

THE HOBOKEN HISTORICAL MUSEUM
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEWEE: GIORGIO CASTIELLO
 (with commentary by his
 daughter, Mary Grace Castiello)

INTERVIEWERS: HOLLY METZ & ROBERT FOSTER

LOCATION: GIORGIO'S BAKERY,
 1112 WASHINGTON STREET, HOBOKEN

DATE: 9 MARCH 2006

SIDE ONE

RF: Did you have a busy day today?

GC: It's always busy Friday, outside of
12:00, when it's a little slower. Then at night,
everybody come. [Interruption]

RF: We're going to ask you questions,
and, of course, this is going to be edited later, so if
you have long pauses, or you forget something, don't
worry. Then we'll get a transcript of our conversation,
and you can look it over, to see the things you meant to
say --

GC: That I meant to say.

RF: -- that things aren't taken out of
context, or mixed up, or incorrect --

HM: -- and it's correct.

RF: So could you give us your full name?

GC: Full name is Giorgio Castiello.

RF: Okay. And I guess we should start at
the beginning.

GC: Beginning of the life, or beginning
of --

RF: Yes, the beginning of the life.

GC: -- or the beginning of the --

RF: The beginning of the life. Where were
you born?

GC: I was born in Torre del Greco,
Napoli, right under the Vesuvio. Torre del Greco.

RF: Can you say it again, the region?

GC: It's Napoli. The region is Campagna.

RF: And the year?

GC: The year -- 1935.

RF: And your parents?

GC: Both of my parents were born over
there -- Maria Grazia Inno and Giovanni Castiello. My
father was born in Cercola.

RF: And their parents?

GC: Their parents -- My mother's father
(I never met the father of my father) was Raffaelle Inno.
He was born also in Torre del Greco.

RF: Okay. And did you learn your trade over there?

GC: Over there.

RF: Tell us a little bit about that.

GC: Well, it was a little hard, because it was just after the war. So there was not much stuff to work for. Mostly I go to work because I don't go no more to school. I don't know for what reason, but I tell Mama, "I don't want to go no more to school." But, anyway, that's the way I started. Also, it was hard because whatever we do at the time, everything was made by hand and by machine. The electricity was not too much for the baking, so all the hard work--like sfogliatelle and fondant-- everything was by hand.

HM: Can I interject? Did you have mixers, like we have now? They were hand-cranked?

RF: So was your family in the business?

GC: No, no.

RF: What did your father do?

GC: My father was working with Sub Appolt for the state railroad. At the time, when I was born, when he was working, that was wartime, so it was very, very difficult. I see very little of my father. He was always "running for the work." Then he started "running" for the German people. Then started the Occupation. I go through all this nice thing.

There were six in the family, three boys and three girls.

RF: And where are you? Are you the oldest? The youngest?

GC: Well, I am the oldest on the men's side. The oldest girl, on the women's side, she just passed away two months ago. She passed away. But she was over here anyway. She came over in '85. I "took" the family.

RF: Back to the baking -- how did you get into the business?

GC: Back to the baking. When I land over there, in the beginning, which just to stay put in one place -- this way my mother knows where I was, because it was a "very long time" when I was "romping" around in "bad company," and she wanted to know where I was. So I went to this pasticceria, which they had no flour or sugar to work. I just was there all day, cleaning around something. Then they start the black market, so they start from the Marshall Plan -- sugar, flour, all the goods that was coming from "the area." There was another bakery not far from the area, and they started to pick up this stuff, because it was in the market, and was more easy to get to, to get to work. So that's where I go, in the mornings, for two or three hours. I go there to work. Then I went to the other place.

HM: How old were you?

GC: I was twelve years old.

HM: And was that a common age to be working?

GC: Well, it was a common age to stay home. You can stay home because it was hard time. Very hard time. My grandfather got a little farm, so the fruit never was missing. There was fruit, there was bread, vegetables -- whatever. We got fruit and vegetables, but the meat was missing. But that was not just for me. That was a general situation. (But not for the black market; if you had money, you had meat.)

RF: And your brothers? Did they work at an early age, too?

GC: Well, when they started ~~to~~ grow up, things got a little better, and they also were working in a bar, taking coffee outside, like we used to do in Napoli. If you go over there, they still have coffee outside, in the village.

The girl, my sister, the one was over here, she did the cameo-bijouxteria, but it was all false stuff --

MG: Like costume jewelry.

GC: -- like costume jewelry.

HM: Made it, or sold it?

MG: They used to make it?

GC: They used to make it for the troops,
Americans, in Napoli --

RF: -- to send back home.

GC: -- to send back home. It was a new
thing.

HM: What was her name? Luisa Petrucci was
her married name.

MG: That's his older sister. Also, I'll
add this. The town that my father is from -- Torre del
Greco -- they are the world's foremost makers, creators,
of cameos. So the tradition of cameo making is very big
there, as well as kind of "coral" jewelry --

HM: So she was making it not out of those
materials, but following that tradition.

GC: She learned that "across the street,"
from somebody who was in that professional trade.

HM: You have to identify yourself for the
transcriber.

MG: Hi. I'm Mary Grace Castiello,
Giorgio's oldest daughter.

RF: And how did you find the bakery that
you worked at? Was it a friend of the family?

GC: No, no friend. We just go and ask for
if there --

RF: Do you remember asking, or did your
parents arrange it?

GC: No, no, no.

RF: You went.

GC: Yes.

RF: Do you remember your first day there?

GC: The first day was not bad. For "maximum money" -- you talk about the lire, in dollars, was about a quarter or fifty cents, for ten hours of work.

RF: Ten hours for fifty cents.

GC: In the beginning, we just worked for some scraps, then 10 hours for 10 cents. Ten hours we worked. I sit because I never work[ed before]. I was a little kid. I didn't want to work. The boss tell me, "This job is not for you." He said, "It is a job, but I don't think it's for you." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because you sit." It was from 10:00 in the morning to 10:00 at night --

RF: Ten to ten --

GC: And he had the nerve to say "it's not for you" because he was closing about 12:00 or 1:00 in the night.

RF: And did he mean that because you were so young? Or he didn't think you'd want to sit?

GC: He didn't think I was no good for work, "in the way he pretended we work or not," too --

HM: Too young?

GC: I work too slow. He was assuming that I was --

HM: You were a child.

GC: This conception of child at the time don't exist.

MG: Can I interject again?

HM: Yes!

MG: My grandmother used to tell stories about how the Nazis would come into the house, looking for the men -- the boys -- to go send them to the labor

camps. They would have to hide them in closets.

