

Gerardo Garofalo

[00:00:00] **Gerardo:** [already speaking when recording starts] ...the reason for the better life.

[00:00:03] **Madoris:** Yeah. Of course.

[00:00:04] **Gerardo:** So – you know...

[00:00:05] **Madoris:** So I just started recording this thing is gonna record our conversation. And so the first thing is just telling me a little bit about yourself. What's your name for the record?

[00:00:15] **Gerardo:** My name is Gerardo Garofalo. I live in 25 Lipton Street in Kingston. I'm living here in Kingston thirty-five years ago. I used to live in Brooklyn and I had a clothing shop in Manhattan - Seventeenth Street, East Seventeenth Street, right off of Fifth Avenue.

[00:00:47] **Madoris:** And when did you move to Brooklyn?

[00:00:50] **Gerardo:** 1966. I came a from Italy, 1966 actually [00:01:00]. And I started the work in a shop – like as a floor boy.

[00:01:06] **Madoris:** How old were you?

[00:01:07] **Gerardo:** Was twenty-seven when I came. So [pause] and it was pretty.... I already did in my school in Italy and everything. I immigrate to France and went to Germany and went through it all to try to improve my life, what I can do. But in Europe at that time, it wasn't - not that great. It was sometimes okay, some don't. So my father and my brother they were here.

So they said, “What do you do here – why don't you come over here in the United States?” So they put in an application, whatever. And with five years to get the visa to come here in the United States.

In the meantime, I learned to be a plumber in Italy and that's the work - as a plumber. So my brother said, “Well, you'll come over here as a plumber, it's a goooooood living.” I said alright, I'll come over here [00:02:00]. When I come over here, it was completely different. You - you have to know how to speak English. Two, you need the license as a plumber or you work for somebody as a laborer. So this way I did, I said fine.

And I start to work my - there's another brother that was a worker in the garment industry. And he said, "All right, I talked to somebody" and he give me a job over there. And I was making \$1.25 an hour – can you imagine that? Somebody - but then - you know, I kinda like. The job was nice, it was clean. I could speak French, Spanish, English – I start to learn a little bit and I was speaking pretty good in Greek.

And it was a lots of them - Greek over there - in the shop. And a lot of Spanish, Dominican. There was a lot from Puerto Rico. There was a lot from Hati that speak [00:03:00] French - not French Creole, but broken - but there was good because I understand why they were talking about it because I speak French, very good.

And the, um.... So I say, "Well, this is pretty good for me." So I went to school to be a man's clothing designer for mans only. I wanna learn to make a pattern for mans. And good - I went to the school. There was a private school and I used to go there at night time. And there was a civics school that was on Twenty.... Uh, on Seventeenth Street, between Park Avenue and Irving Place.

When I went there, I already know about the sewing. And the president of the shop – I mean of the school that I was attending that was just civic – he was from Argentina and he says, "I need somebody to teach the people how to sew because you used to [00:04:00] training people how to sew."

So, and I said, "Well, if you give me a deal, I come over here and I show the guys how to thread the machine, how to handle pieces over there" because I already know that. I said if you do that, we make a deal. So he give me two years school free. But I had to work over there, you know at nighttime, like two hours, one hour, whatever.

And then when I had to do my paperwork, you know on the pattern whatever to do, I used to go over there. And then if the guy called me, I'd go back in the other room and see what they had a problem with the machine. I'd explain, "You got to do this..." Then go back and forth. You know what I mean? It worked for me. I never pursued that career anyhow – you know to be a designer.

So I used to manage it - you know, there was a company with the name Robert Hall, big company. So I said a good, but then.... They went broke, and everything uh... [pause] You know went – I changed job. I went to a different company, same thing - in the clothing though. We did good, then we bought the company – me and [00:05:00] six other guys, we bought the Robert Hall.

