

**Interview with Chris Evangelista**  
**19th November 2018**  
**Location of Interview: Loyola University New Orleans**  
**6363 St. Charles Avenue**  
**New Orleans, LA 70118**  
**Interviewed by: Gabriel Borges**  
**Interview length: 54:24**

**Abstract:** Raised throughout various cities of the United States, Chris Evangelista is still finding his way. In his own words, he is a “free spirit”. After traveling, living, and learning for most of his life, he settled in New Orleans 14 years ago. He has been a top waiter at Galatoire's Restaurant, located in Downtown, New Orleans, for 13 years. This job has acted as a doorway, unveiling the culture of New Orleans in front of his eyes. Although he seems to live a comfortable life here in the city, you can see and hear his passion for adventure through his words. One day, he would like to open up his own farm to table b&b in his home. For now, he continues to bring excitement to those who decide to dine at the infamous Galatoire's, second-line his way through New Orleans, and bring smiles, laughter, and cheer to those who watch the Krewe Du Vieux parade roll through the marigny.

**Service Industry Collection**  
**Documentary and Oral History Studio**  
**Loyola University New Orleans**

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[00:00:12.02] Gabe Borges: Alright. I'm Gabe.

[00:00:14.24] Chris Evangelista: I'm Chris.

[00:00:18.25] Gabe Borges: Uhm. I guess first off, can you just tell me about yourself...where your from...a little background?

[00:00:22.02] Chris Evangelista: Uh. A little New England, a little Puerto Rico, a little California. Now I'm here. Uh, what else?

[00:00:33.11] Gabe Borges: Where'd you grow up?

[00:00:36.09] Chris Evangelista: *\*thinking\** Through high school in Boston.

[00:00:40.00] Gabe Borges: So you've been all over. How long have you been in New Orleans?

[00:00:42.09] Chris Evangelista: Fourteen years?

[00:00:47.29] Gabe Borges: What made you come down here?

[00:00:51.06] Chris Evangelista: I was in LA at that point and my roommate out there was from here. So I started coming into here and at one point I was just like sorry i got to go. This is the next one.

[00:01:05.04] Gabe Borges: So is there any reason you moved around so much before settling here?

[00:01:08.01] Chris Evangelista: Free spirit. Yeah, moving from Boston. And again it was just a friend and she was like, "you're friends moving to California and she said we should too." And I said, "alright, let's do it." And then did that..I was there for 10 years and then uh, I guess that all of a sudden, over time coming here I realized, I wanted to come here next.

[00:01:36.24] Gabe Borges: And then you just ended up deciding to stay?

[00:01:41.28] Chris Evangelista: Yeah, rooted. *\*laughs\**

[00:01:43.27] Gabe Borges: So, you work in the service industry at Galatoire's, right?

[00:01:49.15] Chris Evangelista: Yes.

[00:01:50.03] Gabe Borges: How long have you been doing that?

[00:01:50.20] Chris Evangelista: Thirteen years?

[00:01:54.25] Gabe Borges: Ok. How'd you get into it?

[00:01:56.05] Chris Evangelista: Uhm, my old roommates sister is a waiter there.

[00:02:05.13] Gabe Borges: Cool. So were you in the service industry before in different cities? Did you have experience?

[00:02:14.04] Chris Evangelista: Yes, I've been in the service industry the whole time, so..I guess thirty plus years.

[00:02:21.16] Gabe Borges: Cool, I feel like I've heard that you can be uh..there's a big difference between waiters in a high class restaurant, like Galatoires, rather than like, uh, you know, I don't know, some other restaurant that's not as big. Do you see any differences in that?

[00:02:45.10] Chris Evangelista: Uhm, yes and no. There is just a certain level of... I have a... in terms of what I expect someone to do in the service industry just because I've done in for so long. Uh, certain things that are just, ya know, should be if you've worked in those situations for the amount of time that uh, I think you've been been working in...I expect you to do it..It shouldn't be a second guess thing. So, at a certain level no, it doesn't matter what level of restaurant it is. If your going to go for the title of restaurant then there's a certain...