Meanwhile, the Nazis would come and steal the potatoes -- because they didn't have anything. They'd steal the potatoes that she had to feed them. "They took the potatoes that were supposed to feed the family!"

RF: So do you remember hiding?

GC: Yes. Of course. The worst thing I remember -- once they stop a train, because -- the train was passing not far from me, about 200 yards, it was across the way. They come with the truck; as soon as the people came out of the train, they put them in the truck. Destination, I don't know. They put the machine guns on the side, right in the middle, and all the men, they were in the truck. As soon as I saw this thing, I run away.

RF: So they took them away.

GC: They took them away.

RF: So where would you hide in the house? Would they just come in and say, "Is there anyone here?"

GC: There was a big garden in the back of the house. Sometimes I go there, other times I on top of the roof. "I didn't know whether they would come on top of the roof. The house would be higher than this, you could go on two sides of the building: roof or in the garden.

RF: And were you kind of in charge of your brothers when that happened?

GC: My brother was too small.

RF: Too small. So you were the oldest, that they were more interested in. So this would be when you were nine or ten?

GC: [Younger.] That was in '35, in the course of the war, all these things.

RF: So by the time you're working in the shop --

GC: In the shop was after the war.

RF: After the war. And the shops would not have operated during the war, because they couldn't get supplies?

GC: There were no supplies --

RF: Right. So they just used "bread?"

GC: There was no food for eating. Imagine. When the war was finished, that's when it started the Marshall Plan --

RF: The Marshall Plan. Reinvesting and so on.

GC: And they're sending... mostly they gave to the organizations like the church. And always find a way to "switch to the other side," to sell on the black market.

RF: Right. Then did you continue to work at this one pastry shop for a number of years?

GC: Well, like I say, I was about ten years in the same place. Then my father went out of the house. He had a heart attack, so he didn't come back no more. I was still working in the same place. Then my sister got engaged with somebody working on a ship, who introduced me to the company where he was working -- it was a passenger ship, and I started working on the ship. I was twenty-two years old.

HM: As a baker on the ship?

GC: No, a helper. Because I don't have enough knowledge.

RF: So the ship would travel.

GC: Yes. The ship was traveling at a time -- first I was on a cruise for Canada, because there was immigration. That was about '57 or '58, more or less.

HM: It was an ocean liner?

GC: It was a Neopolitan ocean liner, the Irpinia. They used to call this line the Rose Line,

because it was supposed to be beautiful. But I never was on the ship.

RF: You saw the other side. You saw the other side of the Rose.

GC: Another guy who worked on the ship with me -- Palermo was the biggest town in Italy, all the way in the South. From there we went to Genoa, and then we went to Canada, because that was the line.

RF: So you'd go for two weeks?

GC: All the voyage was about a month. It would take about two weeks to go to Canada with the ship --

RF: -- and then two weeks back.

GC: But it was straight across the Atlantic. I was sick at that time. The ship was dancing like a ball in the water -- ka-boom, ka-boom. I was thinking I was dead. Six months it take for me to --

HM: Seasick?

GC: Six months.

HM: Were you seasick?

GC: Of course. The chef -- he look at me, he was telling the head chef, the baker, "But this guy-- how does he live? Because he don't eat nothing." Because when I was working in the shore, my mother, she cook for me when I go home, because I don't like pasta and the food warm up, everything must be fresh. I go on this ship, I them see boil water to cook pasta to do soup, there was [such a] large quantity, because you had to feed 1,000 people. The quantity and the smell makes me want to throw up, the smell, the meat, the fish. Finally, I get the habit, and I say it is better to work the ship.

RF: What did you do on the ship, usually?

GC: I was cleaning, picking up the stuff from the store down [below], baking, helping the pastry chef.

RF: But not kitchen.

GC: The baking in the ship is separate from the kitchen. It is on another side.

HM: What was your favorite meal that your mother made for you?

GC: Well, in the South it is the pasta.

HM: What kind of pasta?

GC: Any kind.

MG: Tomatoes and basil.

GC: Tomatoes and basil, yes. It was the main thing. Ragu, not too much, because we couldn't afford meat at that time. Not too much ragu.

RF: So how many years did you work for the ship?

GC: For the ship? Altogether, in fifteen years, I did about thirteen years. I started at 22. I finished at thirty-five, then I started this other life.

HM: So when did you get married?

GC: When did I get married? [1970]
Seventy.

HM: So late.

GC: Yeah.

HM: Okay. I'm just trying to figure out if you had a family that you left behind? Your mother.

GC: You can say that I had a family, because it is a custom on our side, the man take care -- So my mother, she was a poor woman. She was desperate after the death of my father --

HM: Yes. You were the head of the family.

GC: "I gonna help you." Honoring their memory. Even if they were poor, or illiterate, I never heard a bad word from them. I promised to help them.

HM: And the little siblings --

GC: The siblings -- my sister was working with the cameo thing. She could make some money, too. Not a lot of money, but she helped out.

HM: Everybody helped.

GC: Just to make the boat go ahead it takes the participation of everybody. But I was the one taking the flag in the hand.

RF: The leader.

GC: The leader.

HM: Okay. So after the ship, what happened?

GC: After the ship, life was not changing too much, because it was very terrible. Once, with my brother-in-law -- once we meet in "Madeira," New Year's Day night, and he was an engineer. He comes in at midnight to wish me Happy New Year. He was with my sister, too, on the ship. It was the ship that was "dancing." She was seasick, so she no come to see me on New Year's. He came just to say "Happy New Year." I got no time to turn around, not even to shake his hand. How busy we were doing the midnight buffet and all these things. So that starts me to think to change way to live.

Then I started to do two or three cruise ships coming over here, coming to America. So it was a cruise from New York to the Caribbean, or all around the islands. Everything changed. But there was a negative side; you go home after ten or twelve months. I was almost thirty-five when I got the idea to come here. Because I could do less cruise, starting the fifth of December, and I finish the sixth of January. I go down -- I come up the sixth, again, with the ship, go back in Italy. I was always working. And there were five people in the bakery on the ship. That was the time I said, "I don't want to work no more the ship."

RF: What year was that, do you think?

GC: Sixty-nine, '69-'70. That was the last New Year's cruise.

RF: And were you still doing the same types of things on the ships?

GC: At the time I was a chef, baking.

RF: A chef. And how long did you bake, on the ships, do you figure?

GC: Everything, about fifteen years.