We moved from a Williamsburg to, um [pause - taps the table thinking] to New York City. There was in an old building - in a J.C. Penney building - that we rent (a hundred thousand square feet to do the clothing). And we had sub-contract for the United Mergent. And we've got a lot of - man, my god -we used to.... We did all kinds of work over there. And there was a lot of Spanish people - a lot of Dominican, I mean a lots. Mans and womans and girls - you know they did good work. They don't think ahead, but they did very good work. Know really – no disrespect. But they was very fine. We get along very well - that's for sure. And then that's it - that's what went on.

Then [pause] you know [pause]. They sold their - they closed down and then that's all [00:06:00]. We had no store. We split up. I opened up another shop, went back into the same building where we was - at Seventeenth Street.

And I used to make exclusively garments, special for design, you know, like [pause] Givenchy, Christian Dior – I used to make a bathrobe – DJ Loff. And I got a good connection with Fernando Sánchez - he's a Puerto Rican designer, Fernando Sánchez – very good. He used to make cool good clothing. But I had – because I had an ad in Woman's Wear Daily and they called from his office, from Fernando Sánchez.

She called me - she said, “You do any Clovelly bathrobe?” I said, “That's my specialty – that's what I do.” She said, “Ah - because we got something in Puerto Rico, they finally closed down. Can't do the job.” I said, “Listen, [00:07:00] I can do! Let me see what you got, send me a sample.” And she give me the thing, you know with the rope and the nice Clovelly color – all one color, all for women. Because I used to work for Ralph Lauren and [Yves Saint] Laurent at the same time and they give me....

That was good. And they said, “Oh good – that's good.” And then we did a lot of work for them - I used to do a lot of work for Fernando Sánchez, very good. I mean on time. Perfect.

Yeah. Then, you know - like everything else - the thing go down. I dunno if the imports kill everybody at that time (within the eighties). They was killing all the - everything went out of town - out of this country.

And I went - at the same time - I went to Santa Domingo at the free zone that I was going to make fifty thousand pair of pants a week that use to comma in Lima [00:08:00], Peru - they used to make it, but he used to comma in Miami. So you know, the guy - whatever happened, they had a problem over there. They said, “Can you make it?” I said, “Sure, let me see.” So we went – we rent

a hundred fifty thousand square feet in the free zone. Uh, I forget the name of the town [pause] because it was a special town [long pause] not Santiago [pause – thinking].

I can't think of that name of where we rent. The problem that I didn't do that because the government that was controlled by the military in eighties, over there. And they don't want to give me no guarantee - in like, you know they not kick me out of there, not least for three years. If we invested like \$500,000 - because we already had the machine ready, bought, I paid for. There was already - we had a deal because everything was hanging.

So to bring it there, you know, there was some machinery over there, from New York [00:09:00]. So, because they don't want to guarantee me, then - that nothing's going to happen to me at least for three years or something. I said, "I'm not going to invest \$500,000 over here, and then you in six months later, once start to work and you said, "Well, this has all belong to me" – like in Cuba, like in Fidel Castro did."

I'm not going to do with that. If you guarantee me, I'm gonna bring work over here - because there was a lot of good showing. In the Dominican, the work was very good. Yeah. And there was one good guy that I used to use that as a foreman. Actually, there were two. One was Pablo Pichardo - hard working guy.

[00:09:39] **Madoris:** I know Pablo Pichardo, but we can keep going. Ah [laughing] okay.

[00:09:42] **Gerardo:** [Surprised] You know Pablo Pichardo?

[00:09:43] **Madoris:** Yes, ah...

[00:09:45] **Gerardo:** Actually, you know what – I baptized one of his sons. With the second – when they come – with the second marriage. Yeah!

[00:09:53] **Madoris:** Okay. Let's talk about - so that we get this, and then we talk a lot about the Dominican Republic [00:10:00]. Um but um how do you get to Kingston then? What brings you here?

[00:10:05] **Gerardo:** Because when I had this shop in New York City, I never liked the city. My kids – I no want them to.... They're used to go to private school, you know like a Catholic School - Saint Frances de Chantal on Fifty-Third Street and Thirteen down in Brooklyn.

So every time I went on a weekend, I used to get along – I used to love it up here. I am from the mountains. I love the mountains, I like the clean air. So I used to bringa' the kids over here and we'd go fishing and they'd swim and everything like that.