[00:03:42.07] Gabe Borges: yeah, yeah... I feel like I've just.. or you see people like..I work in a restaurant and have been for a couple years now, but ya know, I know people who in say, GW Fins, and those people are making big livings off of just doing that, ya know. For me it's just a job to hold on to while I'm in college. I just, I feel like there's a difference between just doing it as a side thing and then full time, that's your career, being a waiter, ya know?

[00:04:22.06] Chris Evangelista: Yeah. I mean where do you work?

[00:04:23.24] Gabe Borges: I work at origami sushi on freret street.

[00:04:29.01] Chris Evangelista: Ok, yeah, yeah.

[00:04:31.09] Gabe Borges: But I'm a sushi chef over there, but started out as..I was bartending and before that I was front of house.

[00:04:42.14] Chris Evangelista: So, is that something for you to just get by or are you transitioning to the next...

[00:04:48.13] Gabe Borges: Well, yeah yeah, at first before I started working in the kitchen it was something I did just to get by, but you know I just uhm, I don't know, I grew up, my families in the seafood industry and so i've been in and out of restaurants forever so I know, people..

[00:05:07.13] Chris Evangelista: Here?

[00:05:07.13] Gabe Borges: Yeah, in New Orleans. So, my dads real close with different waiters at different restaurants that are his age and guess it's just interesting to see somebody... that be a career? Being a waiter.

[00:05:23.29] Chris Evangelista: I mean, if you had told 20 year old me that yeah, 25 years from now I'd still be doing this. I would have been like, no, stop. But, everyone needs to eat, right? And uhm, so just in terms of that there is a certain level of expectation. there is also, were on this weird slope now for what is...like I have people sitting down with expectation and it's like, oh we don't do that out here. Let's say the table sits down...Our tables are not set to begin with. Like,

[00:06:18.00] Gabe Borges: Like when they sit down?

[00:06:18.00] Chris Evangelista: You get a blank canvas and everything happens from there and uh, so you know, you go through the weird idiosyncrasies of that, like Galatoire's is what is is, but it does everything it's own way. Right? Like the Brennans, they have a whole system. The whole Emeril's, they have a whole system. Like the whole Besch group, they have like...You see these trainings that happen and uh, so yeah we do it our way. The first floor, which is the iconic floor remains true to its roots, so again, you arrive, there's just a canvas, it's just a tablecloth and everything happens from there. We don't use bread plates. We just break it off on the table. Old school. And some people will get really freaked out by that. And it's like, well where's the bread plate, like your doing the service wrong already and it's like, actually, this is what we do. This is our way.

[00:07:27.06] Gabe Borges: I guess you could say your job is different than any other waiters job at a different restaurant. Or would you say that? That it's not just, walking up, greeting, taking the..ya know, you're a lot more interactive rather than other places.

[00:07:44.16] Chris Evangelista: It depends on the person. You realize that you're encountering someone lost in the situation and it is up to you to kind of bring them in the situation and I have seen, not just at Galatoire's, but at other places where people who arrive don't quite click with what is going on in the room, and there just like no this is

terrible. Like, the other day I had these two people and they were like, "We love everything, but it's terrible." I'm like, "what's terrible?" And she's like, "Look at this table" there's like 20 young ladies who are celebrating the departure of their friend and they were really loud, but that's already, if you've read enough about Galatoires, a part of it is, we're loud. we're loud in there. And uh, there's no way to circumnavigate that. Like, I'm sorry I can't fix loud. i'm not gonna tell them to be quiet, they're having a great time. Like, sorry it's one big room and I can't move you somewhere else that is less quiet. But, it is.

[00:09:01.22] Gabe Borges: have you ever, in the past or between the years. Or has Galatoire's always been the only restaurant you've worked in.

[00:09:08.14] Chris Evangelista: there was 8 years of overlap with Bayona.

[00:09:13.28] Gabe Borges: Where's Bayona located?

[00:09:14.21] Chris Evangelista: On Dauphine. Susan Spicer restaurant.

[00:09:19.10] Gabe Borges: Ok, cool. But Galatoire's just had that, I don't know, attraction?

