it.

Davis: You get it. It's absolutely exhausting. Every time
somebody comes, I'm always so glad they come.

Davis: And when I leave.

Bardin: Well.

Davis: I'm like thank you God. That they say that they have
left because. You get tired of explaining stuff.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: People that aren't that don't know what it's like
inside the five boroughs, they don't get it.

Bardin: Yeah.

Davis: They don't, and you have to keep. Over and over. And
well, why do they? Do that well, why do they do?
This stop just stop. You're in Rome. Do as the
Romans do.

Bardin: Yeah, that's for sure.

Davis: You know, so yeah, it's hard. It's hard.

Bardin: Yes. Well, I want to go back. I would love. Like, I
feel like I've got the New York bug. Like you. Ever

since I went on the vacation, I was like I could see myself here. It's so fun. Yeah, well, the of course the primary challenge is housing.

Bardin: Yes, exactly. It's too expensive.

Davis: I would like I thought I scored housing early on.

Bardin: Yes, for sure.

Davis: And I scored rent stabilized housing.

Bardin: Yes, that's.

Davis: I mean, if for somebody that's coming a new one new person. I would say try to find something in Hoboken or Jersey City or Weehawken.

Bardin: Uh-huh.

Davis: And it's cheaper and you take the train ride into the into the city.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: To go to work or to go to dinner. Or whatever it is you do.

Bardin: Uh.

Davis: Now, is it as fun as living right there in Manhattan? No, it's affordable.

Davis: And then once you start moving around and getting jobs and meeting people, all of a sudden somebody will come to you and say there's an apartment in my building.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: You know, but you have to be. You have to be able to.

Put in the time and wait on it, New York is a very
fickle mistress.

Bardin: Yes.

Davis: You have to put in the. Work to gain her trust. And
then once you do that, you you're kind of stuck
It's I saw I was great meme the other day on TikTok
the guy said -- Starts off by complaining about
New York, so expensive and crowded, and he goes.
Yeah. But if it's not New York, it's nowhere.

Bardin: That's true.

Davis: He is so right. Once you have your blood. I mean, the
idea of, you know, I was here off and on for 10
years. and it was great because my mother and I
were best friends? But once she went, there's
nothing. I come into this House, it's empty. This
time its empty. You can sing. This --

Bardin: There we go.

Davis: Sad song on the violin. Anyway, are you going to? Get
out this way or what?

Bardin: I'm gonna probably stay in the Denton area. I really
like Denton. Like after leaving there. Abilene
coming here. I don't see myself going back.

Davis: Well, Denton is a is a very cool town. I have two brothers that I went to college with are from there. Their dad taught in one of the department. And one of them was wife taught in sociology. They both retired and they live out towards Aubrey. They built them a new house for retirement out toward Aubrey. Ohh. They've done very well. He worked for Peterbilt for 37 years and retired with a big old check. And so as it turns out, I may actually go to Denton. They asked me twice. Are you coming to Denton? If not, I'm coming to Abilene. All right. Well, OK. Come to Abilene.

[End of Interview]