

Speaker 1: 00:00

All right. Hello and good afternoon. It is currently 3:06pm CST in Garland, Texas, and in Denton, Texas. My name is Basmarshed, and today I'm here on a zoom call with Noah Huerta. I'm speaking with Noah today as part of the Milpa Agricultural Placemaking Project's efforts to collect food and agricultural related oral histories from North Texas. Noah, thank you for being here today.

Speaker 2: 00:27

Yeah, thank you for having me.

Speaker 1: 00:30

Well, let's start at the beginning. Noah, when and where were you born?

Speaker 2: 00:35

Oh, that's a good question. My dad always wants me to leave this question out because we're always, like, afraid of, like, ice and stuff, but I'm. I was born in Dallas, Texas, on September 4th. So a week ago, December 4th, 2001, at 9:00pm well, happy birthday. Much is gracias. Yeah, so, like, yeah, I was just born. I was actually born during a flood. So then my parents named me Noah because they escaped, like, the flood just in time to get to the hospital.

Speaker 1: 01:20

Can I ask more about the flood? Like, where was this?

Speaker 2: 01:23

It was in Methodist Hospital in Dallas. It was like. It was like a big flash flood. Like. Like, it wasn't like, it wasn't like, something that I think would be any different than the flood that happened on or like the flash floods that happened this past Friday here in Denton.

Speaker 1: 01:45

Yeah, that's a beautiful story.

Speaker 2: 01:48

I think so.

Speaker 1: 01:51

All right, well, tell me more about your childhood. What was that like?

Speaker 2: 01:56

Well, let's see. My mom and my dad both worked two jobs, and they raised me along with my Welita. My dad's mom and my mom's parents lived all the way in California, but I still lived mainly just at home with my mom and dad. And then they would have my welita take care of me on days when they had to go to work. And I grew up just kind of, you know, sometimes I was an only child, but then I also had a lot of cousins. So, you know, I. I still very much had lots of experience growing up with other kids. Let's see, I had mental health issues a lot, though. I don't think my parents realized how bad it was until kindergarten. I wanted to kill myself a lot when I was a little. I was like four when I wanted to kill myself. And then it was weird having a vivid memory of your childhood. Be that. But then also having, like, memories of good things. Like. Like, my mom always wanted me to be happy, and she always wanted me to know that I was loved. And same with dad. Dad was always, like, doing stuff for me. I remember When I was in kindergarten, I remember, like, the first joke I ever told. I was in class, basically, and I just kind of, like, pretended like I was sitting next to some classmates, and I pretended like my hand came to life, and it was just like. Like, beating. And that was, like, my first little joke I ever told. It was fun. But what else? I. I grew up in a. In a Catholic school. My parents tried to take me to daycare, and that lasted for, like, a little bit until the daycare program shut down. So they took me to a Catholic school, which was able to take me at the, like, age that I was at. I was born at a weird age because it's, like, September, and, like, it's. It's too young to be in the first grade. But then they're like, you know, it's like, well, then we can have to wait till another year. So I ended up being, like, older than everybody, and I was in Catholic school until fifth grade when I got into a fight with one of the other kids. It was a game that kind of went wrong. It was like I was always already having problems with that kid in class. But at some point, basically, I