And there was an old man here in Kingston. He used to have - there was an Italian deli on Broadway and the corner of O'Neill Street and they used to call it the Guistino Market.

The old man used to say – I used to go over there for sandwich, you know, the cases... And he mention, "Find me somebody to sell – I want to sell." So I said, "Alright [00:11:00]." A couple of times, he keep asking me this, I said, "Why don't you sell it to me?" And it was, uh, somebody was working over there. They used to work - he was very good, Timmy. I'm not gonna give a last name - he was from Kingston – because there's something no good, but I don't want.. I don't want to give you his last name – I'll justa reveal the first name, Timmy.

And he said, "Yeah, that'll work." You know - I said, "Listen to me, if you're going to buy...". There was two building. One building had it at a - you know, like an L shape on O'Neill Street and Broadway. The bottom floor was for the store. But then the one on Broadway, there, big, big apartment.

I said - I told my wife, "Maybe we put a little furniture, we come over here, you don't have to go to no cheapo motel up here." I said, "We can have our own - our own thing - put the furniture over here.... We come over here anytime you want." So I told the guy, I said, "You don't have to invest." I said, "You still just gotta run the place [00:12:00], do everything, and we split." That's what we did.

But soon the guy start to make a money, he start to gamble, do things [pause]. And then they call me, he says, "It's Central Hudson, the boss had...". You know - the people used to supply... They said, "Listen - we cannot deliver if – your not gonna.... We need to get paid C.O.D." I said - "What's wrong over there?"

So I told Pablo Pichardo I says, "Listen.... I got to go to Kingston." Because he used to be my foreman in the shop. I said, "I got to go – you watcha the shop. I got to go over there." And it was good - very good guy.

So I come over here. He wasn't nobody in – they were just a girl over there and nobody in the store. I dunno the girl, you know, that come. I said alright, let me see.

I went to pick up a can just to see what she'd do - pick up a can like a customer, put on account (\$2, \$2.50). She tooka the money. She no even put it in the [00:13:00] – she not even open the cash register. She put it right in her pocket.. I said, “Where’s Timmy?” “Oh musta be down the barber shop.”

There is a barber shop on – it’s still there, Tom La Lima... I mean Joe La Lima – the barber shop. I said, “Where is it?” And she said, “Oh it’s over here about two blocks.” I walked down over there and he was sat over there with a bunch of guys nobody.... You know just talking or whatever they was like a bunch of – sound like a bunch of mafioso. But there was no mafioso - just cheap...

I said, “What are you doing?” “Ah, there's no work.” “So why you got to go over there?” “Why don’t you do the job?” “Whys they call me - you no pay the bills. Why is it?” He said, “Alright, let me go over there.” I said – it make me mad. And I said, “Listen – come over here.” I said, “Where’s the key - gimme the key. Get the key and get the hell out of here. Get your jacket – you and you.” Lock the door, I closed the door and that's it. Then I said, “Now, I've got to...”.

So there was a Korean guy wanna buy my shop [00:14:00] in New York. I said, “Okay. Now I am going to make the deal with the Korean person.” So he bought the shop. He don’t need the shop – he want the floor to make a – uh [pause], shoes. He was like a [pause] - whatever they want to do, something like that. But I don't care.

But he bought everything because he was bothering me for a long time that you wanna buy. So I gave him a price. I said, fine. My building already had to pay out over here anyhow. I said, okay. I told my wife, “Okay. So as soon as these kids get out of school - this way back in April - as soon as the kids get out of school, we go over there, reno the apartment upstairs (what I gotta do between now and then), and we're going to move.” Soon as the kids get out of school, I sold the shop to the guy and that's what I come up - that's why I end up at Kingston.

[00:14:51] **Madoris:** And then um was there any organization, any like community center that you... What – what were the places where you [00:15:00] found community in Kingston?

