

4-9-2021

Interview with Shayal Singh (Steve's Indian Filipino Market)

Shayal Singh

Harpunit Kaur

California State University, Monterey Bay

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California State University, Monterey Bay

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Recommended Citation

Singh, Shayal; Kaur, Harpunit; and Hernandez-Gallegos, Tere, "Interview with Shayal Singh (Steve's Indian Filipino Market)" (2021). *Pacific Food Empires*. 4.

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Interviewee: Shayal Singh

Interviewers: Harpunit Kaur and Tere Hernandez- Gallegos

Date: 4-09-2021

Location: Zoom (Salinas)

Collection: Food for Thought: Oral Histories of California's Asian-Pacific Foodways, JAPN
317: Pacific Food Empires, Spring 2021

Length: 00:45:31

Overseen by: Dr. Dustin Wright

Biography:

Shayal Singh is the daughter of the owner of Steve's Indian Filipino Market. This is her third year working at the store and she is also a nurse. Shayal Singh was born and raised in Fiji, her father came to the US before her. Her father received the store from her cousin since they could not keep up with this and another store they had.

Summary of Transcript:

(0:29) Shayal Singh gave a brief introduction about herself, her home background and spoke a little about Steve's Indian Filipino Market. **(3:18)** She explains how long they have been in the food market. **(4:22)** She explains what her favorite part about being in the food business/industry is. **(5:23)** She explains how it was to build a clientele. **(10:34)** She explained how COVID-19 affected her business. **(14:32)** she tells what inspired her father to choose the food market as a business. **(16:23)** She explains what is her least favorite part about working in the food industry. **(21:13)** She talks about how her being an Asian-American individual has affected her business in the food industry. **(23:27)** She talks about how with the shutdowns that are being put in place now, has that affected your market. **(27:09)** She describes the food she sells at her market. **(37:33)** She talks about how if there was something she would change about her business, either in the past or now, what would it be. **(41:22)** She talks about the goals she had when you first opened and what goals she has now?

Interview Transcript:

HK: OK, so thank you. Here we have the daughter.

0:01

HK: The owner's daughter for Steve's Indian Filipino market.

0:08

HK: And my name is Harpunit Kaur. And my partner's name

THG: Tere Hernandez- Gallegos

HK: And then could you please tell us something about yourself, about the market that you just, just a little bit of an insight.

0:29

SS: Oh, well, my name is Shayal Singh. This is my third year in. I actually haven't, like I haven't been to school here. So it's interesting here to be culture shock for me because I come from a Pacific island country.

0:44

SS: So it's a really small country compared to here. And then we don't have a lot of Asian people in terms of East Asian.

0:52

SS: So for me seeing him made a meeting here.

1:02

SS: There's a lot of the Afghanis and Filipino people here and getting to know them and like working with them was a really good experience.

1:07

SS: And for their market, I believe the market was here.

1:17

SS: Well, Steve is my cousin, he came from Fiji, in the nineteen ninety seven.

1:24

SS: He came from Fiji, my dad, my dad, my father's uncle.

1:34

SS: He used to own the business. He used to have a small Asian market, I believe he was used to working in the military.

1:41

SS: So I think it was one of his friends, Filipino friends, that said, why don't we.

1:49

SS: Why don't you open up Asian market? Because at that time, they didn't have any Asian groceries.

1:55

SS: A lot of the military people that are here are Asians.

2:03

SS: So they didn't have anything and they would have to go to San Jose or Sacramento or Hayward to get their supplies.

2:09

SS: So my uncle decided to open a small store.

2:18

SS: I think that store was based on Reservation Road. It was a really small store.

2:22

SS: And then later, after fighting for five years, my brother helped* Steve came from Fiji. 2:27

SS: And then he helped my uncle grow the business. And then he decided to open one in Salinas. 2:35

SS: And then and then there were two businesses. 2:44

SS: The one was on preservation and the other one was Salinas. 2:48

SS: So, I mean, it's a different ownership, but it's like it's sort of like a family thing. 2:52

SS: Right. Right now. So then my cousin I mean, the reservation store couldn't keep up with the demand, so they had to open another one. 2:59

SS: So that's when we opened another one at Delmonte. Thank you. 3:11

HK: You're welcome. So would my partner want to start off with the first question and then we could switch off like that. 3:18

THG: So for them, first question, how long have you been in the food market? 3:29

SS: Do you hear me? Oh, yes, sure. So, OK, well, this is my third year or so when my dad, my father, when we first migrated from B.G. to here. 3:39