[00:09:23.27] Chris Evangelista: It pulled me into the culture of the city more. Like, i love Bayona, bayona is one of those experiences where you are polished a lot with the details. You come... You are most often coming from someplace else to come to New Orleans to experience Susan Spicer, and that's a beautiful thing. She puts out amazing stuff. If you are a server or... I mean, its shifting now as ya know, more and more people come in, but when I first started at Galatoire's, i was literally server number 1 post-Katrina and most of the on-local staff had evacuated. So it was me and I don't know, like 8 old cajun dudes. And it was just like, literally we'd all sit there and they'd all speak cajun French around me and I was like, wow, this is back to 1960 or something, cause they were the staff that was around in 1960, like everybody else was gone. And uh, so that was a trip after Katrina. It was just me and a whole family in front, cause they were all related. And then, in the back was a whole family. And then, the establishment itself was a whole family, so that's kinda what i like, dropped in on. yeah

[00:11:16.14] Gabe Borges: Do you feel a part of that family after all this time?

[00:11:20.08] Chris Evangelista: Yeah, yeah, I mean, it was..there wasn't, I mean, there wasn't, it didn't, I guess when we got, when we opened a steak house next door, was the next surge of employment that kind of altered the chemistry in the building, cause like, now you have twice as many waiters and half of them worked on the other side of this door.

[00:11:54.09] Gabe Borges: but y'all are all stil...

[00:11:54.09] Chris Evangelista: but we're all still working...and where are you working today, but i mean ya know, that's all worked out. It's an interesting. The two sides, the two faces of Galatoires.

[00:12:09.09] Gabe Borges: So, uhm, one of the main reasons, \*cough\* sorry, we're doing these interviews..we're trying to explore mental health in the restaurant industry, service industry..I guess I'll just throw it out there, but I don't know, do you see any problems when it comes to mental health, whether it be, I mean, anything, just the service industry in general. how it treats its, uh, the people that are in it?

[00:12:46.23] Chris Evangelista: I mean, it definitely takes a certain character to, uh, have longevity in this industry. Uhm. Cause pretty much whatever part of the business you are in, you are dealing with many people. Like if you're back of the house you're still dealing with the whole front of the house, if you're front of the house you're dealing with customers. If you're in the office you're dealing with all that. I guess it's a little bit more normal in the office, ya know. And I think down here it just depends on, uh, the leads, like management. Like who you have leading you're group will determine the outcome of the evening often. I mean there is lots of unforeseen events, but that's also part of it. Uh, You need to have improvisational skills. There's no way around it. you have to be able to come up with something quick, like, you know, cause yeah, like people really get angry, ya know. But that's the customer and you still gotta have it, like a smile on your face at the end of the day, regardless of what's happening behind you. Uhm,

[00:14:42.07] Gabe Borges: Would you agree that working in the industry, you need like, uh, a different form, or not a different form, but a really willful and strong dedication to the job, because of the amount of time you're working?

[00:15:01.25] Chris Evangelista: Well a lot of it has to do with, uhm, a reciprocity with the business. Like, I, one of the ultimate transitional points for me from Bayona to Galatoire's was the fact that I do have health, dental, 401K, ya know. that is happening for me and ya know, that's some of the things you want in the normal world. I do want to go to a doctor when I feel like it and not worry about about it and y'all are hooking me up with this. There is a group discount, so it makes it cheaper. Stuff like that, so... It, uh, it helps. Uhm,...

[00:15:58.24] Gabe Borges: I could totally wrong, but, I mean it might just be Galatoire's, but does everybody at Galatoire's get those benefits. I know that at other restaurants and stuff, waiters...

[00:16:12.29] Chris Evangelista: Yeah, yeah, if you're full time and you uh, hit that mark and uh, calendar, then it's time. And if you want it, then..But I mean, is it that you have to have insurance now or is that not Louisiana?

[00:16:29.15] Gabe Borges: I have no idea how it works haha.

[00:16:31.14] Chris Evangelista: Like, isn't there the penalty now if your don't have insurance, so everyone has to have insurance. Do you have insurance? \*laughs\*

[00:16:38.29] Gabe Borges: I don't even know. Not even sure.