[00:15:03] **Gerardo:** Yeah, there was a – there was a clothing shop in a [long pause] – in Railroad Avenue that used to.... When I saw that it was over there. I went over there and I says, “You know maybe you need – I want to - I need to work.” I don't know nothing about the food, you know, at that time. I don't know what to do with.... There was somebody who was supposed to come with me, but then it wouldn't happen – didn't wanna come over here.

So anyhow I had to put everything in the dumps or whatever was in the shops, except whatever I could save – I saved. But the other rest - all the food, all the cans, you know. I used to put it up at night. And all - all the people who used to come in like a scavenger, they took it out - you know, they could eat. People - they was still good. I let some of them in, you know, during the day, whatever they want, they can pick it up because I don't know what to do with it. So I, you know, some.... You know they - they took [00:16:00] a lot of stuff and that was fine because they saved me time to put it in the dumpster anyhow and it was good. So that every time I - you know, there was a - you know...

I saw that there was a factory right on Railroad Avenue, two block down over there. So I went over there and they said the name - the guy was M. So I said, “Alright.” Said, “Oh yeah - we could use. Very good. You come over here.” Because they used to make lady coat – wool coat. I said, “No problem, that's my cup of tea.”

And I worked for them. You know – like whatever I was doing, you know, like a, like a, like a manager actually. And they were very good people, very good people. But then [pause] I got to meet Italian people at the restaurant and there was somebody that - he was to work as a chef at [restaurant name]. But he wanted to leave over there. I said, “Alright, why don't we do something.”

So we bought a [00:17:00] restaurant - me and him. He didn't have no money. I had some money. So I said, we bought the restaurant down the Strand – that I am going to manage the numbers now. We used to call them Mary P's – that was Mary P's and we bought it. We bought that - me and the other guy. We changed - there was like a fast food type, you know like fried things and so on. And it had the bar. It was just bar food.

So we bought it and we changed. We put in Italian North - Italian cuisine and it was good. It was fine. Uh, the kids - they grow up. We bought another restaurant in Kerhonkson. We name it Monte Cassino. And it was run pretty good. The guy that they used to - my friend, then we become friendly, you know – the M.

They used to come into the restaurant with the family. When they needed some help with something - the collar doesn't fit - because he knows that I know about the pattern. So I used to go help him out sometime before I go to open the restaurant, I used to go over there [00:18:00] and check him out if he needed - give him some idea what to do if he had a problem. And everything was fine.

Then you know - I got tired with the restaurant. I don't see my family no more after working - hours and weekends and holiday. You know - that's when we do the business, this.... I wanna spend that time with my kids. I want to enjoy my family. So I told my partners, "You know," I says, "Now you got some money. Why don't you buy me out?" And it was the guy, the M., they had a problem with the union and the reason I found out - they had the - he owed the money to the bank (you understand) - New York Bank. I said, okay, we made a deal. I said, "I buy the factory from the group who owes." I said [unclear], you know. And then his wife... She was my partner because we don't want to break the - we become friends. And then the other guy....

So everything worked out fine. And I had the shop, you know, and I happen to - I had the clothing shop in Kingston. We used to call the [00:19:00] Fashion Lane because - from Thomas Street to where the restaurant is now - the Railroad Avenue, little short block over there - the short block that's the Fashion Lane. So I never - they never [studders] - that's the Fashion Lane.

And then something happened, we split up, I moved the shop down at Newburgh with somebody else. We split up with the group - we're still friends - but I had to move their shop from - because the mother owned the building. So I say, I got to get out of here and I had somebody.... Because we had that showroom at Seventeenth Street and it was at somebody else from Newburgh on the same floor. There's a lot of - you know Seventeenth Street - there's a lot of show rooms over there. So we used to let a room to show them - you know what we used to make.

And the guy - A., he was a Jewish person - very nice, very excellent person, nice (he's dead - rest in peace). And we used to talk [00:20:00], you know sometimes when.... We used to check in and say, "Oh what you got? What I got..." He used to look what I have. I used to look at what he got. I used to - you know used to exchange an idea, as a friend - it doesn't matter. We were never enemies because it was the same thing that I do. He does what he does. I do what I do. And then that's what it went up. So you know...