was already, like, just kind of like, I had enough with what they were doing and what game they were playing. There was a game where we would just kind of, like, poke each other in the chest. And it would. It would basically be like a joke where it's, like, scoop, and it would just be like. It was like a demeaning game kind of thing that the boys and I would play. And. And I, like, got mad at them, so I, like, did it to them, too. But then I didn't realize that, like, oh, they were going to get back at me and Jim. And then they accidentally poked my eye one time. And that was, like, a big fight, a whole thing. And my parents wanted me to take me out of that. Out of Catholic school, and they put me into a public school, and they wanted me to be in, like, the more prestigious part of the public school, this academy program that they had. So the only thing that could really. I remember my dad, even I tell my dad, dad, I don't want to do theater over there. Theater sucked at St. Cecilia at the Catholic school. And they're like, yeah, but no, you don't know how to do anything else. So we put you in theater. Like, there was a music program, an art program, a science program, but it's like, I mean, you're better at that, whatever. And. And, yeah, I just did it. And that's kind of When I started, like, getting into acting, performing stand up comedy, writing and stuff. Oh, and I think another thing from my childhood. So my welita took care of me so much in my adolescence, so much that apparently I didn't realize that I almost, like, lived there with them for a long time until I was like, four maybe. And so my Lolita is from Mexico. She only spoke Spanish. In fact, I don't really remember her speaking in more than, like, a few English words. So at some point I remember, like, people ask me all the time, you know, Noah, your parents speak Spanish, your dad's from Mexico, Your Juanita raised you. How do you not. No Spanish. And I. I told them, like, I realized I had to think about it for a while, but every day. And by the way, when I went to middle school, I went to. That's when I started staying home with my Lolita every day after school until my parents could pick me up. Sorry, that's tangent. But anyway, I spent a lot of time with my Willita when I was an adolescent and when I was a preteen and every time in between, too, because she lived like, like two miles away. So not far. Anyway, I spent a lot of time with my welita and my willito. And the thing is, Julita would always make me, as soon as I got there, just food ready, sopita and arroz con pollo as right there. And she just made it without me even really asking. And I just went, so pita, she's like, si, tea. And I'm like, and that's all I wanted. So I just never asked for anything else. So I never, like, I. I tried learning Spanish when I was a preteen, though. But when I was like four years old, I was like, this is all I need. This is. And at some point, it was like, she would just make rice and I would just call that sopita. Like, everything she made, I was like, oh, a different kind of sopita. It got weird, like, when I was with my friends in. In school, like in Catholic school and in public school, because I was like. I was like, you guys have sopita too? And they're like, they bring out sopita. I'm like, oh, that kind. Oh, that's weird.

Speaker 1: 09:12

Could you clarify for me what's sopita?

Speaker 2: 09:15

Okay, so I can tell you what sopita is, despite what I just told you about my history with it. So. So pita is a type of, like, Mexican soup and pasta. It's a cute name for soup, you know, sopa but the cute part of it is, like, the. The noodles in it and the beef stew kind of thing aspect of it. It's like, tomate and, like, tomato and, like, soup with, like, a little bit of, like, pasta. It could be, like, macaroni. It could be fideo. It could be any type of, like, pasta that you have lying around. And it's sopita.

Speaker 1: 09:55

Adorable.

Speaker 2: 09:56

Yes. Yes, exactly. And I just. I just kept thinking, like, why. Why does everyone eating that weird pasta? This is sopita.

Speaker 1: 10:09

Are there any other foods that your grandmother made you?

Speaker 2: 10:13

Yes. Okay. This one time, she. She brought me just a glass of what I thought was water, and it ended up being, like, clear Kool Aid. And I was, like, so amazed. I was like, what? And I. And I would just, like, drink it. And I was like, oh, my God, yes. And I thought it would happen anytime. She gave me water in that glass, thought it would taste good. So when she poured me water again, I'm. I've drank it. I'm, like, disappointed that it's water. And what else should she make? Well, Myita loved making, was like, oh, tamales. She always, like, cutting up strawberry for me. She loved making ham and mayo sandwiches. I used to

not like mayo, but I put up with it because Julita made it. So, like, I still don't really like mayo that much, but I still put up with her. Put up with it because of her. And, oh, my God, here's actually another thing. Here's a story. So my dad was the youngest out of all four of his siblings. And so when they came to America, Julita would always make, like, sopita rice, beans for everyone for dinner. But my dad never really liked that stuff. So she would always make him a side plate of just ham and cheese sandwich. And he loved that. And. And he'd always get fries, you know, papas fritas. And she would always make that for him, like, once a week or something. And he. She would continue to make that into his, like, mid-20s, too. Like, still making that for him. Like, anytime he visited, like, my mom would just laugh that she would still make that. And that the face he would make you go, yes. But then, like, when I was like, I remember three years old, my parents brought me to Julita again to come see her again. And apparently she right away got to making papasritas. And my dad looms over the stove. He's like. And. And as soon as he said that, Melita goes, no paranoia. She said, no, this is for Noah. And the dad's face went and That's a story that my mom, like, swears happened. So, like, it was weird. Like, a lot of the food that, you know, at least I grew up with was either, like, Mexican or very American, or I guess working class American, if you will. Kind of, like, like, derived from what was around us, you know, at the local fiesta store or at the Super Mercado store. Oh. She also loved making us fajitas. That was amazing. And tacos.

Speaker 1: 13:24

Delicious.

Speaker 2: 13:26

Yeah.