SS: It was hard and difficult for my brother to manage the store in Marina. 3:49

SS: So he decided to sell it off. But then we came along and then he said that it is better to keep it in the family. 3:54

SS: So my dad, he bought the business and he wanted to keep the essence and everything the same. 4:02

SS: So I would say it's our second year running the business. 4:09

SS: It has been there for a while, according to me. It has been there for like eight or nine years. 4:16

SS: So the one that I'm looking at and I'm on my other. 4:22

HK: The other question is, what is your favorite part about being in the food business slash industry? 4:28

SS: Like, is there something bad? Well, firstly, the money. 4:37

SS: I mean, they're all business. Like, the first thing I would say. 4:42

SS: But honestly, for me, because I'm normally not always at the store. 4:46

SS: But for me, it's learning other people's culture. Meeting new people. 4:51

SS: A lot of a lot of people know me here. Right. Other businesses know me when I go to Lucky's. 4:57

SS: When I go to the nail salon. When I go to the dentist, I see my customers there. 5:04

SS: I see the guy I was pulling out my tooth is my customer. I would say, I mean, you get to meet like you're part of the community or helping everyone. 5:08

SS: It's like a family thing. My customers are not customers. They're like family. 5:19

SS: They come every day. We're all first name basis. I would say that the social aspects are my favorite part. 5:23

THG: How was to build a clientele? 5:32

THG: The other question is how to. How was to build a clientele? 5:50

SS: Oh I am sorry, Is it like one of the questions you sent me? 6:01

THG: Yeah. It is the five one number five. Yeah. 6:07

SS: Oh, clientele. It wasn't hard, honestly, because there's a lot of apartments. 6:12

SS: So a lot of people don't have storage space. So they don't usually don't-like a lot of people. 6:18

SS: What they do is go to Costco, go and buy like a bulk of things because they have bigger houses, bigger storage space. 6:24

SS: But what the problem was here, there's a lot of apartments, so they don't have huge pantries and everything to keep for storage. 6:32

SS: And Asian people are really particular, like they don't believe in, like reheating food and making it like a big amount and keeping it for later. 6:41

SS: They prefer cooking every time, like a hot milk or a hot meal. 6:50

SS: And so I believe that that's the reason why we're always busy and we always have customers. 6:54

SS: It's not like every day is like a slow day. Everyday we have customers coming in, I believe. 7:00

SS: It wasn't really hard to build the clientèle because we had a bunch of apartments here and Asian people that our--- Asian people prefer. 7:08

SS: Like fruits and vegetables over meat and processed or like going out. 7:19

SS: So it wasn't that hard. I would say they would even if for a piece of onion they would come every day to buy. 7:24

SS: It depends on the person, the customer. 7:31

SS: But despite having the lot. We're not the only Asian market. 7:36

SS: There are others like the Korean store next door. And there's a bunch of other Asian markets, too. 7:40

SS: But with ours we have fruits and vegetables. 7:47

SS: So I believe that's our gain site because you can buy your groceries and then you can buy your fruits and vegetables for fresh produce. 7:49

SS: And then we keep fish and meat products, too. 7:58

SS: So I believe that's like one of them was a plus point for us to get customers every time. 8:02

THG: Yeah. For me personally, when I went shopping, you know, the market. 8:12

THG: I am always looking for the fruit and vegetable that looks fresh and I like the little market. 8:21

THG: Have I got better fruit and vegetables fresh than others like you mentioned Costco. 8:30

THG: And it is better to buy like every day or like twice a week. 8:38

SS: Oh, yeah, I know. Yeah. Just to add onto it, like the thing, the thing about Costco, Wal-Mart. 8:48

SS: Bigger companies is that they get their fruits and vegetables from their own farms. 8:57

SS: They don't buy from local businesses. They have their own farms. 9:01

SS: They have their own factories. So what happens is when you buy from those big corporate companies, they have a different way of producing. 9:06

SS: They use chemicals. They use pesticide, so like, whereas smaller Asian markets. 9:15

SS: They buy from local farmers and suppliers and those they don't have the money to go and get fertilizers or. 9:22

SS: You know, they have the natural means of growing within vegetable soil and even off like the vegetables we sell. 9:31

SS: You will not find them in local grocery stores because they're really hard to get. 9:39

SS: And you have to go, to like a diff--. You have to go really inside Gilroy to get those vegetables. 9:44

SS: Pretty much. So with Costco and Wal-Mart, I believe, they have like huge farms and they just have and then they sell it. 9:50

SS: Sometimes I believe they're cheaper compared to them. In terms of vegetables, fruit, 10:02

SS: I believe it's a little bit like we are a little bit expensive because we buy from Middleman's or we fire from smaller farmers. 10:07

SS: So they like it because they produce vegetables on a smaller scale. 10:15

SS: So they have to sell it, which is a little bit expensive to us compared to Wal-Mart or Costco, because they have their own farm. 10:21

SS: They know how much to sell it for, you know, just to get more people to come in. 10:29

SS: So I would say that's basically it.