Then the business went down. You know, uh, everything - back in 90, everything - the import kill. So we lost a lot [pause] a lot of business because -

you know, like, eh, we used to sell for Burlington Coat Factory and we used to sell like 30,000 coats a year. And before you know, Burlington got it from somebody else because he buy from Ukrainian - when the Ukraine no longer was a communist, no longer belonging to the uh, Russian. Now they got problems, but then – it was good and it was a good worker. They used to sell the coat [00:21:00] – the same kind of coat that we used to make - with better work, they used to sell for fifty, sixty dollar less than what we used to make. I said, I can't compete with that. So you know Burlington he says, “I can't buy from you guys.”

So then I find a job with the New York State Correction Department to train inmate. And that was my best thing ever - best move in my life. Because the restaurant, the clothes... I said, “Forget about it.” I told my partner - I said, “Listen - we still gonna be partner, I want to go try this one...” - somebody offered me that job, actually. Somebody offered me the job because I called them - that I needed some machinery that I wanted sell. But nobody buy. I sell some to Honduras, you know special machinery that they buy to make a the jeans. There were looking to have the machine – so I sold to them in Honduras.

But uh.... The other rest, you know. So I call somebody that “Oh no you call... You know, they make a [00:22:00] garment that...” I don't even know. So I call New York – [unclear] - you know, if he can buy this machinery that I have. So he said “Oh sure I have somebody from [unclear].” They named the guys – M. – he was the super intendant for the industry in [unclear].

He said, “Why don't you come over here? We show what we do - if you think the machine is [inaudible] - we buy.” He was lying to me, he don't buy, they cannot buy a used machine. They had to buy a new machine and not used machine. But I didn't know. But they were look for somebody to work at superintendent to make a mattress and in Eastern - you know in Napanoch.

He said, “Well?” I said, “Mike – what am I going to do? You people don't pay anything!” He said, “Yeah, we pay.... \$30,000.” I said, “What's a \$30,000 a year? I'm used to livin' a better life than that. Why you gimme \$30,000?” He said, “Yeah, but it's so secure.” [Exasperated sigh – long pause]

But then at one - you know... And then, he called me again [00:23:00]. I said “Nah forget about it! I can't do that.” So it was about three years, he keep calling me. And then the guy Eastern called me, the name was Lee Jolwitz, he was super intendant over there. He said, “M. gave me your number. Can you come over here - we just want to talk to you, blah, blah, blah.”

So I went over there [pause] and I kinda like it – you know they lay out what they make a mattress. Very simple. The stuffing – basic instinct, nothing crazy. Even though they're criminal over there - they work over there, you know.... I never worked - I never deal with criminal in my life. Like you see bad guy, but you stay away and your fine.

And so anyway - that was good. I said you know what.... And you know, he says, “You know,” then the girl says – I said, “Well, let me think about.” I don't even reach back at Newburgh to my shop. And the girl, she called me and says, “You going to start next week.” And I said, “No no no no – I didn't accept no job. I did not take anything, you know, for seriously.”

So [00:24:00] she said, “Okay, we'll see.” Then Lee call me, you know, Lee Jolwitz call me. He said, “Why don't you come over here - we'll talk again?” So I told my partner, David Fiori, he said, “Take it, Gerry, take it. Don't worry about it over here.” He said, “The machinery...” I said, “Forget about the machinery - I don't even worry about the machine.”

So I go back over there. We agree on that price. You know what they want to pay me. And that's it. So I told Abe I says “Listen – I'm gonna go for it, at least for a time, maybe at least you.... We straighten out the thing with you and me over here. I wanna go over there.” But then every night - used to leave Napanoch at three o'clock. I used to go to Newburgh to work until eight, nine o'clock and then to come to Kingston and leave again in the morning to go to Napanoch. Every day - Saturday, Sunday, just going... Because I still had a partner over there.

And then after a year I says, you know I told Abe, “Keep the machinery. If you need help, I will help you out, but I gotta - I [00:25:00] gotta be over there.” Because now was set to move over there - very good. And I kinda like. I spent twenty years over there.