Speaker 1: 13:29

So when I asked you if you want to be interviewed, you mentioned to me that you want to talk about your experiences at a Ramadan. Do you want to tell us about it?

Speaker 2: 13:37

Oh, yeah. Let's see. Okay. I'm trying to remember what story, but I think I do. So I went vegan earlier this year because, like, I really wanted to try it, and it felt like a good thing to do for my stomach and a lot of things about me, but it was the kind of thing where I wasn't really struggling with it that much, but it was the kind of thing that was kind of, like, hard to know if I don't know what to do, if I don't plan ahead, you know? And then I went to the breaking of the fast for SJP's Ramadan, and then I just kind of like, I saw you guys, like, bringing all this stuff for a potluck, and I'm like, oh, well, I'll just avoid some of this stuff. You know, I'm vegan right now. I can't do that. And then this guy is like, I want everyone to be able to try this. It's lamb mixed with mashed potatoes and all this, like, it's like a glorious dish that everyone was like, oh, my God. And I'm like, well, I've always. And nobody forced me to do it, but, like, I was like a when in Rome kind of guy. So I'm like, oh, yeah, I might as well be nice about it. I did, and I ate it, and I just kind of. That's when I stopped being vegan. Not even just because of that, but it was like. It was like a slippery slope from then on.

Speaker 1: 15:12

That's very funny.

Speaker 2: 15:14

Yeah. I forget what it was, but it was basically like, it was a chickpea. It wasn't mashed potatoes. Sorry. It was chickpea and pork. Pork, chickpea and, like, beef, lamb. It was a chickpea kind of dish where the guy would. It's like mashed chickpeas mashed with hummus. Like, hummus all over this beautiful pan, this bacon pan. And it was just like, a bunch of meat and lamb put there, you know? Yeah. I forgot what the dish was called, but everyone ate it up that day.

Speaker 1: 15:51

It sounds delicious. I don't know what the shit it is either.

Speaker 2: 15:55

No.

Speaker 1: 16:01

Well, let's rewind a little bit. I didn't ask you about being vegan before, but can you talk more about the process of your vegan era?

Speaker 2: 16:11

Let's see. It's not the first time I've tried. In high school, I tried being vegan, and it. It's. It's like I was even worse because, like, I. I just basically ate Oreos and drank Kool Aid, and for me, I basically thought of, like, what can I even do that's, you know, like, vegan? I really. Sometimes it's very easy for me to try too hard. Like, I. I put a lot of pressure on myself to do things all the way. So I. I think about how, like, it was easy for me to crash and burn very quickly, and it's something I like. My process for it, like, this year was like, I'm just gonna go to the dining hall and eat rice and beans and maybe some fruit, a bunch of Indian curry and stuff. Yeah. And, like, I had to, like, remind myself of all the vitamins that I need to try. It's. I don't know if I could be vegan right now. I know I tried being vegetarian for a while instead of vegan. I don't know what I can do, but I know this. It's like my process for it is still based on, like, what sort of, like, foods can keep me full and what can I eat. A lot of, like, for me, it's like I can eat a ton of grapes, and if I just have, like, beans or something that I know is, like, protein, I know I'll be full, you know, And I still kind of want to try that again. I just haven't really planned out when, you know. Yeah.

Speaker 1: 18:33

Could you tell me more about how your family feels about your vegetarian vegan?

Speaker 2: 18:38

Well, my mom and my dad were very, very supportive of me for that. My cousins, not so much, but it doesn't really, you know, matter what they think. It's just kind of funny to get clowned on by them, you know, And. But when I went vegetarian, I remember it's like, man, it's so hard when, you know, mom and dad are always, like, eating something, and I'm like. Like, when I would live with them, it's like, oh, I can't really have that. I know you guys want to Go to Wendy's or something. I can't really have that right now. I don't really like their vegetarian options. And then sometimes it's like, you know, being vegetarian is like, oh, you know, they'll. They're really supportive of that and they'll, like. Though my mom would buy me, like, vegan butters or vegan alternatives for stuff to cook with, and I thought that was