HK: Thank you. 10:34

HK: And then, and another question was, how has the Covid 19 affected your business or if it has or not? 10:40

SS: It has actually missed a lot of things. And initially when the lockdown happened, we were busy. 10:50

SS: Problem was. The shelves are empty and we were not able to supply people because the Asian market, it comes from overseas. 10:57

SS: Shipments are stopped. And then the previous administration, we had Trump. 11:08

SS: He increased tariffs on those Asian countries. So they were selling things really expensive. 11:17

SS: For example, we used to sell, I believe, a tin of coconut milk for ninety nine cents. 11:25

SS: And in that short span of time, it went to one forty nine a dollar forty nine. 11:30

SS: So it's little things, but I would say Covid 19. It did impact my business. 11:36

SS: We were busy. But then in the middle it got really slow too, because people don't have jobs. 11:43

SS: They had to like the budget. So they couldn't buy a lot of things, you know. 11:50

SS: I believe it was not just only my business that got affected, I believe it was everyone in the restaurant, people who came. 11:59

SS: The Asian restaurant, people that used to buy groceries from özel, vegetables from us, they couldn't buy from us. 12:09

SS: So we lost, like, major customers. 12:16

SS: Then we used to supply. So. 12:21

HK: Yeah. 12:21

THG: Oh, sorry, go ahead.

HK: I was gonna say my mother and my father there also have a store and the Covid 19 has.
12:29

HK: Also affected them by their customers and also with how much the supply that they get.
12:37

HK: And then those prices have risen up to. So it does.
12:44

HK: We also understand, like, how it affects them. Thank you for talking about it.
12:49

SS: Yeah. I mean, at the end of the day, I mean, the small business, every small business is struggling at this point, like even.
12:55

SS: Right. I feel like there's no regulation in terms of like there was no exemption for rent.
13:07

SS: Yeah, there was no exemption for electricity. Like, okay, you know what the government would have done, like, OK.
13:15

SS: You don't have to pay for electricity. We'll take care of it. But nothing was done.
13:23

SS: So, yeah, I feel I guess they are giving you a relief bill but it's a loan.
13:29

SS: You already have a loan and then you want to get into another loan now.
13:34

HK: And then I also heard about the first PP loans.
13:39

HK: It was like the big companies got it and not a lot of smaller stores have and that's why they had the second loan again for lower.
13:43

SS: So I think, you know, even like basically you're saying they could have just given hand sanitizers or stand or something.
13:56

SS: We tried to rent it. It was really expensive. You know, the wash stations you have, like wash your hands and then you enter.
14:06

SS: I think they tried to the reservation store, but it was really expensive. So they had to get rid of it in a month.
14:17

SS: It was like your, your, your business already suffering.
14:23

SS: And then you are renting this something. Now you have to rent something else Right. Right. Yeah.

14:27
SS: I feel like if little things were given to small businesses, it wouldn't have been that bad.

14:32
THG: Yeah. Another question is, what inspired you to choose the food market as a business?

14:39
SS: Oh, well. It will.

14:56
SS: That was my dad's decision. I believe, look, when we came here, I mean, there was a lot of jobs.

15:02
SS: Like that time when we came, the economy was booming. I got a job as soon as I came here.

15:10
SS: You got to remember, I got a job at Ross. I just went there and they said, you're hired.

15:16
SS: But then I was at that time, we were living in Sacramento.

15:21
SS: So it's. My dad came to the US before.

15:25
SS: Like before. Couple of years ago. So he was familiar with the business.

15:30
SS: He saw day to day operations when he came to visit.

15:37
SS: So he had a basic idea. He was the one who was interested in, like, running because he also had a degree.

15:42
SS: He has an MBA. So he knew how to run a business.

15:51
SS: I just help him out. But I believe it was more like the money X Factor.

15:56
SS: But now I think he enjoys it because of the social aspects.

16:02
SS: But I think it was because. It was heavy, he was trying to help my cousin at that time, but now it's more like.

16:07
SS: His baby now. So he is taking care of this. Yeah.