RF: And did you learn a lot from baking on the ships? Or did you learn more --

GC: It's more like the hotel business, you know, but I learned the basics of baking on the shore. So that's what helped me a lot, too -- the knowledge, linking the things together helped me a lot. The language of the Spanish helped me, because I was going around all the Spanish places you know. When we

come, as a family, most of the people were speaking Spanish, in 1969-'70.

HM: So how did you pick Hoboken?

GC: Accidentally. Accidentally. I was working in a bakery in Brooklyn. They used to do bread and baking. The boss didn't speak too much English. He was Sicilian. Most of the time there was a girl answering the telephone, and there was me working by the telephone. I was over there, and, in fact, this guy called. He got an advertisement -- when I was working, they put an advertisement in the paper for a baker for bread. This guy called over there, and I answered the telephone. So he said, "You're supposed to say you're not a bread maker." He said he wanted a bread maker. So, "Who you are?" he asked me. I said, "Oh, I am the baker, I just do cakes." He said, "Oh, yeah. You know, I've got a bakery I want to sell." To me I was already working in three places when I come to America, two in Brooklyn and one on Long Island. Then I come over here. I tell my wife, "If I had kept working in these conditions --" I was working with no benefits, nothing at all. I'll go back where I

came from. Because till today there are better benefits in Italy than over here. That's what I told my wife.

So this chance come. It was somebody -- an old friend that came from the same town he was living in. I asked him, "Where is this bakery?" He don't even know. He was living two blocks away, and he came over here in '57. So I don't know. I come from there, I come with him. Around this time, in March, he was doing Zeppole, everything from the can. So he [the owner of the bakery] said "Let me give you a nice zeppole." Not to make it look bad, I ate the zeppole. I almost throw up everything when I go out. That's the truth. The cream was so bad.

So we talked. He said, "For real, you want this bakery?" I said, "Yeah, for real." I had no money. I said, "How much you want?" \$8,000. He tried to sell this place, but nobody wants it because at the time everything was changing over here. The place was so bad in Hoboken.

RF: Uptown too, yes.

GF: It was so bad nobody want to come over here. So I don't know all this business. I wanted to change. I took a chance. And that's what I did. Luckily, God wanted it in some way. This guy was supposed to go

back to Italy -- the one who owned this place. He said, "I've got to go back to Italy. If you go over there, I can send the money over there. You can take the money, you can take the money 'in Italia.'" He was going there. I tell my brother-in-law (I got two brother-in-law), I said, "Do me a favor. Give this money to this guy." So he paid the money there.

HM: So Gigi, your brother-in-law, loaned you the money, in lira.

GC: In Italy, yes.

RF: So he really wanted to get out.

GC: He wanted to get out, because he wanted to go back over there.

RF: So that's this location, here?

GC: This location. He changed three times before I was coming. Because he wanted to get out, he gave the place to somebody. The last three before me can't go ahead, because he's inexperienced. He can't do

the right thing, and it was bad for the business. Then when I come over here I find out that they were selling very bad stuff from this guy.

RF: And what was the name of his business?

GC: It was "Uptown Bakery." Because in town there was two brothers. Schoening was downtown, and this was the other brother.

RF: So this was the uptown Schoening?

MG: Two brothers, before.

RF: Yes. Because people have asked me where the uptown Schoening was.

HM: Now we know.

GC: The oven and the refrigerators were from them. This machine is still the same, and the tables, too. When I come, these two tables were together, attached with a piece of wood. I tell this guy, but why

are these tables together? He said "Sometimes if you have to do something aside, it's easier to work." So the first thing I did was split these two tables, because if I had to go to the machine, or do something over there, I had to go all around the table. This guy looked at me like I was crazy. What did I do?

RF: Do you know how long the uptown Schoenings were here?

GC: Well, I think at least he was from the beginning of the 1900s. I came in '74, so --

HM: That's a long time.

GC: You can look at this stuff outside. This stuff is Deco, these cabinets, about the '30s and '40s. All the cabinets are the same ones. The ceiling was lower than this one. I took the ceiling outside, without thinking, of course, it would cost more to warm up. Otherwise, I don't take.

RF: All the heat.

GC: So that's the thing.

RF: Had you always worked alone here? I mean, you have your family.

GC: I had my family, yes.

HM: Tell us a little bit about special pastries and cakes that you make. Because there are different times of the year, when you make different things.

GC: Oh, yes. Different things. Right now is our zeppole -- zeppole and sfingi. As a matter of fact, I started St. Joseph when I come over here. I did St. Joseph, too, the first time.

HM: Like a St. Joseph table?

GC: No. St. Joseph zeppole.

HM: And what's the difference? Are there difference kinds of zeppole?

GC: Yes, there are two kinds. One is Napolitano zeppole, and the sfingi is Sicilian, the cream is a little heavy, with ricotta, diced fruit. So that's the difference, the cream inside [for the St. Joseph's zeppole]. But even the base of the zeppole, the dough, it comes like a ball. To cook this ball [for the feast zeppole], it takes more time, than to cook the zeppole.

HM: It takes more time because it has more in it?

MG: There's more dough. The kind that the feast has is more like a dumpling-dumpling. This one is for St. Joseph. It's more like a beignet.

GC: This one is a sophisticated zeppole, not like the one for the St. Joseph feast.

HM: Heavy.

GC: Not heavy. Sophisticated. More rich.

MG: The one for the St. Joseph zeppole is more like a dessert pastry.

HM: And the other ones are more --

MG: -- the feast are more like the dough
that's fried.

GC: It's just like a dumpling. Exactly.
It just has a little yeast inside, salt, and oil and fat
or whatever they put inside, and it's nice because it's
always warm with sugar on top. You can't go wrong. So
everybody like.

HM: All the basic needs.

GC: But this one is really different;
they take more attention.

HM: And wheat pie?

GC: Wheat pie, or "Italian grain pie" is
for Easter. It's supposed to be for Easter, but now we're
doing Christmas too; we're doing Thanksgiving sometimes,
when it is requested. If I can do, I do.

HM: And what is the tradition of a wheat pie for Easter?

GC: What is the tradition? Well, because in old time there was not too much to do and not too much money to spend. So "the sophisticated ones," they do an Easter pie, and the ones without the money make pastiera, which is made just with the pasta, a crème caramel inside with a nice, grated orange inside -- flavor -- a little cinnamon, a little vanilla. Cook -- how you call it?

HM: Spaghetti. Pasta.

GC: Well, you can make it with spaghetti, with --

MG: I want to say vermicelli --

GC: Angel hair, they took fast. That's why I like.

RF: Spaghetti pie?

MG: They do that at home. That's what they call it -- spaghetti pie.

GC: Instead of putting on sauce, they put a little crème caramel -- sugar on top.