really nice for. That was really cool. And then other times, it's like she has, like, leftover stuff that she doesn't know what to do with, and it's not vegan. And it's like. It's like I was already struggling with it, so I said, you know what? You know, you could just give it to me. It's fine. I'll eat it. And I think it was just kind of like, you know, I probably didn't have to actually stop being vegetarian, but I don't. When it comes to, like, not being able to afford what to choose to eat, you know, it can be a little bit difficult to find enough proteins and enough vegetables to both fill you and give you nutrients. I, like. I know it's like. I'm not trying to say it's, like, technically easier to be, like, an omnivore, but it's like. It's like a whole thing where I don't really know if I could be vegetarian right now. I have to, like, plan that out for a week. And I might do it again this next week, though, because what happened. What happened recently? Apparently so. My roommate, he's. He's Indian. And in his culture. Well, basically, recently, his family, his grandfather passed away. And he told me, actually, in his culture that whenever somebody passes away, they go vegetarian for a week, the family. And I saw him eating out of, like, a chicken bucket when he said that, and I'm like, so when are you doing the vegetarian thing? He's like, oh, no.

Speaker 1: 21:48

You're kind of doing this in support.

Speaker 2: 21:51

Yeah, yeah. Like, I don't mind doing that. And, yeah, I don't mind. And I like feeling cleaner. I really do, because there's a lot of meat that I really think is just dirty for you. Like, I really think there's just a lot of meat that's, like, not really good for every body, if that makes sense. Yeah, yeah. Well.

Speaker 1: 22:24

Well, Ramadan's in, like, six more months, I suppose. Do you think you're going to try out another iftar Mila test? Shp.

Speaker 2: 22:33

I would love to. First of all, I'd love to do anything for sjp. Anything I can do. But, like, Ramadan is an interesting thing to try. Like, oh, my God. Like, I have no idea how I do that.



But I'm also. I'm very much a night owl, so I could try to make that work. That'd be funny. To just basically, like, wake up in the middle of the night, night to just eat a bunch of broccoli. Like, that's like, that's hard mode. That's interesting. I am interested in that. My roommate actually does participate in Ramadan. He's not Muslim, so I don't know why, but, like, like, his grandparents were Muslim, but he and his parents grew up Christian. And I asked him, why do you. Why do you do the fasting during Ramadan? And he's like, because my friends would do it when I was a kid and my teacher did it. Yeah, I was like that. Oh, okay. And he just, like, still does it. Like.

Speaker 1: 23:47

That'S really funny.

Speaker 2: 23:49

Yeah. Yeah. It's just. It's like you just. I. I don't even know because, like, the thing is, is that, like, I do love different types of food and love eating, and so it's like. Oh. It's like. I've also tried very hard to, like, lose weight. So I don't know. I. I wanna. I do figure, like, there are diets I want to, like, stick to more often, you know, And I just know that I have, like, terrible health problems. Like, not like, the worst, but I have, like, terrible stomach issues and everything. So there's some things that I don't want to be reckless about when it comes to diets and fasting. Just because it's so easy for me to just be, like, overconfident that that's how I've been like, anytime I'm like, vegetarian or vegan, it's like not really planning anything, not planning for when, like, that feeling of not being full, you know, but also not being sure if you need more food kind of thing. Yeah.

Speaker 1: 25:04

Well, I know you mentioned you started, like, a vegetarian diet, but vegan diet back in high school. Do you think, like, coming to college made it better or I guess more difficult to manage?

Speaker 2: 25:27

I think it's a lot for me to have self control and also, like, it's this sort of weird, like, food addiction kind of thing they still have where it's like, if I don't try out this food, I'll miss out,

you know? And it's like that. That is how a lot of people with, like, eating disorders can feel. And that is kind of how I feel sometimes it's like, I remember there was this medication I was on a long time ago, back when I was like 17 and 18. It was an antipsychotic that made me more. That made my appetite bigger. And for that it was like, I think it was just kind of hard for me to work that weight off for a while. So I think right now I think my relationship with food is a little different. It's kind of like, like I don't want to feel bad for the problems that I have right now and I don't want anyone else to feel bad either. I think I, I think I just, I would rather start with whatever step I can take for like, like when it comes to like, oh, like, is it harder to be vegetarian right now? I think it's just harder to be like forgiving of myself when I make a mistake right now. I don't, I don't want to say I've always had that problem, so I don't want to say that like it was easier back in high school. But I do think that I've gotten a lot better over time when it comes to finding this kind of like grounding with my emotions, just working my way through, reminding myself that it's just a mistake. That's it. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 1: 27:48

Yeah. I'm glad to hear you've gotten better.