16:17
HK: The other ones, like before we actually, what was your favorite part? Which one would use that as working?

16:23
HK: What is your least favorite part working in the food industry?

16:28
SS: Actually, I have a lot of them there. The long hours, I would say it's 12 hour, like twelve hours I work per day, so.

16:36
SS: And then I'm a student, too. I work at a job as a nurse's aide.

16:47
SS: So that's. So on Mondays and Tuesdays when I'm working there, I actually like it so long.

16:54
SS: Like twelve hours, you know, working on your feet. You have symptoms.

17:00
SS: You have really nice customers. And then sometimes you have really not so nice customers.

17:04
SS: They're ready to pounce on you on a bad day.

17:11
SS: So I mean. Yeah, I mean, it's mo-, it's, it's not the business part.

17:14
SS: I would say like not working like labor work at this, but it's more like dealing with the customers sometimes.

17:19
SS: There you have really nice customers and sometimes you have really not so nice customers.

17:26
SS: So I mean that's one it, I would say. And then another one is like the time consumption, like even if you go home you have to order stuff.

17:32
SS: You have to order vegetables, you have to give orders for the bread. And I come from Fiji.

17:40
SS: I didn't have to know people there. I don't know the language. So most of the time when I'm communicating, their English is not good.

17:47
SS: Mine is so-so. and then they're the way they pronounce some of their food is hard.

17:54
SS: So I say something and then then they hear something else.

18:01
SS: So that's another problem I have. And I'm still trying to learn Tagalog, though I always forget the only thing I know if I'm with you.

18:05
SS: But other than that, I mean.

18:18
SS: Yeah. And then there's also a language barrier because a lot of customers that are coming to the store are the older generation.

18:21
SS: They don't speak English. And I am communicating with my hands.

18:30
SS: I'm Googling, I'm using my voice, using a translator. I'm using my hands.

18:34
SS: I'm trying to show them there's another problem. I face this language barrier.

18:39
SS: I think the business is I mean, asian markets are fun.

18:45
SS: Can we plan to. Yeah.

THG: Thank you for mentioning that I think I like the way you improve to get a good understanding of their customers is great.

18:50
THG: You know, that's maybe that's why you can build a better clientele.

19:09
THG: And that's why the people don't look for another store.

19:16
THG: You know, you go if you have good customer service in your store.

19:19
THG: That's where some people prefer to go back to that store than the older one.

19:25
SS: Yeah, me too. I mean, customer.

19:31
SS: I've never worked in my life before when I was in Fiji, so I turned 20.

19:35
SS: It's the first time I work. So I would say I learn about cost- like back home is different for you.

19:42
SS: Back home you either buy or you don't buy. And the person is the sales person is not going to force you.

19:49
SS: No one cares. The business owner doesn't care because they know you're going to buy it anyway.

19:55
SS: Here it's different because just because people have a lot of options.

20:00
SS: So they have, you have to be really nice and friendly and have good customer service to keep your customers.

20:03

SS: So from that was a really big culture shock because I was before I was like, oh, if he doesn't buy, I don't care. 20:10

SS: But if you have that attitude, oh, no, it's not going to work. 20:17

SS: So when I first started working at Ross and then I moved here and then I was working a case at the end working at my store. 20:21

SS: I was working not because of money. 20:30

SS: I was working just to learn how to deal with customers because the place I come from is really different compared to here. 20:32

SS: You have to be really nice and gentle to your customers and offer them to keep being like you have to keep smiling. 20:42

SS: And from where I come, you do not have to do that. You just buy and move along. 20:48

SS: So I would say I learned a lot working at KFC, how to be, how to present yourself, how to greet customers. 20:53

SS: Yeah. So I would say I learned it over there and then I used whatever I learned from there in this business. 21:02

SS: In much. So. 21:13

THG: So another question is, how did you, being an Asian American individual, have affected your business in the food industry? 21:20

SS: How in the food industry. I sometimes have to agree to, like, go through which question is it no longer nine, nine. 21:34

SS: (reads through the question). As an Asian American. 21:46

SS: Well, there are a lot of people who get confused with me, either I'm Indian or I'm black because of my dark skin. 22:01

SS: But I get confused between my dad because he's fair skinned, but he looks a little bit like Mexican or Filipino to older Filipinos. 22:11

SS: They have, like a difference. They come from different countries. They have like they come from different islands. 22:20

SS: So the Filipinos, some are dark skinned, summer night skin, some they have a diff. 22:24