HM: But that's separate.

MG: But also at home they do like the rice pie. Instead of doing grain in the pie, they'll do rice.

GC: Well, this is another region's thing.

MG: Well, why do they do grain pie at Easter? That one I don't understand why they do it.

HM: That's what I was trying to figure out.

GC: For the festivities.

MG: Yes, but why grain, at Easter?

GC: Because grain is more in use. Maybe because of Spring.

RF: It's symbolic of something.

MG: Maybe the grain is symbolic of spring and all that stuff.

HM: It's March, so there's no fruit around?

MG: Well, they put orange water in there.

GC: Orange blossoms.

MG: Orange water. I don't know.

HM: That's okay. You don't have to know everything.

MG: But it's not really a fruity kind of thing. Maybe because cheese is scarce, and it's Easter, and they have to do something celebratory, they stretch the cheese with the grain. No?

HM: Maybe. We'll find it.

RF: The grain is like a symbol of life.

MG: The other strange one, now, during Lent -- which we don't do anymore because only three people wanted it -- is the Sanguinaccio, which is chocolate pudding that's made with (traditionally, in Italy) pig's blood. And for the longest time we couldn't get pig's blood, so we were doing it with beef blood.

GC: There's people that want it. The old kind, you know. There's too much work, too much running.

MG: It's a long process.

HM: Is it sweet?

MG: Yes, it's chocolate. If you didn't know that the magic ingredient was in there, you wouldn't know.

HM: That just probably makes it a little deeper taste.

MG: Deeper, and, I think, thicker. Because I think that was used as a thickener.

HM: Oh, instead of gelatin.

GC: No gelatin.

HM: I know. But I'm just wondering if the blood coagulates it --

MG: You can use cornstarch, and all that crazy stuff.

GC: You can do it like a cream. You don't taste the pig's blood.

HM: Not because you taste it, but that it has a chemical reaction that makes it thick and nourishing.

GC: As a matter of fact, you cook it on the side, and then you do a syrup and thin it out.

MG: Yes, you have to thin it out --

GC: -- yes, thin it out with the sugar, and you can eat it in this way, with a biscuit. In Italy, they used to do savoiardi.

HM: Like a ladyfinger. Eat it with a ladyfinger.

HM: Okay. And what else? Wheat pie, the pasta --

GC: Sweet Casatiello pastry, with colored eggs on top, for Easter.

HM: And that's called what?

GC: Casatiello.

MG: And there's another one -- scarcello. The sweet one.

GC: This is a sweet one.

HM: With eggs. Wouldn't that be for
Easter, too?

GC: Yes.

RF: Is that the bread, where the eggs are
wrapped with the bread?

MG: Yes, with different colors. Then
there's sweet --

HM: There's different versions of it?

MG: Yes, there's a sweet one.

HM: But they're both with eggs.

MG: Yes. People at home -- they'll make
it differently in each family.

GC: Oh, you mean the rustic one --

MG: -- and then there's the casatiello.

GC: The casatiello with cold cuts. Yes.

HM: You're going to have to write all that down. And tell me the difference between --

GC: One is made with lard inside.

HM: Oh, lard. So the one that has lard, is that after the meal, or with?

GC: In Italy, it is a tradition -- the first day after Easter, one day in my town -- I don't know what they do in other towns -- they go for a picnic in the mountains on the first day, and the second day they go to the beach. They do all these things to carry outside the house and do a picnic with the friends. Especially at the time is fava beans with a nice glass of wine, a piece of pastiera, eggplant parmigiana, and, of course casatiello (the bread with the lard.)

HM: You're making me hungry. So you bring the bread that has the lard in it --

GC: I did most of the time. Most of the time I did.

MG: The lard bread is more like a "puff" pastry. So instead of using butter -- because that's another thing in southern Italy, they do lard more than butter --

HM: -- which is what they used to do here, too.

MG: Right.

GC: Otherwise it's not casatiello. It has to have a taste, there's no sugar inside. Also, you can put some prosciutto, salami, romano cheese, bacon, pepper. Just cut a little piece and put inside, one little piece.

HM: So are there things that you remember from home that you don't make here, but that you miss?

GC: Well, this is the second year I miss this sanguinaccio because it is a pain in the neck to do.

HM: Well, then, maybe you don't miss it so much.

GC: There are people still asking for it.

HM: Well, once they taste it.

GC: They taste it. The ones who ask for it know. But for the new ones, they hear about the blood, and they get scared. Yucky. It's just like a pudding. It's healthy.

HM: But what you miss about Italy is the fruit?

MG: What are things that you miss food-wise?

GC: Oh, food-wise. Oh well, the fruit is a different taste.

HM: Because the soil is different.

MG: But you know what I think is true?
They live closer to the land.

GC: Where I come from there was a little farm all around town. Now it's no more this farm, because mostly it's all cement. Like they import fruit over there, they import over there, too, because the request is too much. They can't do it. So everything, all around, wherever you go. Before, you could go into market, and you could smell all the peaches, the apples, the pears, whatever. Whatever. You could smell the fruit, the freshness. Without even talking about fresh figs in the summer.

MG: Also, all the strange fruits. Like now you'll find these strange fruits in the supermarket (I'm calling them strange fruits), here. Say you find it in the supermarket and you bring it back, and he's like, "Oh, it's this," or, "Oh, it's that." He knows them all. Prickly pears, "nespoli" -- I don't know what they're called in English. They're like a smooth-skinned apricot,

kind of. And what else? Persimmons. The famous persimmons.

HM: Well, some of it has to do with where Italy is located, in terms of food from North Africa, like from different Roman conquests.

MG: Well, also, Sicily is sort of --

GC: North Africa is a little far from Napoli.

HM: I know it is, but I'm saying, in terms of the influence on the vegetables and spices--

GC: The spice, that's what I was talking about. Sicilians, they have the Arabic influence.

Sicilian [?] --

HM: Sicilian volcanic oranges, grown in "volcanic" soil, in Sicily.

GC: Yes, but on the other side, they grow the same oranges or whatever it is, they have a different

taste. If you're in my town, one in the middle of town does a dish one way, another one, five miles away, will put something in it in a different way. You're going Sorrento and find the parmigiana with the chocolate inside.

HM: Eggplants.

GC: In Torre del Greco, they do it without the chocolate.

HM: Where is this, that they do it with chocolate?

GC: In Sorrento.

MG: For the Feast of the Assumption.

GC: No, various times. They have a sweet taste.