Speaker 2: 27:51

No, thank you.

Speaker 1: 27:52

Yeah. I'm torn between asking a bit more about your relationship to food or something else. Is there a direction you want to take this?

Speaker 2: 28:10

I could talk about my relationship with food. Yeah, I can do that. Oh. What's your question?

Speaker 1: 28:16

Yeah, well, I mean, you've mentioned a lot how recently you're, you've been thinking a lot like, well, what do I eat, what I want to eat? And like your future plans. So I suppose. Well, I

mean, what have your day to day experiences as food been so far? Like, in this recent span of time?

Speaker 2: 28:40

I think I have like a. Sometimes I have like a binge eating problem where it's like, I don't want to say like, I do it every night, but there are times where like I drink, like, I try to like save up room for the day. And like, I remember on Sunday my parents came over to help me celebrate my birthday and I ordered like a big thing of winks and I basically ate all of it. And then I had a steak and then I ordered a salad for the next day. And like that, that big amount of food I feel like was like a big, like too much for me. And I was always worried about being hungry later that day, which for me it's like. Like I'm always worried about being hungry. And so I. I usually overeat thinking that that'll do it. Instead of. Instead of like, basically just kind of allowing myself to be in that uncomfortable sort of like withdrawal pang, you know, that's what it feels like. It feels like after, like be in this kind of withdrawal pain. It's allowing yourself to feel that shock, that fear, but. And just. And just letting it stay. And. Yeah, so I just. Yeah, I. I think when it comes to, like, I've never really had a food insecurity problem, but I have had times where like, oh, I want more food. And I was a kid and my dad's like, well, we can't, you know, we can't. That's all we got in the house right now. And it's like, I think a part of me is always like, oh, I've always wanted more of this and more of that. And when I do finally get enough of this and that, it's like, well, am I eating too much? And I. I think like dining halls, it's like a little bit hard to restrict yourself. I think I've been doing a better job at it, but I don't want to. I don't want, you know, it's like, I don't want to basically like, pretend like I. It's been bad all the time, but I've also just been kind of like indulging a lot on like fried chicken and stuff and like that. It can be hard to feel like you're making progress when, like, the scale doesn't go down or when you still, you know. Yeah. When you don't. When you feel like you're gonna miss this food when you graduate and stuff, you know. Yeah, this. But this is therapeutics. Thank you for listening.

Speaker 1: 32:03

Yeah, of course.

Speaker 2: 32:05

Yeah.

Speaker 1: 32:06

It's very relatable.

Speaker 2: 32:08

Yeah.

Speaker 1: 32:10

Have you found many. Any community you're at unto in terms of like, your food dynamic?

Speaker 2: 32:19

I talk to my cousin a lot about it, and she also deals with the same problem I have. And when we get meet up at like, mean Greens with each other, it's. It's really comforting to talk to somebody who's also like, just trying to like, balance all these things in her life while also trying to. Trying to eat healthier just like you are, you know, just like I am. I mean. Yeah, I wouldn't say that. I mean, I wouldn't say that. Like, I have found like a. And like an ed community kind of thing. It's Just kind of, like. I just think that, like, there are times where I bet there is, but, like, I don't really know what to really think of it. Maybe it'd be good for me. I guess I just haven't really. I don't want to say I don't have the time for. Could be. It could be worth it, you know, Worth a shot. I just have, like. You ever. It's like, I think I just kind of get whisked away with all these, like, impulsive, like, stuff that I say yes to and all this stuff that I do. So I need to really make time for something like that that could be good for me. So. Yeah, maybe. Yeah. Oh, what am I saying? I used to have a community. Actually, it was a therapy group that I was in back in 2023. It was part of an outpatient program that I was in. I was having suicidal thoughts again when I moved in to my apartment. Honestly, it wasn't even because of the university. It wasn't because I was living on my own. It was because of trauma I was dealing with, baggage I was dealing with. With. From community college. I had a lot of problems with people there, and it kind of. I. I needed to go to outpatient therapy for my suicidal thoughts. And basically, it was just, like, people I would talk to every day about this thing I was going through. This thing I was going through, this thing they were going through. We give each other advice, would listen to each other at some point, and it was. It was. It was like having a nice, warm hug at the end of the day, you know, always having someone. People to come home to, you know? It was really good.

Speaker 1: 35:29

I'm really glad you're here, Noah.