SS: So they always speak to him in a different language. 22:29

SS: And then they realize that, oh, he's not Filipino. He's not Mexican. So. 22:33

SS: I mean, for us. There was no one like the Asian thing because they got confused with us looking at us. 22:40

SS: But for us, you know. 22:49

SS: We had, we didn't face any problems or we didn't have any gaining us expect either from being an Asian American just because of our looks. 22:52

SS: They couldn't identify that we were like black or Indian. 23:04

SS: I did. I still get compliments for how I look. I feel like that's about it. 23:09

SS: But at the store, the business. No, I had, like, nothing, nothing to do with race ever happened in the store. 23:15

HK: That's great. So going on to the next question. 23:27

HK: As It is with the shut downs that are being in place right now or they still are. 23:30

HK: Has that affected your market in any way? 23:37

SS: Yeah, I mean, like the restaurant customers that used to come in buying bulks, whether it was vegetable produce or basically even the sauces they use. 23:41

SS: That the Asian stores like the thai store, the one in on Reign Dollar Pie Store, 23:53

the restaurant where she couldn't she couldn't come and buy like the way she used to. 24:00

SS: The owner is another one of the Boki houses. 24:05

SS: They used to come over to buy bags of onions, carrots, like in huge quantities.

24:10
SS: They stopped coming because they knew, they could, they couldn't open or they.

24:17
SS: Weren't even like running in their maximum capacity to come and buy that much.

24:23
SS: So that affected the business. We had a lot of customers that got laid off because the majority of our customers work at Pebble Beach.

24:29
SS: Asians, the whole beach was closed. They couldn't come.

24:37
SS: They were pretty much depending on whatever they were getting from unemployment.

24:41
SS: We, we, I remember he's a lady.

24:46
SS: There's like a couple of people that supply us peanuts and bake and desserts.

24:50
SS: So we kind of help them out, too, by selling their products and then we give them money just to help them out in difficult times.

24:57
SS: But other than that, I feel like it really impacted small business, especially the Asian markets.

25:06
SS: And another thing was when this happened, when Covid hit the employees of the two employees.

25:14
SS: That we had that time left because they were scared of working the Asian market.

25:20
SS: I remember there was a fight for rice in my store. Yeah.

25:26
SS: Literally, they were fighting over rice for the truck.

25:31
SS: That's not even out on the street. They were like, we want to pay.

25:35
SS: We want to take it, I'm like . Hold on. I mean, just like unload it and see how much of your rice we are getting?

25:40
SS: And we get like a hundred, 100 hundred bags of rice. They were just giving us ten bucks, though.

25:46
SS: Imagine that. How am I supposed to choose between my customers?

25:52
SS: Won't believe it or not. Yeah.

25:56
SS: And then I'm leaving us. I'm very, like very busy times because people are running our own particular papers and rice and.

26:00
SS: Other things and that those two left because they were scared of working at the Asian market.

26:13
SS: They don't want to get Covid because we had a lot of Asians coming in. And I remember this white lady, you to your race, who was this white lady?

26:18
SS: This other Asian lady came close to her and she's like, no, no stay away.

26:29
SS: Six feet. Oh, wow. It's OK. I'm a nurse. I mean, I'm a nurse's aide.

26:34
SS: If I, if I decide to do that and stop caring for my patients, who's going to look after those complications?

26:39
SS: Right. But the way she cited the tone she used was very disrespectful.

26:45
SS: I feel like Colbert has impacted Asian markets a lot because people got scared to.

26:52
SS: Going there thinking that we were going to give it to them or something like that.

26:57
SS: Like I am in South Asia. But still, they were like, you know.

27:04
SS: Still got Peter differently. Yeah.

THG: So for the next question is, what are the most popular items in your store?
27:09

SS: Well, a lot of people come from the noodles. The notion noodles, the cup noodles.
27:26

SS: That's for the young people that are coming, the younger generation, the middle school kids.
27:34

SS: They come from that, like Candy. The snacks.
27:40

SS: But so we have like so the people come for the vegetables, pretty much vegetables or fruit.
27:45

SS: Then we have like the races, which is that, the Filipinos and the Vietnamese.
27:52

SS: They come for their own food time. 27:58

SS: So they like I know I always have to keep up with my Filipino and my Vietnamese because they come every day for fruits, vegetables and their noodles. 28:01

SS: They eat noodles. That's their staple food. So. 28:11

SS: And for India, the Indian groceries that we sell in the store, it's surprisingly not Indians who are coming in buying them. 28:14

SS: It's mostly, oh, I think that's why it looks just like a 60 year old white lady by buying. 28:24