HM: So here you are, in Hoboken --

GC: In Hoboken. But the main thing -- when I got a chance to come over here, I tell my wife, "Enough." "Do you want to come over there?" She said "no" right away. She don't want to come because we were living in the last block in Brooklyn. I say, "You don't want to come, I'm gonna go back and forth. I'm gonna go." At 10:00 in the morning, she say, "Okay. I gonna come, to." She was praying to some saint that everything be smooth and nice. That's what she said -- But when she come over here, she was a little, the way it was in Hoboken, you know... For me, I already see Hoboken before I was coming over here. Because once I was in the shipyard, so I know Hoboken. but just one time, I don't go around to see what it was. But she said, "I was praying, saying the rosary." So here we are.

SIDE TWO

MG: I was three.

GC: You were more than three.

MG: No, I couldn't have been more than three.

HM: Nineteen-seventy was when they got married.

GC: The same year she come, in December.

MG: No, I was in '71.

GC: So it was '71.

MG: Yes. I was the next year.

GC: You were born the same year we got --

MG: No. Well, no, because you got married in '71, in February. No, but you celebrate -- it's complicated. It's 1971 that I was born, everybody. I get to share my age.

HM: So you were three years old.

MG: Yes. I guess so. Seventy-four --

GC: When did we come here?

MG: It's thirty-one years that we're
here.

GC: It was '75. I'm sorry. She's right.
She was about four years old.

MG: Three and a half. In December.

HM: Then your sister is --

GC: She's two or three years less.

MG: So, '73. Shall we talk about George
now, or later?

GC: Of course.

MG: George is my brother, but he's my
unusual brother. He got here in an unusual way -- he took
a plane. He's adopted.

HM: Oh, cool.

GC: Oh, it's important to talk about
George, or he'll here something --

MG: Yes, his friends will all get back to
him.

GC: Politically correct.

RF: We want to be correct.

MG: So he was born in Korea, and we
adopted him when he was three, almost four.

GC: Almost three.

MG: Three, almost four.

GC: Oh, was he three then?

MG: I think it was three, almost four.
But, whatever.

HM: And when was that?

MG: I think it was 1980, because I was in third grade -- right?

GC: Well, I was forty.

MG: I think it was 1980, because Grandpa -- my mother's father -- had died a couple months before, or that same month or something. Right? Because I remember going to see Grandma in the Bronx, and she was still in black -- in the supermarket, we found her.

GC: It's when I was forty, I think.

MG: It was 1980 -- or '81. It's one of the two.

GC: In '75.

MG: No, '80 or '81.

RF: So how did this come about?

MG: I don't know. That's what they were called to do.

I'm telling you, I was in third grade.

GC: You were in third grade.

MG: Yes.

GC: Okay. So in '75, I was forty years old.

HM: Wait a minute. I have to do the math.
How old were you in third grade? About nine?

MG: Eight.

HM: So, let's see --

MG: -- '79-'80, because it was in March or April.

RF: And how did the adoption come about?

MG: I don't know exactly how they decided, but -- there was praying involved with that, too.

GC: I just want to show you the pictures.

MG: Here come the baby pictures.

GC: You know what I tell my son: I still
carry the one I prefer.

MG: We'll get to the modern pictures
soon.

GC: So they send these pictures for show,
and we say okay, that's all.

RF: And you still carry them in your
wallet.

GC: Oh, yeah. I tell him that's the
picture I prefer.

MG: That's the grownup.

RF: I've seen that picture, and didn't
connect. He's a big guy. Where is he now?

MG: Seattle.

RF: So he escaped?

HM: Hoboken?

MG: Well, he misses it. This is the funny thing. He misses it a lot. He has a blog, and he talks about Hoboken all the time.

GC: He's no escape. He's got a girlfriend--

MG: He's feathering the nest.

GC: Yes, he's feathering the nest.

RF: He served in the Marines?

GC: Yes. He finish school, and the day after he go into the Marines. The mother want to kill him.

MG: Didn't he do his first year of college? No? Okay. That's vague for me.

HM: I just want to back up. When you came to Hoboken, you said, it was very Spanish. There were a lot of Spanish-speaking people.

RF: Yes. Did you make different things? No.

GC: I just do what I do today. And some things they don't take. Well, they start to like it, because everything I do at the time, I change every day, [pastries] in the window. But I was asking myself why the people living across the street, why they don't come and buy, you know. Then I know. The people, they wasn't coming because whatever it was before was so bad, they don't come and buy. You start to hear the whole story, why this guy go down with three people, he changed three hands, and then he take the money and go, and the probability was they thought it was the same idea with me. So lucky me, I got the experience I got, and was in a different way. You know what I mean?

HM: So how did you break that -- how did they start to -- did they notice that you had different things in the window?

GC: I guess. If the people even knew I was in town. Once in a while somebody from the "back" come. If they don't have to go uptown, they don't go. They always go downtown. Then someone say, "How long you over here?" Thirty-one years. "We never know." You know what I mean? That's the way it is.

HM: And you wouldn't believe the town is so small.

GC: You don't believe, but they don't move from where they live. You know what I mean?

HM: I know exactly what you're talking about.

GC: That's the situation.

HM: So the uptown people knew about you, and knew you did great --

GC: Well the people that was living now, they are not the ones when I came over here.

MG: And we had Maxwell House, too. We had a lot of people from Maxwell House.

HM: So people knew at Maxwell House. And did they come?

GC: Oh, yes.

HM: Did you stay open late then?

GC: No. I just started to open late in the morning, and close late in the night -- which, I don't know how many hours work I had to do. Because if you come down at 4:00 -- the first year I used to come at 4:00 down, just for a loaf of bread. To do bread was not my business, so I just kill myself, and the people don't buy, because there was so many groceries around, that they could buy over there. The people that were here at the time. Now, probably is the time to sell the bread from outside. I don't want to put the bread from inside

here, you know what I mean? But that was the time when I come over here. And then most of the bread I had to throw out, even if I was selling five cents or less, because the people, they don't come and buy here. That's the difference.

HM: So what's the best seller? What do the people like the most? I guess it changes over time, what people like?

GC: Sincerely, I think most of the tings sell almost at the same level. When it's zeppole time, it'll slow the pastry a little bit.

HM: Are the recipes all in your head?

GC: Thank god it still work, the head.

HM: And how much do you make? Do you make hundreds at a time?

GC: I just make whatever is enough for -- you talk about cookies or biscotti for a week or five days. That's all.

HM: And how many is that, about?

GC: Enough, for say --

MG: He'll adjust the batch. Like in the summertime, it's a lot slower, so he'll make a smaller batch of cookie dough than like at Christmas.