Speaker 2: 35:31

Yeah, thank you.

Speaker 1: 35:36

Do you think you'll try to. Well, I know you have your cousin. Do you think you'll find other people, like, in the future?

Speaker 2: 35:46

I hope I do. I just. I think I'm very, like, caught up with other things right now, like. Like shows in class that I'm working on and sjp. But, you know, I. I know I will. So, yeah, it's gotta be good, at least, you know. Yeah.

Speaker 1: 36:12

So I realize we've neglected to clarify that SJP is disunous for justice for Palestine. Um, do you want to talk more about it, too?

Speaker 2: 36:21

Well, yeah, I don't feel like I have that much to say. It's just kind of like. It's like my. I say it's like my way of exercising what I believe in for. It's my way of, like, really putting in activism instead of just saying that I care about the people of Palestine, that I care about indigenous people's rights. That's a good community for me at least, to really exercise that activist muscle. And I think there are times where, like, like there are times where I don't really know what to do to like, get closer to some people there because sometimes it is more like volunteer work than it is like a social thing, you know. But there are times where it is actually nice the way that they talk to me and reach out to me. It's really nice. Nadine especially is really nice. She's really cool. Yeah, Yeah. I think it's also just important. I've

always been the type of person who's wanted to like, stand up against authority that like, is trying to just like, oppress, trying to kill, trying to like beat down on people. And this I've always wanted, wanted to punch up at that. And I think there are people at SJP who are on academic probation just because they were protesting. Like, I don't think that's right. And I want to be a part of the community that helps them, you know, I just know that these people could use help. Yeah. So I did. I wanted to help out with that.

Speaker 1: 38:30

Well, I'm glad you're involved.

Speaker 2: 38:33

Yeah, yeah, I am too.

Speaker 1: 38:38

No, you have managed to answer all the questions I did have prepared for you. But is there anything else you want to talk about or just add on?

Speaker 2: 38:56

I have this bit, the stand up bit that I, that came to mind when you asked about, like, you know, my childhood and food when I was like, it's part of my, it's on my YouTube channel where I like, I post like my stand up comedy clips. And basically like, what I do is like, I remember, like, I went up to this, to stage and I said, my Name's Noah, I'm 20 years old, I'm Mexican, and that's important for the story. So when I was a kid, I never really knew what really like race was or what being like Mexican or white was because it's like I, I just figured everyone eats the same food that we do. Like, I just figured white people must eat like tablitas, fajitas, corn and that also pita. Like, I thought that that was like, oh, yeah, that's what white people on TV must eat. Right. Obviously. And so, and so I remember, like, when I told my dad about that bit, that story, he's like, yeah, you're right. Yeah. That is actually what we're all like, growing up because it's like, it's just food. Like, it's not Mexican food. It's just food to us. Like what? And I just felt like I like the sociology of that. I just love the, I love the joke about that. When it like gets into something deeper where it's like, what, what does it mean when you don't even like have like kids don't. Aren't really usually having

racism because like kids, like, they just, they just know what's in front of them. They just know what's like around them and stuff. And for me, I grew up like in a very mixed family, like very mixed skin tones. We're all Mexican, but also part way and also like dark skinned Mexican. So it's like, like it took me a while to really think about like, like I never really, when I was a kid, I never really, really understood what you even say, like race was. Like when I just saw someone darker than me, I just thought, oh, they're like, okay, there must be Mexican. And then like. And I, I didn't see because I grew up in like South Oak Cliff, Dallas, which is like, if you're a kid, it's like it's very easy to only see Mexicans, you know, when you're a kid. So it's like I never really got to see many black people or Asian people. So it was like. I think for me it was like a big, I don't want to say culture shock, but it was like a big thing for me to like learn about Martin Luther King Jr. In Catholic school and then to just like to see it as like hypothetical because, oh, where are black people? Like, where are they? Like, like I don't. And he just. Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 1: 42:17

I grew up in Detroit, so that's just really funny to hear.

Speaker 2: 42:23

Yeah.

Speaker 1: 42:26

Yeah.

Speaker 2: 42:27

Detroit. What brought you to Denton?

Speaker 1: 42:30

Yeah. Okay. So well, this is a. My oral history, so I won't get into it too much, but we moved here in high school.