SS: But the English Women. Key. Key. Like what? 28:36

SS: What are you going to do with this mission? Oh, I use it in my food. 28:40

SS: So they make us use oil. We move from G to oil because we work hard. 28:44

SS: The key is really fatty, not good for us. But now they're moving backward. 28:49

SS: So I will say that out is mostly targeted by the white people they comfort, like the Indian food. 28:54

SS: I mean, I do have my Middle Eastern friends coming over and eating their stuff, but they like the Indian stuff we sell in the store. 29:02

SS: It's mostly taken by the white people. I like I heard you getting in. 29:10

SS: Customers come in and take it unless it's a special religious occasion or whatever. 29:14

SS: If they're doing their annual shopping because Indian people do shopping when one once a month and they buy a lot. 29:21

SS: That's it. And then don't come back until it finishes. The Eastern Asian and North Asian. 29:29

SS: I believe they are different. They come every day. Little by little. 29:37

SS: Day by little. And then they come back again. 29:41

SS: So I would see the one that I miss, customers I and that the ones that sell are like Filipino people in Vietnam. 29:44

SS: And these people come every day or that. Yeah. 29:52

HK: I think it's really interesting how you said about Gey because I am South Asian hearing, 29:58

HK: Because my family, we have like two big cups of gages right next to us. 30:04

HK: So it's really like I've never seen any other race for that. 30:10

SS: Right. Yeah.

HK: And I was like, oh, cool. So when you said that I was like, OK, that's that's interesting. 30:15

HK: I've never seen that. So it's really a bunch of white people coming. 30:21

SS: Thank you. Finding the younger generation I thought was older than the younger generation 30:26

SS: That comes from JI and they buy like those big thirty nine dollar bottles. 30:31

SS: And I'm like. Close. What are we doing? Like, what are we doing? 30:36

SS: Do we? Oh, no. She is not getting worse. 30:41

SS: They're living longer, if you like. South Asian people have heart disease themselves because of our unhealthy lifestyle. 30:46

SS: And where's their use of our products that we want. 30:56

SS: Paul, that's really valuable. They're using it now. It's better for our health. 31:00

SS: So I feel like. Even the card. 31:06

SS: And then they're using their king. I thought it was like our thing, you know, now it's like. 31:11

SS: They still could help you with recipes, too. 31:19

HK: Really? Yeah.

SS: They're like, oh, you should try these, aren't you? 31:26

SS: And I'm like, not not on how much you like. 31:30

SS: They would give me recipes and stuff and they have their own best. Yeah. 31:34

SS: They're the ones who are buying most of the Indian products. You know, rose reinspection. 31:39

HK: That's interesting. That's very different than I would have thought. And then there's a second part to that question. 31:43

HK: Is that what is the least popular item in the store, in your store, if there are any? 31:51

SS: The least favorite, I got three of them. Like, I don't even keep them on the shelf. 32:00

SS: No more because they don't sell expired. But I wouldn't say. 32:04

SS: The fish, just because there are days that we don't have any fish now, because it goes so fast. 32:09

SS: And then there are days where the fish is just sitting there and you would have to throw them away. 32:16

SS: Well, I would say fish could be the most selling item. 32:22

SS: And at the same time could be the one that would, like make you have losses, too, because I believe snappers, red snapper, salmon, other fishermen. 32:27

SS: Still, it's really hard to get. Very expensive. You have to go all the way to San Francisco to get them. 32:40

SS: And you need to get it from the people that have licenses, too. 32:46

SS: Because if anyone gets sick by eating those fish, then you need to go trace back to people who, you know, you buy from when you can not. 32:51

SS: We have people who would like you to go fishing or sport sporting purposes. 33:00

SS: But I'm saying that what if they if my customers eat that and they get sick? 33:05

SS: How are we going to go back following them, though? 33:10

SS: Yeah, I would say the fish.

HK: That's really sweet of how the how you and your store always think about the peep about the customers and not about like,

33:16

HK: Oh, this is the easiest to get. Oh this is cheaper to get. You always always are on top of your guys' things.

33:27

HK: And you guys make sure though that it's quality, not quantity.

33:34

HK: So that's really nice.

SS: I think it's because of my father and well, he had a really good job.

33:39

SS: He was a customer all his life. So he always wanted within like even for he wanted us to eat good.

33:48

SS: Like he doesn't care if you don't wear like if he doesn't he doesn't care about clothes too.

33:55

SS: So you can have a hole in your coat. I don't care. Food is really important for him though.