[00:16:43.06] Chris Evangelista: Cause I know there's something we have to sign off every year, saying you know, if we decline insurance then...

[00:16:49.26] Gabe Borges: Then you get fined or something.

[00:16:50.18] Chris Evangelista: Blah, blah, blah.

[00:16:52.01] Gabe Borges: Yeah, yeah, yeah, i remember something going on like that..

[00:16:57.24] Chris Evangelista: So I think that's. You have to sign that regardless or not.

[00:17:02.26] Gabe Borges: So have you ever experienced, I mean, any type of I mean have you ever experienced a downside to working in the industry, which I'm sure it's true -

[00:17:22.12] Chris Evangelista: A bad side?

[00:17:23.19] Gabe Borges: Yeah, or what are you, what do you think the pros and cons are?

[00:17:30.06] Chris Evangelista: Outside of normal bad?

[00:17:30.06] Gabe Borges: Yeah, what do you think the pros and cons are of working in the service industry in general?

[00:17:34.13] Chris Evangelista: Uhm, fluidity, definitely, you're able to, uh, shift out to make other plans, usually and uh, pretty much whatever level. if your a manager, you can swap with another manager, if your a server, you can trade out with a server. So you're always=, not always, but, but you have the opportunity to trade your days out.

[00:18:10.00] Gabe Borges: Oh, you mean like when it comes to scheduling? yeah.

[00:18:12.01] Chris Evangelista: Which is not necessarily, I think is not the norm, uhm. A lot of people would say that working the weekends is terrible. i've done it so long that I don't know the difference anymore. I mean, here, in particular, it doesn't matter, because there is something going on on Tuesday, there's something going on on Wednesday, it doesn't matter. Like I could go find something to do, ya know. Uhm, Uh...Bad things...Again, some people would not like the hours. I, again, I've been in it for so long, it's another thing that doesn't phase me. I do what I need to do around the hours that..you know...to get the job done. On both sides, at my house and at work. Or

if it's scholl at that point, it was school then work. Uhm. I guess some people need the 9-5 Monday through Friday structure in order to uh, say that it's a pro as opposed to a con.

[00:19:33.11] Gabe Borges: I guess it's gonna be different for everybody, yeah.

[00:19:37.28] Chris Evangelista: uhhh, ya know I do work in a good restaurant so, uh, I do get to..and I've worked there for awhile so I do get to intertwined my life with work, in a way that i am able to continue to uh, enjoy where I am, both at work and out in the city. some people will get to the point where all they do is focus on work and not live the life around them, kind of thing. Uhm, people... \*may not live?\* the appropriate lifestyle as if they are working late nights, ya know. I see a lot of people go late night and then go party late night and show up the next day and there like, ughhh. and like, alright, you been doing this for 5 years now, are you sure?

[00:20:53.09] Gabe Borges: Is that common?

[00:20:53.25] Chris Evangelista: Uhh, I see it often. I mean especially when fresher faces, ya know. you get to a point where you need to decide whether you're just gonna continue to go down that road, which is a destructive road or you, you know, you reap what you wanna sow for real, as opposed to uh, I guess , going down that other road, uhm, but this cities good for uh, bringing that to a head quick. Like, I've seen a lot of people just bounce right out of it, cause they just, it's all too much. All too much too fast, ya can't handle it.

[00:21:35.06] Gabe Borges: Do you feel like there's, uh, a sense of community within service industry workers within New Orleans particularly? Like not just in a restaurant, but you know.

[00:21:53.09] Chris Evangelista: Yes. But at the same time, because it is this city, it's, the longer you're in it, the more you're gonna be at the crossroads with so many other like, the venn diagram of New Orleans is like ridiculous, cause you know, even though you might work here, you're customers will tell you about the other places they go to and then all of a sudden you realize you're friends are working there, so even though yall havent seen each other, in like 4 or 5 years, y'all have been caught up via the customer. And you are again, get to the point where you cross this threshold where like, oh well, hanging out with your customer, ya know. Because your customer said, oh you should do this and we're gonna go do this or like are you getting off work now, lets go have a drink down the street, i don't know. So it all kinda, is it a service industry? but how many people that I, ya know, are customers that are all in the service industry already, ya know, it's all kind of -

[00:23:17.16] Gabe Borges: intertwined...