GC: Don't talk about large, because I just work for people. I don't take too much outside. Whatever I sell, I sell for the customer, they come. So for me, there is no necessity to do a hundred pounds of flour in one mix, then I can go away on vacation. No. I'm going to do a ten-pound mix, and if I need another ten pounds, I'm going to do it again, in one week--or in two days, three days, if that's necessary. That's the difference between now and thirty-one years back. The freshness. And details. Whatever you do, you have to do good, constantly.

HM: I agree. People can tell, too. That's why I always come here. Because I can tell. That makes it good.

GC: People can tell, that's right.

HM: And you always want that taste again.

MG: Can I add my two cents? My father is very concerned about doing the right job, whatever it is, so he can't really -- he can't bear, I think, the thought of not putting out something that is a good representation of whatever it is, and whoever he is as a person, too -- if that makes any sense.

HM: It makes a lot of sense.

MG: That's why I think we get the authentic thing a lot of times -- we're an "authentic" bakery. An "authentic taste," or whatever.

GC: Because I give them 99.5% to the people. A half percent is mine. Thank god -- I mostly never use 50%, since early. Just for a few, when they stopped buying for the price, or the quantity. I know these people. They want to "tease" me, or they just want

to talk for talk. What else can you do. There is no one day I'm around, you know.

RF: And do you have to get up really early? Like, I think of people who bake bread -- they get up --

GC: I got the line I got so I don't have to wake up early in the morning. My wife already say I'm crazy. Imagine if I start to work down early in the morning. A few times a year I have to get up at 4:00 in the morning --

MG: Christmas. He's kind of the Clint Eastwood of bakers. He's kind of iconoclastic. He does things his own way. He makes what he wants to make because it's what he wants to make, and he does it the hours he wants to do it, the way he wants to do it.

GC: I used to do the donuts, too. In the beginning, when I come over there, then there was "Dunkin Donuts," and I don't do them no more.

RF: And they're not good.

GC: Well, I can't compete with Dunkin' Donuts, like this one, sell the way they sell. Because that's what they do.

RF: Specialized.

HM: But they taste bad.

GC: Tell me. I never eat one.

RF: You walk by Dunkin' Donuts, and you kind of gag, from the sugar. It's just too much.

GC: The sugar, and the smell of the fry.

RF: And the fry. Interesting.

GC: That's the difference, the detail.

RF: I was thinking of other things that you make. Is there something you make that was named after a customer?

GC: Oh, "the Blob."

MG: Well, the customers named that cookie "the Blob." But now we have coined the walnut cookie the Basil Tahan cookie, as a joke, though.

RF: It's a joke.

MG: Well, I'm being serious, but it's a joke. But he means actually naming one after a person. Like the Basil Tahan walnut cookie.

RF: I thought I saw something in one of the cases.

MG: That was the Basil Tahan walnut cookie.

RF: And you call it --

MG: -- because Basil loves the walnut cookies at Christmas, so, as a joke, I decided to call them the Basil Tahan walnut cookies. Now it's sort of the

Basil Tahan cookie, because he's taken a little card, and carries it with him.

GC: This guy, we know each other from the time I am over here, almost, over twenty years. He's faithful.

MG: In fact, they called on the phone before, for an order of cake.

RF: Do you have any eccentric customers, who can only --

MG: It's Hoboken. We have lots of eccentric customers.

RF: What's like the strangest request? You don't have to name names or anything.

MG: I think it's more personalities than requests. People like their things their own, certain way, but I think it's more the personalities behind.

HM: Yes. Hoboken has many.

MG: Yes.

RF: So back here has remained pretty much the same.

MG: Yes. Except for the paint. And the floor.

GC: The floor was wood floor over here. After one year, I put this one over here, tile.

RF: You put tile down.

GC: Then I put it outside, too. That's the second time, over there. This one is still strong. That was the best job. That really was. Do you how many times the weights go on the floor over there?

MG: Yes, we have the "weights" in the room.

GC: Not one tile is broken, in the end.

RF: I see. And then you modernized your store front.

GC: The store front, the inside, too.

RF: What year did you change the store front? In the '80s?

MG: Eighty-two, '83?

GC: I don't know. Around. I don't remember when it was.

MG: Eighty-two or '83.

HM: So the "mustaches," do you make them, also.

GC: Mostaccioli.

HM: Do you make them year-round?

MG: No. Christmas.

GC: That's Christmas stuff.

HM: And then the hard ones?

MG: The long ones, quaresimali-- that's all the time. Sosamelli -- those are the other hard ones, shaped like an "S."

HM: Oh, those are the ones I'm talking about, like that.

MG: That's really a Christmas cookie. Now we make them all year-round.

GC: These are cookies without "eggs," without fattening--

HM: That's really hard. No eggs in that?

MG: Only on top. There's an egg wash, for a little "crackling." But nothing inside.

RF: So where did you learn all these recipes? Are they all from home?

GC: Everything is Italian stuff, you can't learn these things in American baking.

RF: But when you worked as a young kid, baking, are these the kinds of things that were made in that pastry shop?

GC: Traditional. Yes.

RF: So you didn't really learn them on the ship.

GC: No, I was still in the process of running, when I was working on the ship.

MG: He had to steal information, kind of.

GC: As a matter of fact, when I came here, I was surprised to see everybody [in America] called a chef, younger people. Over there, [in Italy] before you become a chef, you have to be fifty years old. You know what I mean? Long, long, long. You have to wash

a lot of pots. That's the way it was. That's not the way it is now. Everything change even over here.

HM: But that's how it was then.

GC: That's how it was then. Now I don't think it's the same way.

HM: Well, are you being trained?

MG: Yes, I guess so.

HM: And you're not fifty.

MG: I'm not fifty.

HM: So it's different over here.

MG: Yes, but at the same time, I have to put my time in.

HM: And you sure have.

RF: You probably started younger than
twelve --

MG: -- without the pressure.

HM: It's a different relationship.

GC: She learned the ethic work.

MG: The work ethic, young.

HM: At her father's knee, as they say.
She looks happy.

GC: Oh, yes, she looks happy.

MG: People just came in.

I know I'm in a very unique situation, and
I appreciate it. But that unique situation has good sides
and bad sides.

HM: As all do.

GC: She's right.

HM: You're a good team.

We would like to put in one recipe with big amounts. You know, a typical recipe, with the amounts that you make -- just off the top of your head. So just pick one cookie that you make, and tell me what the ingredients are, in the amounts that you use.

GC: In the amounts that I use.

HM: Yes. Just off the top of your head.

GC: Which one?

HM: You pick the cookie you want to tell me about.