34:00

SS: He doesn't want to sell, like cheap stuff or food that would make someone sick or give them like rip them off.

34:06

SS: Basically because he worked hard all his life.

34:14

SS: He didn't want to do it like he doesn't want to rob a customer because people live paycheck to paycheck and then they come to your store.

34:17

SS: Not going to bigger stores where they couldn't have gotten any cheaper.

34:26

SS: They come to your store.

34:30

SS: So his main priority was money. No money has become like secondary now compared to being the top priority, because I think he made money.

34:31

SS: He has money now. It's more like serving the customers, keeping the store going.

34:41

HK: That is great. And then the next question is, how would you describe your food you sell at your market to you?

34:46

SS: Well, that's pretty much I mean, like I when I go to what it looks like, it's in inches.

34:59

SS: I don't even go there because I have everything coming from my store. 35:06

SS: And it's also the food you eat here is very like your own culture. 35:13

SS: Food is really different from the American food. Right. 35:18

SS: Americans have really changed our food. Like my own version of Chinese food and Chinese food that I eat here at a panda is really different. 35:22

SS: Back home, I used to eat it with my Chinese friend and therefore it is more spicy here. 35:31

SS: It's sweet. So a lot of people are really thankful when they come to the store. 35:36

SS: They say, oh, thank you for carrying no food, you know, because if you guys are in Korea. 35:42

SS: Then we would have to go far away to get it or we wouldn't be in touch with our culture, 35:47

SS: Wouldn't be able to give our kids the food that we, you know, with food is pretty much keeping the culture and everything going. 35:53

SS: Yes. And I don't. 36:01

THG: Oh, sorry, go ahead. I'm going to talk about the next question. 36:08

HK: Oh, I was going. I say. I think it's wonderful how you and your father and just everyone who is Asian. 36:13

HK: Market or any type of market would do these things because of keeping the culture. 36:20

HK: And I think that is wonderful. Like because we can't just like, oh, this week I want to go back to my home country. 36:27

HK: It's like you can do that unless you have, like, a lot of money, which in the, in the places we are, where it's kind of hard. 36:34

HK: So I think it's wonderful how you guys do that and you guys bring food from those countries. 36:44

HK: And I think that is a non-get product from the companies here, the really big ones. 36:50

HK: And I think that is wonderful and really sweet.

SS: Thank you.

36:57

SS: I mean, there are U.S. there there's U.S. based companies here that have taken like they would have, they had their own.

37:02

SS: Spin on ingredients and they have made their own sauces or we don't buy from them just because of the fact of flavor.

37:14

SS: And people want that either. And you want to have their own food.

37:24

SS: Want to put their own stuff in there. No. Yeah.

37:29

SS: I mean, nuts. They just want to keep their home closer to food, I guess.

37:33

HK: That is wonderful.

THG: So the next question is, if there was something you would change about your business, either in the past or now, what will it be?

37:39

SS: I did change. You made a lot of changes in this store. Biggest problem with this story was it was really dirty.

38:01

SS: I would n't even lie about it.

38:07

SS: When my cousin was running in this store, I did when I first came to his store, I was like, oh, hell no, no, we're not buying this store.

38:09

SS: It's hell dirty. I'm not buying it. Why do people come here?

38:16

SS: You know, it's a big line. Why are people coming here?

38:20

SS: This is so dirty. And I don't blame him because he had two workers and he's a guy.

38:24

SS: I don't expect a guy. South Asians don't expect a guy.

38:29

SS: Keep it clean and. No, nice. Spotless, right.

38:33

SS: Always woman. So, I mean, here he is.

38:37

SS: But he had another store in Salinas and is going in the middle of the night to get supplies.

38:41
SS: He doesn't. And it's the workers. So and if you don't have if you're not watching your workers, they're going to slack off.

38:47
SS: They're not going to, you know, there's a lot of things going there.

38:53
SS: The storm is a dirty cripple. Clean everything.

38:58
SS: Just stole the shelves. Get rid of the old items that weren't selling and.

39:02
SS: And another change that we had to do was when the sales people came, the salesman that would come from distributing companies to write it down.

39:09
SS: What would they do? They're commission based. So you have to be a little smart because they just try to sell you things that he doesn't.

39:18
SS: That doesn't even sell or they just want to get rid of it.

39:28
SS: So you have to be really careful when they come in because you are really strong and say, no, I won this best and you can keep the ones away.

39:32
SS: So before that one, when my brother was running it, I knew that it would just come right down and they would send it right there.