[00:23:17.16] Chris Evangelista: yeah. It really is to me anyways.

[00:23:22.20] Gabe Borges: yeah, I feel like I see, uhm. Usually like late night when, on different streets, when uh I guess work is getting out, all of the waiters, everybody flocking and hanging out outside of the same bars, ya know, everybodys from different restaurants,. I don't know...ummm, well, on the side, got any hobbies? You do anything on the side besides work?

[00:23:45.05] Chris Evangelista: Gardening. yeah. Gardening, uh, I like that. It's uh, peaceful. It's antithesis of being at work, uh, cause it's so loud.

[00:24:05.10] Gabe Borges: How'd did you get into...ya got a big garden at home?

[00:24:08.15] Chris Evangelista: Uh, it goes around the house, so. Lots of butterfly attracting stuff. So I just sit there and it's like some weird moment where a bunch of butterflies are around my head and my neighbors are like, alright there goes that dude again.

[00:24:28.00] Gabe Borges: \*laughing\* oh man. thats funny. Uhm, lets see. Do you have any family here?

[00:24:34.27] Chris Evangelista: No.

[00:24:36.07] Gabe Borges: Wheres ya family live?

[00:24:37.24] Chris Evangelista: Uh, new Hampshire, Boston, Santa Cruz, Shanghai. That's my immediate family.

[00:24:57.07] Gabe Borges: Do you ever travel around to visit everybody?

[00:25:00.06] Chris Evangelista: yeah, again, one of the benefits of ....

[00:25:05.03] Gabe Borges: Being able to get someone to cover?...

[00:25:07.16] Chris Evangelista: yeah, or like, Oh its slow season, can I take six weeks off to go to Asia, cause who does it for a week. I mean people do, but hahaha. Cause yeah, like I have a bunch of family in the Philippines. Uhm, people I grew up with are in Thailand, and so its, like, I love Thailand.

[00:25:25.15] Gabe Borges: is that your favorite place?

[00:25:29.29] Chris Evangelista: Uhhh, Thailand first choice, yeah. I love the Philippines. Uh, but, something about the intersection of religion and daily life in Bangkok and Thailand in general, and how it seamlessly is. well, I'm sure there is bumps, but how it's interwoven between the two blows my mind. Uh, but japan too. Japan really tripped me too. he attention to detail, would be the service industries, polishing school, go to Japan. Like, its awesome.

[00:26:14.24] Gabe Borges: Do you see any difference, I mean, what do you think the differences are between Japan's industry and down here? or not even Japan, but anywhere you've been, do you see-is there something about New Orleans' industry than some of those other places?

[00:26:41.06] Chris Evangelista: Hmm, that's an interesting question..\*laughs\* Uhhhh. I mean I guess first off, you'd have to be uh, a city that has a food culture, to separate yourself from other places. So, to start off you'd have to have a city that doesn't have a food culture, to be in that industry over there versus an industry that does have a food culture, so that'd it'd be like your first ring. You are, expressing your culture, so I don't know, I don't know. Cause like thieres dining and uh, fine dining. You know, a Chinese restaurant fine dining is different, uh, yeah no, I don't know , i dont think its that different. No, cause at the point you cross culture and if you're trying to be a restaurant of a certain level you start looking to, you know, some of the French uh, masters to uh, bring to your table, so at that point there's a certain standardization. No I think it's the same. Like, \*shrugs\*.

[00:28:29.10] Gabe Borges: So, do you see yourself, I mean, doing this the rest of your life?

[00:28:34.20] Chris Evangelista: \*laughs\* uh, yeah,. I guess in some aspect. Uhm, I'd like to do like uh, uhm, farm to table within, like a farm to table bnb I guess it would be. right? Just have it all on the property kind of thing. Uhm, so it'd be just an expansion of my house and garden. \*laughs\* But you can come eat

[00:29:13.10] Gabe Borges: Have you always been into that, you know sustainability and farm to table. Has that always been a thing in your life?