GC: I'll make one easy.

HM: Make it easy.

GC: The macaroon amaretti. It's very easy to do. This one is just almond paste.

HM: Okay. How much almond paste?

GC: What do you want? A big batch?

HM: I want to know exactly what you make. I don't want to break it down for a person to make at home. I want to get a sense of what kind of size of materials that you work with.

GC: I make about fifty pounds. About twenty pounds of sugar, granulated sugar, about one, by five -- about seven and a half -- about a gallon and a half egg whites. This is one thing -- buy the almond paste over here.

HM: Yes. You buy the almond paste.

GC: You can buy the almond paste in the supermarket, whatever you want - 1/10, 1/15, this amount, whatever they want to do, they do. Split and divide it in the way they like. What else? You can put it in the machine, add the egg whites a little at a time, break the almond paste, then start to add the sugar, too, add a

little more egg white, adding still more sugar until they blend together.

HM: So you're doing them kind of on and off, right?

GC: Otherwise, they get all crumbly. To break it, it comes out smooth. After this process, it is ready to work. You can make about an inch and a half, with the portion -- the bag, the working bag --

HM: The pastry bags.

MG: He pipes, or I pipe, everything by hand.

HM: Okay. I've got it. On the tray, you're putting it.

RF: On the tray, you're putting it. Is the tray greased, or not?

GC: You can put it on parchment paper. The oven is about 350 degrees, 375, depending on how it

works [with your oven]. Then displaying the tray, about one inch apart, each portion, about an inch or inch and a half apart.

HM: Because it spreads.

GC: It spreads a little bit. Not much. Sometimes the almond paste is more dry than other times, and you have to add a little more thing. But this one comes with experience, of course.

HM: Well, there's an art to it. You really have to know what it's supposed to feel like.

GC: How it works. After that, just put a little powdered sugar on top, before you cook. This way, it expands into in the cracks, the sugar. You know the amaretti, no?

HM: Yes, you're making me hungry. And how long does that cook?

GC: About fifteen minutes. You have to control it, because in the house it's not like this oven.

HM: No, no, I'm wanting to get more of a sense of what you do here.

GC: I give you this one, because it's the more easy to do.

HM: As for other people, they're on their own.

GC: The other ones can be complicated. Sometimes the flour is not as responsive, and I've got trouble myself. That's why even a mix from a book don't respond the ways it says in the book.

HM: I always think that, in baking, you're like an artist and a chemist, combined, because all the conditions -- what's your oven like; what are the ingredients like; how they interact with each other; what does it feel like?

GC: Sometimes the people see me working, and I don't count the number on the oven. They say "Why don't' you put the alarm over here?" But I watch the

oven. But before, when you cooked, there was no thermometer in the oven. In the old Country, we used to cook with wood. There was no thermometer to put inside, and the way you check when the oven was ready, it's just from the whiteness of the vaulted oven. You can realize it's about 400-500 [degrees]. So you prepare whatever you have to prepare, put the stuff inside--first the things that need a hot oven, then the stuff for low temperature. There was no thermometer. You cook the sugar for the fondant, there was no thermometer. Then they start to do the thermometer inside, and you cooked the sugar to 220 degrees temperature -- but you did everything by hand, checked by hand.

HM: That's why you weren't a chef until you were fifty. Really. All those little --

GC: The almond paste was a machine like this one with a rule over here.

MG: It used to.. Now you can --
[Interruption] This is our sheeter. This is what we call this machine. That one.

GC: There are two cylinders, originally in this position, with a container on top. So when you start to do this macaroon paste --

HM: The almond paste --

GC: -- mix, boil the almonds, take the skin off --

HM: Oh, my god.

GC: Then when they are ready, pass in this machine four times, without egg whites, cranked by hand. Believe me, the heart was coming out, by hand.

RF: This was originally by hand.

MG: Back in the day.

GC: In Italy, to do the job this one does, in the corner was a table, with a big stick of wood, with a triangle. You put the dough on top and start to work all around and then you do it again.

HM: So you're pounding it with this?

GC: Yes, you can pound it, because the dough starts to get mature for whatever you want to do. Otherwise, it stays hard and you can't do anything.

MG: But now, with almond paste and fondant, and all that stuff, you can buy good, commercial, ready-to-go --

HM: -- and you don't have to do it.

MG: -- don't have to do it.

HM: Somebody puts it in the machine for you.

MG: Exactly. That part of it --

HM: That's good. It makes it better.

GC: Thank God, and yet, with the machine, the fondant never comes out the same consistency.

HM: It's different when the weather's different, baking. I know, from being at home. If the air is very damp and you're doing dough, it's different.

MG: I think, on the flip side, what he means is that you would think -- like a commercial place, with an almond or macaroon paste or something, because they have all the machines to control everything, they get a much more consistent product. Whereas, he was able to have a more consistent product by doing it by hand.

GC: That's the difference. That's why it takes 50 years to be a chef.

HM: To reach perfection.

GC: Yeah.

HM: Well, it keeps you light on your feet. You never know when you open the can. It keeps it exciting, a little different.

GC: Oh, yes.

HM: But that's a really interesting point. It makes sense, though, too. You are the processor.

MG: Yes. I think that's one of the things -- Again, so much of what we do is so by-hand, that we have more control over what comes out. You can taste the difference. I think there is just less additive. I don't know.

GC: There is no additive at all beside what you have to put in the mix.

MG: But they add things --

GC: Like I told you before, we don't have to do a large quantity to put in the store, or put in the freezer, because it stays longer. It loses all its freshness.

MG: But even people -- they add one thing so it will do one thing. Another thing to make it big, another thing to make it come like that. They add all

this stuff, mixtures of things, and it changes the flavors, and what it is, from what it really should be.

GC: Well, sometimes, you know, you can work -- like ricotta. Sometimes it's hard. You have to put the sugar inside. Or it's too watery. So nothing is perfect. You've got to work with whatever you've got at hand. If you've got no knowledge, you're against the wall. That's what it is.

RF: What are these units, below? They're on wheels? And these are your shoes? So the flour is stored below?

GC: It's better we don't tell the sanitary man or he's not going to like it.

HM: Well, we're not taking pictures. We're just talking.

RF: I thought the sneakers were the magic ingredient.

HM: So is there something that you especially like to make?

RF: There's another pair, over here, of sneakers -- the magic ingredients. Sugar?

MG: Is there something I particularly like to make? I don't think one thing more than -- no, I'm kind of mood dependent, as with everything else in life. I have to say, yesterday we were making sfogliatelle and I've just started making them, helping him actually form them.