39:41
SS: Wouldn't you consult my brother that, hey, I wrote this down and you know, you think, is it OK?

39:49
SS: We wouldn't even, like, tell him they would just send it.

39:54
SS: So one of the changes we did was me and my dad.

40:00
SS: We said, OK, I'm going to order bread. You would do vegetables and fruit.

40:04
SS: The sales people come whichever day I'll do the rice company.

40:09
SS: You do the frozen items like we distribute.

40:14
SS: So that way we are able to budget and see what we need for the store.

40:20

SS: And some of the changes we're planning to do is we're going to extend the store, if you have seen it.

40:26

SS: It's enclosed in front when you enter, we wanna open up the place and maybe have the aisle for the Middle Eastern.

40:32

SS: People, like, halo stuff because we're still friends have to go all the way to San Jose and get their stuff.

40:40

SS: Halo. Here, and meat. So that's one of the plans.

40:48

SS: You can maybe have like a small section of bring Mexican items at the grocery.

40:55

SS: And then another out for the Middle Eastern people.

41:01

SS: So now it's going to like Peter, more customers and at the same time like.

41:06

SS: Still, this store needs expanding right now at this point, so, yes, that's one of the things we want to do.

41:15

HK: That is wonderful. And we're on our last question again.

41:22

HK: I would like to say thank you for doing this interview with us. So the last question is, what goals did you have when you first opened the market?

41:26

HK: And if you have any goals right now that you and your and your market that want to achieve?

41:36

SS: Oh, we're. So the goal in the beginning was to run it every day.

41:43

SS: Make sure we don't die in this store because, hey, I never worked before.

41:50

SS: And then I come to this place meeting different people of different races and running.

41:56

SS: Like at the beginning, the main goal was to run it, like keep on running it efficiently as much as we could without slacking off.

42:02

SS: Well, no. I mean, like after a year, we finally got a handful of fingers finally able to produce.

42:13

SS: Like, pronounce names of difficult a Filipino and Vietnamese items.

42:18
SS: So now we wanna brown brown child. Well, we feel we thought of opening on Boba Small like a boba place.

42:23
SS: But it's a lot of work. So then we thought of having an aisle for the Middle Eastern people. They don't have to go to San Jose to get their stuff.

42:31
SS: So right now, I feel like we're still sticking to the Middle Eastern part.

42:43
SS: When I came back, instead of opening a Boba place, because then I needed to, like, I'm really an employee.

42:48
SS: We need permission, permits and those kinds of things that got really expensive and hard to get.

42:55
SS: There's no help from the government whatsoever. So that's pretty much it.

43:01
SS: And we want to expand and market. More.

43:07
SS: I did get the word out like encouraging people to buy it from small, smaller businesses compared to buying from bigger corporations like Wal-Mart.

43:10
SS: Like Target or Costco, because those people are making a lot of money and small businesses are closing down.

43:20
SS: I know a lot of businesses that closed down, though, the one that's really close to where the bike store is on top of us.

43:27
SS: On another side, they're closing down because of the Covid.

43:38
SS: So right now, the main aim is to keep the business people running and expanding it more.

43:43
SS: Thank you guys for having me.

HK: Thank you for doing this interview with that scribal project.

43:53
HK: We've really much appreciated it.

HK: And yeah, and then do you want to say anything right now?

43:58
THG: Well, thank you. Thank you for your time. Thank you for sharing. You know your history and given time to do our project.

44:06
THG: You know, we appreciate you.
SS: You're welcome. I mean, it's all good talking to people about business, family, business. 44:18
SS: My dad is planning to pass it on to me later. Then you're planning to give it to me again. 44:29
SS: So it's going to be like a partnership. Let's see how it goes. 44:37
SS: It's hard to do, it's hard to have a family business. 44:41
SS: Sometimes you have a clash of ideas. So because I'm also doing my school at the same time. 44:45
SS: So that's another difficult part of it. But let's see how it goes. 44:52
SS: But thank you guys for having me. I hope your assignment goes well. 44:57
SS: I was informative for you.
HK: Thank you. 45:02
HK: And then hopefully in the future, we could come to your rest. We visit your market and see how it is. 45:06
SS: Oh, sure you can. Any time. I'm their money. 45:12
SS: Mondays and Tuesdays. I'm there. My friend Kenya, who also works at the store. 45:17
SS: She's like a family to us. She's there. My dad is also 45:21
SS: He's always there. So coming up, we'll do all this for you. 45:26
SS: Thank you.
HK: Thank you.
THG: Thank you.