[00:25:07] **Madoris:** Yeah. Um, was there anything that you didn't like about Kingston?

[00:25:10] **Gerardo:** In Kingston? Yeah. I bought a couple of houses...

[00:25:14] **Madoris:** That you didn't like.

[00:25:16] **Gerardo:** That I didn't like?

[00:25:18] **Madoris:** Uh-huh – about Kingston?

[00:25:19] **Gerardo:** Mmm, not that I do - I find that a lot of people in Kingston very good. I actually, I was a very successful down in Kingston. Then when I was livin' in Brooklyn, I had a business in New York City.

[00:25:32] **Madoris:** Yeah. And now we're going to pass through like, um, more cultural questions, like about your culture and things like that.

Do you keep any cultural traditions from Italy or anything?

[00:25:44] **Gerardo:** Yeah - well cultural – yes. Yes, of course we do everything - boom. You know, family - that's the same culture we have. But we still respect here. But we don't ban what we have from Italy. I've seen my brother, my sister [00:26:00] - my brother just passed away. But my sister - she live in Italy, my nieces and my nephew they're still – I still got property in Italy.

So there - you know – so then I go back and forth. So still keepa the same culture. You know what I mean? But... We Catholic. We go to church here. We used to go to church over there. They said it doesn't matter - I know, I know.

I don't see it. I don't [pause] - I don't dislike anybody if they have a different religion, different [pause] thing... I don't care. I look at people as a human and I don't see a person [pause], you know like the people, “Oh you like black...” No – no I don't. I don't see black people - I see human beings. That's what I see. Honestly, I see a bad person if he's my brother and he's not good. And I say that's a bad person. And if you see a black person or a Spanish person, or or [pause] Indian, I don't care where they are - if they do good to me, of course I love that.

That's [00:27:00] good. I got it - in my neighborhood, we got a, you know, very cultural neighborhood. We got a Dominican, we got Indian, we've got a Russian right next to me. Then another Dominican across the street from me. So the Indian is at the other side. You know we got black people. We got – you know everybody got along very well.

It's because everybody thinks about the same way. But everybody got in their own house, they keepa their own culture. You know what I mean? But then not because we know - we could - we know better than the other one. The same thing with the working out. We got the same thing – the girl - she was over here before - she worked with us.

She's very nice kid. Well, you know - the Japanese, we got Spanish, Dominican (not Dominican) uh - Mexican. Everybody get along very well.

[00:27:47] **Madoris:** Is um... And then when it comes to traditions from the U.S., have you taken any traditions from the U.S., like any holidays that you celebrate that you didn't celebrate before?

[00:27:58] **Gerardo:** Well you know - they cele - you [00:28:00] know they celebration, of course your celebration of the National Holiday is over here. We don't have the same thing in Italy, like Fourth of July, Memorial Day.

Over there, they've got different ones. You know what I mean? See over here, you respect like a Cinco de Mayo. Yeah, we respect and we go out and we eat at the same day. But it's not [pause], it's not the same thing. Like if you had Saint Anthony, you know what I mean - in Italy. Not all Italy gets - celebrates Saint Anthony, you know what I mean? Only in my little town. So, you know, you used to do this or you, you do that. But that doesn't anything to - to another part of the country.

[00:28:45] **Madoris:** Yeah. And um another question is - now talking about Italy - what are some of your favorite foods like favorite things to eat?

[00:28:55] **Gerardo:** Things to eat - right now, pretty good. I cook everything [00:29:00]. I learn a lot when I had the restaurant, I had to learn because cooks, they didn't know what they were talking about. I didn't know how to cook then, but I knew how to eat.

But I like the clams with the pasta, if it's red or white. I love Osso Buco - you know what Osso Buco is?

[00:29:18] **Madoris:** Uh-uh.

[00:29:19] **Gerardo:** That's veal shank. I like to make it with the risotto.

You know, I made the risotto primavera. Uh, make a risotto pescatore. I make a risotto with porcini mushrooms and also osso buco. I like.... I like all kinds of things. And I like a nice steak. I'll eat a hamburger, but believe me - I love a hot dog. But their no good.