HM: Those are the ones that are like shells?

MG: Exactly.

HM: They must be kind of cool to make, because they're so beautiful.

MG: They are. They're a pain in the neck to make, I think, because you have to be very careful. He doesn't like to waste things.

GC: I waste nothing. This is another quality of the chef.

MG: See. He doesn't throw out anything. So for a long time, I would just shy away from that. Because better he does it and makes it the way he likes, because he has to have things the way he likes. But now, with the resurgence of its popularity -- let's put it that way -- I help make the little ones. So yesterday afternoon, that was the whole afternoon, I was making the sfogliatelle, of which I was very proud, because this was second, whole, complete tray, that I completed by myself.

GC: I leave you in peace.

MG: Yes. Because what happened -- besides the fact that it's a long process, people kept coming in. So I would do a line, someone would come in, and then I would have to come back. And it just took forever.

HM: How much time does the process need? How much time are you talking about? To do a tray?

MG: To do a tray? It takes him --

GC: -- about forty-five minutes.

HM: And it takes you -- ?

MG: It took me about two hours to do a tray -- after I was interrupted a hundred thousand times.

HM: When people come and eat them -- when you put them out -- did you cry? After two hours?

MG: No, that's the way it is. I understand that's the way it is. I think it bothers me more when people don't understand the labor that goes into everything, and then they'll say something, about whatever -- complaints.

GC: Let's just say it's a pain in the neck to do those things.

HM: So you say, "You try to make it."

MG: Sometimes, with the cakes, people will compare what they get here to Costco, or "BJ's," or the supermarket --

HM: By the way, the "tiramisu" cake that we picked up? His mother loved it. It was her birthday cake. She loved it. It was delicious.

RF: I hadn't seen her for a while, so it helped.

HM: It sweetened the experience. [?] -- She took a little bite and smiled, and we knew we'd gotten over that.

RF: So people actually talk about Costcos and BJ's?

MG: Occasionally.

RF: Sick.

HM: Kick'em out.

GC: That's sick.

HM: It is sick. Well, obviously, they don't know what they're talking about.

RF: Outside, there's a picture of you at a big event, with a Statue of Liberty. What was that?

GC: Yes. That was 1986. It was the big "bash," Miss Liberty, the restoration of Miss Liberty, and that was a cake I did for the Port Authority, for 3,000 people.

MG: Yes, they were in charge of the swearing in of the citizens in, I think, Battery Park.

GC: It was made in Battery Park, exactly. They tell me, Port Authority, before, even if somebody sneezed they ordered a cake. Now everything is tight. But when I did this cake, this guy called me who always ordered the cakes, for all the stations. And he said, "We have to do this thing so and so. Are you able to do this cake?" I say, "Yes, I am able to do this, but there is just one problem, I am not organized for this work, big

scale. I just have one freezer like this one." So he says, "What?" "Because I don't have a freezer. You need a lot of room in the freezer or refrigerator. It's not a thing you can do in one day." He said, "OK, just for this you have no problem. Start to do the cake. We are going to send a freezer truck every day. Whatever is ready, they put in the truck, and the day of the feast, we're gonna go downtown and you'll put it together there." And that's why I was over there. The cake was big, like half of this store. You know. And, I was almost all day over here. The ships, they were passing and I didn't see nothing.

MG: The Tall Ships were passing.

GC: The day before, I have to get the cream, and all the instruments for work all around, whatever I needed for work. It was, oh, god. Then they gave me the ticket for the night for the party, and I didn't go. I wasn't there for the party. You can't even walk in the street, in that part of town, where the cake was.

RF: We should get the recipe for that!

Can you describe it, the cake?

GC: I did the sheets one by one, which was about forty sheets. Then I put it together over there, finish the top, and do the decoration. That's why it take me so long.

RF: And it was to feed how many people?

GC: Three thousand people.

RF: Were there leftovers?

GC: I don't think there was any left over.

RF: You must have been pretty tired.

GC: A cake of vanilla and chocolate. Well, it was a time I've "got a lot in my head." I don't know English today, imagine when I come here. To talk with people, think of things all around. It's not easy.

RF: Well, we can't bake like you, either.

GC: Well, even in the proper business, it's not easy when you got to a new country. Everything is different. But I like whatever I did, the experience, new life, new things. If I had to start everything again, I can start everything again.

RF: Also, you bought the bakery. Did you eventually buy the building, too?

GC: Of course.

RF: That came later?

GC: That came later. Yes. Not too late, because this guy was in a rush. Thank god I did whatever I did. It was the right time. It was the right time, I spent \$20,000 more, at the time, in the old value of the property, in this block and over all, too. You know what I mean? Because his idea was -- I fail, like the ones that had the store before me. But, bad for him, I don't fail.

HM: Too bad.

GC: I give him all the money, whatever he wants, so he got nothing to say. Just he catch me with about \$20,000 more than the value of the property. Okay. I did the right thing, anyway.

RF: Timing is everything.

GC: He's in business, too, wherever he is. Around where I come from, a little bit farther down, Paestum, a city about eighty kilometers from Napoli. It's a nice place, too. He put a store in, a deli.

MG: That's where he wound up? So the other guy there has a little store, in Italy

GC: When he come back I tell him, "Do me a favor. Because then I hear the whole story. Don't even stop outside, don't let the people see you--that's what I tell him." I was bad, but I was so mad. Because if I don't have the experience I have, I fail too. It doesn't matter. It's okay. The people still come.

RF: And I would think that the new people in Hoboken appreciate your product. Don't you think?

GC: Oh, yes. Most of all they appreciate the cannoli. What did you do for the tasting tray?

MG: Rum balls, and something else.

GC: Rum balls, amaretti cookies, and something else. The people go nuts for the amaretti cookies. Bring a lot of people inside, for the Taste of Hoboken.

HM: And now you have coffee. You'll never get rid of people.

MG: But it's "coffee to go." Express espresso. Or espresso express.

HM: Espresso express. I like that.

GC: See, I come with this experience. I don't want to say a negative, because I learned over there, but working in a bar, from 10:00 in the morning to

1:00 or 2:00 in the night, is a little too much. That's why I don't want to put the tables out.

RF: Oh, that brings back memories of your brother.

MH: That's true.

GC: It's too much. Over here is different, anyway. Over here is different.

RF: Yes, but at a bar, there's alcohol, and that sort of --

MG: Well, in Italy, though, it's a little different. A bar there is not like a bar here, because it's like a coffee place -- coffee and drinks, but it's more -- I don't know. It's more -- it's different. The society's different. People bring their kids to a bar there, kind of.