Speaker 2: 42:37

Okay. All right. Yeah, that makes sense. Yeah. Oh yeah. I, I think like to. When it comes to like that that's kind of like what I like to say about, you know, food and my culture and childhood. It's like a lot of it was very much. It's like we, we kind of like assimilated a little bit into American culture. Like we grew up very Mexican American, but it. So it was easy for us to like be used to just like Taco Bell or Wendy's or like stuff that was around us. But also we always added our Mexican dishes to everything we ate. Though. So, I mean, that's how, like, I remember my. My deal. My. My uncle Tony. He basically, anytime we were eating food together and he had like a. He was eating like, barbacoa, which is like a steak kind of thing. Not like a big steak, but like a shredded steak, shredded pieces of meat. He would eat it with a tortilla, put into a taco. It would fall out, put into tortilla. And then basically he would get that tortilla, eat, eat that, and then use the tortilla to wipe his face off like a napkin and then eat the tortilla.

Speaker 1: 44:00

I think that's delicious, personally.

Speaker 2: 44:03

Oh, yeah, exactly. Yeah. Yeah. I. I remember never liking spicy food. I'll say that. Like, oh, my God. Getting clowned on throughout elementary and. And middle school by my cousins who were just like, you don't like dakis? What the is wrong with you? And there. Or they would just go like, like, like, you're white. And like, shut up. Shut up. I just don't like dakis. Like, I don't like him. Like, try it. Try. And then. Or like, they would try to get me to try tahin. I don't know if you know what tahin is. Yeah, tahin on, like, fruit. And I like, as soon as I tongue touch, it went. And my dia would go, well, he's a good sport. He tried it out. So it's weird because it's like, it's a very big disconnect in your culture, like, when you're, like, surrounded by other Mexicans that just. That either love spicy food, which it's common to have Mexican people that don't like spicy food, but when it comes to, like, tahin and stuff like that, it feels like, oh, that's like a fucking VIP thing that I've never gotten. Like, I've never gotten that experience of actually liking that stuff. Actually enjoying spicy Mexican candy. I'm like, I hate that stuff. I do. Like, I just do. And, you know, I can ignore all the getting called white stuff, but then when it. It feels like I'm always left out just because I. That don't like it, I just don't. Yeah, My. My mom, she actually has this thing. She. It's a type of cystitis in her. In her intestines and in her. Yeah, in her intestines where basically she can't have



anything acidic now. So oranges, tomatoes, anything spicy. Hell, even fucking soy. Even soy. Like, that means. No, not even like, tofu. Not even, like, yeah, she has to really be picky or else it could be like a. Like a severe, like, problem for her. And I don't want to, like. I don't want to say it's like something that's, like, hospital level, but it is like, something that's, like. It feels like an allergy at that point. Like, it's like a. Or like a. Like, lactose intolerance almost, you know? So she misses having, like, cultural food. She misses having Mexican food that she loves. She misses having, like, you know, Asian food. She misses having spaghetti or even just, like. And she can really only have, like, like, certain foods. Like. Like, she has to, like, have a different favorite fruit now. It's like pears, you know? Yeah. So it's like. I don't know. It's like you take away half of the food pyramid away from her, you know? Yeah. And I guess that's just how I've always felt where it's like, it's nice. It's. It feels nicer growing up and seeing my family also go through stuff that I. I'm also kind of feeling, too, when it comes to, like, finding ways to. It's nice when someone is accommodating, when our family is accommodating to people like us with, like, either allergies or just, like, we don't like that, you know? Like, I know my thing isn't the same as Mom's, but, like, it's very nice to just see people care about what she's going through and to see family members do that, you know? That was good. Yeah.

Speaker 1: 48:01

I'm glad that it helps you connect with your mom.

Speaker 2: 48:04

Oh, yeah. Well, it's also like. It's more like, oh, it's nice to my extended families, you know, doing all this sometimes on Thanksgiving or, like, the food's ready for her. Like, that's good. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I think that's about what I had to say for now. Yeah, I think so.

Speaker 1: 48:30

Yeah. Are you good to end here then, or anything else you want to add.