[00:29:47] **Madoris:** No [laughing]?

[00:29:48] **Gerardo:** And not because I don't like – not because I don't like. I love it! But it's because I've gotten too old.

[00:29:54] **Madoris:** They're not the same – they're not the same...

[00:29:56] **Gerardo:** No.... It's not.... It's not good for me [00:30:00]. I'm too old. I gotta be careful what I eat.

But I go. I love Chinese food. I don't eat every day, but I do. I eat Mexican food. I love that. Hungarian food. I love 'em - you know, they make good sandwiches, there's one on Broadway – beautiful. Nice, you know. Jamaican food. Perfect. You know, there's one right down on ... On Hasbrouck Avenue. Then I go there. I love the Curry uh [pause - thinking] oxtail. They make it over there. I go - I love it. I don't eat every day, that same thing, but I do.

[00:30:34] **Madoris:** What part of your culture would you like people to embrace or would you like people to celebrate or recognize?

[00:30:43] **Gerardo:** They said - there's, uh [pause – thinking]. People is [pause] - you know like me and my family, I like to.... You know my kids, even my grandkids - I introduced to them, you know, the way I used to live, the way I was brought up [00:31:00], you know with Easter, you know things like that.

But you know I cannot say to a Chinese person. You should celebrate Easter like I do. You know I don't do that. Every cultural should [pause] - you should celebrate what, you know like [pausing].... You know like in Santo Domingo, what do you - La Virgen de Guadalupe or whatever. We don't have that in Italy, but doesn't mean [pause] – if I go to Santo Domingo and there's a fest, of course I'm going to respect that. And I'm gonna do exactly as they say - as is required.

But I don't, I don't force, you know, my culture on anybody. I accept somebody else's culture, but for me - I'm not, you know, that kind of person that says.... Well, you know.

[00:31:51] **Madoris:** Um do you have a favorite story or anything fun that happened to you that relates to you being an immigrant?

And that would be like when you were here in Kingston or anything that happened to you when you lived in the city or any story.

[00:32:09] **Gerardo:** Stories.... There's a lot of stories.... [both laugh]. But you know - good, bad, you know this - about this is just my life.... I was never that guy that go out at night, like a....

I like go see a movie, I like go see a good show. But nothing to create that story of "Ohhh my god I saw this oooohhh...". I can't make it – I can't say that.

[00:32:31] **Madoris:** [laughs] Okay. Do you think that migrating has changed who you are in any way?

[00:32:38] **Gerardo:** Uh.... It changed my financial position – not what I am, that's for sure. My financial position – yes, it changed a lot. Which - you know, compared to what I was in Italy, France or Switzerland, Germany.... You know I travelled a lot when I was much younger. I travelled a lot [00:33:00] in different – I even went to Africa to see you know if I can....

I always looking for better business, something business that I can make a money. It was always in that kind of thing, but I never.. Clean - I was never in a – you know people see that.... In Italian they say, "Oh. He's mafioso because he do successful." I hate that. And I don't like it - these people that, you know, take advantage of somebody else to improve their position. That's [pause] against my [pause] - I don't feel good about that, that's the only thing. So I like to make the money, but I like to make money clean and I like respect everybody.

And when my people - they use to work for me – I always paid them better than anybody else. When the people used to paid them \$10 an hour, I used to pay them \$12 an hour. I read that – when the people not givin' them the uh you know uh um the insurance, I used to still give them half - whatever used to paid half [00:34:00], but I still give them the insurance. In half. You know – I pay half and they gotta pay half. When other people by me – many little shops in Kingston didn't used to pay them. I used to give them because [pause] they're working people, their's part of the family - the business. And the working people were making the shop go. That's what I always felt.

You know, I'm not going to go take my shirt off because he got to work. Yes, of course, I love to work and I love to have.... But I gotta live too. But I don't - I don't wanna scam anybody because they work for me. This would be like treating like a slave. No - I always treat my people like a good human beings. Because they were good and I respect that.

[00:34:42] **Madoris:** Well, that's it for the [unclear].