Speaker 2: 48:39

On? My. I think my American side of the family is actually something I never got to when it comes to, like, food as well. My grandmother, she's my American, European side of the

family. She. She's always grown up as an American, but her. Her great grandmother immigrated, like, from Germany, but was, like, part Jewish. And when she, like, immigrated. From. Immigrated to America, they had a whole thing where she had to pretend that she was only German and not Jewish because America had, like, a quota back then. So, like, my grandmother never really grew up knowing about our Jewish, like, ancestry and stuff. But, like, I remember growing up hearing a lot about our own American roots, and my grandmother took me to San Francisco with one of my cousins. And I think, like, that was one of the first times I enjoyed one of my favorite foods. It was clam chowder. And my cousin Diego didn't want to try that. Diego was just like. I was like. We were like, 10, and Diego's like, no, I'm having chicken tenders. And my grandma said, like, noah is more worldly than you, Diego. You have to try this. And it was important for me to try that to my grandma because she grew up in San Francisco herself. So I've always wanted to, like, soak that in and just kind of, like, I always kind of wanted to live in San Francisco. Like, I know people, like, like to say things about one thing or another, but I'm just like. Like, I don't care if everyone's fighting. I don't care. I just. I. I love living by the beach and. Yeah, basically, yeah, just that, like, for me, it was. It was like getting to know San Francisco. I didn't even realize it until later in life. It was that, oh, it was important for my grandma because, oh, like, not only does she grew up there, but she still really likes a lot of the food there and wants, you know, try it out. And it was actually nice getting to bond with her over that. She would tell me, like, the way that she would always make it or, like, the way that she would always try it with, like, lemon even. Yeah.

Speaker 1: 51:45

Beautiful food connects us.

Speaker 2: 51:48

Yes. Yeah, actually. Or even disconnects us if you're just not willing to try that. Like, my Diego. Diego didn't want to try clam chowder, and I didn't want to try tajin anymore. I didn't want to try spicy candy or dakis or, like, it can be almost disconnecting if you're just not into all that stuff. I guess I kind of feel that way right now when it comes to, like. Like, I don't drink really. So there's, like, a whole back half of, like. Like, college experiences that I don't need, but also just, like, things that happen to people that I'm thinking, oh, I've never had somebody say that to me. Wait. Huh? Is it because they've never gotten drunk before? Is it because they've never gotten drunk? Like, it's like, a whole thing that. It's weird to me, you

know, it's like a part of me does feel like, oh, people telling their stories about, like, getting drunk this night this night. I mean, I don't. I don't do that. I'm like.

Speaker 1: 53:06

Well, it's not like you're afraid of missing out, but you are missing out somewhere.

Speaker 2: 53:11

Yeah. And. And I. It's this. I feel like that's like the whole dichotomy I'm living in, where it's like. I don't wanna. I don't want to say that. It's like I'm noticing that I get. Yeah, it is a disconnect that it. Is this the disconnect that you can have when you don't have the same drinks or don't try the same food? You don't have the same foods, but you tried them, you don't like them. It's a disconnect. But also, you don't. It's not necessarily, like, forced on one person or another. I mean, there are times where I tried foods that I didn't like, but I just wanted to eat them because my Willita gave it to me. My Lolita gave me a sandwich with moldy bread on it one time, and I. And I legit thought, huh, like, like, there's a tiny piece of mold on it. And I just thought, huh. Well, she. She gave it to me. It must be okay. So I ate it.

Speaker 1: 54:14

How were you afterwards?

Speaker 2: 54:16

I was like, huh. I didn't know you could eat moldy bread. Probably had stomach problems that I forgot about. I've been very bad about, like, my own, like, health. I'm really bad at, like, mentioning when I'm sick. Like, I. It took me a. There was a time where it took me, like, five days to realize I had Covid. Like. Like, there was a time where I'm just, like, so bad saying, like, if I'm sick or not, because I'm thinking must be allergies. So. Because, you know. Because you never know. You never know. It could be allergies, I guess. But just, like, I'm over here. If I had, like, stomach problems for a long I. Stomach problems, like, like all my life, and I didn't even think until I was 22 that, hey, maybe it's actually, like, a thing that can be diagnosed. Like, hey, maybe it's actually, like, IBS or something. Like, oh, maybe I should actually, like, call someone about that. Oh, yeah. Yeah. It's about it.

Speaker 1: 55:26

Yeah. Well, I had fun talking to you. No.

Speaker 2: 55:31

Well, thank you, Basma. Thank you. Am I saying. Am I saying your name right?

Speaker 1: 55:36

You are.

Speaker 2: 55:36

All right, cool. Thank you.

Speaker 1: 55:38

All right, let me end the recording.