[00:29:23.00] Chris Evangelista: Yeah, it's always been a thing for me. Uhm, I guess being my age and watching that tipping point happen where it was just like care free seventies, it didn't matter and then it all of sudden the reality of the situation and then uh, having seeing how different parts of the world respond to it, the Japanese literally sort everything down the different things, like, plastic, number 1 goes here, plastic number 2 goes here, versus, we can't even get it done here. \*laughs\* ya know, so that makes for interesting reality.

[00:30:23.19] Gabe Borges: Is there things you uh, see happening in galatoires, or Bayona that you know, doesn't uh, go well with your beliefs when it comes to farm to table and sustainability and stuff like that?

[00:30:41.24] Chris Evangelista: Uhm, I would like more recycling effort. You know, it's hard because you need to be uh, an educator at the same time ya know. And ya knows, it's , a lot of it is about time, the whole equation of time and money and then benefits to solve that equation at the moments even though there's even greater equations that's

happening around you, but since it doesn't affect the sport term vision, ya know, like we as a greater community knew for a long time knew about uh, oyster shells and what they do, so, it took how long to do an oyster shell recycling program in this city. So now it's here. Uh, stuff like that, we can definitely move from a position of going with just the general flow to shifting to being more of a leader in some aspects. Uhm, that would make me happier. You know, not just as one restaurant, but as a city. You know, to counter some of the uh, impressions some people have of upon leaving the city. You know, uhm. I was surprised after being here for so long, I went a visited a couple cities in the North East and I was like, man this place is dirty. I never thought I'd say that about some place like ya know, had so much going for it. i was like, "Y'all dirty here". Uh, you know, I thought we had some trash problems, but uhm, no y'all, you now. Not to diss that other city. But uh...

[00:33:12.19] Gabe Borges: Do you ever find yourself, while at work, I don't know, you said we all gotta be, one, taking, but also taking action. Do you ever find yourself, tryna educate?

[00:33:29.05] Chris Evangelista: Oh yeah, constantly. because I mean there's not, ya know, there's not a book on the subtleties on what needs to get done in a restaurant. But again, some of it is just my assumption of what is or should of been taught already on a certain level. Like, I joke about the fact that when i was in high school, before we graduated, like everyone when to shop class. Everyone had to know some basic fundamentals, everyone had to go to sewing class. We all had to learn how to sew something. Couple other classes like that like, ya know, I had to work with power tools by certain age, but that was just part of the scholastic environment at that point and uh, no we didn't have polishing class in terms of anything like that. But uh, Maybe the recreation of something like eduquitte cause some people are not, like some things I expect you to have learned at home by now. But, you still aren't doing it, but I guess I have to tell you how to do it. You know, like alright.

[00:34:55.10] Gabe Borges: I remember my mom used to threaten to send me and my brother to eduquity school whenever we didn't have the right manners.

[00:35:05.16] Chris Evangelista: But I mean you know, it's again, it's not just as uh, the people serving or the people I'm working with. It's the customer too. It's this weird slippery slope of no-one knows what to do anymore and it's like, we'll see. I don't know. \*laughs\*

[00:35:32.02] Gabe Borges: Yeah, so, uhm, lets see, uhm, I already asked you if you plan on doing this the rest of your life. Uhm,

[00:35:44.13] Chris Evangelista: In some form of one or another. Like I said if there's was like my little farm to table b&b, that'd be great. Uh, if not, if I have to stay in the New Orleans restaurant world.

[00:35:56.25] Gabe Borges: Well, yeah, or I guess just the world of the..well, if ya did stay in say, New Orleans, do you plan on staying at Galatoire's or could you see yourself after thirteen years, or could you even imagine going somewhere else?

[00:36:09.21] Chris Evangelista: Uhm, I could, I don't plan to.

[00:36:19.13] Gabe Borges: You kinda got it made already...

[00:36:22.06] Chris Evangelista: Well, you know, people joke about those waiter graveyards, we're all old at this point, but I mean that's not necessarily true. I work with some young cats too. That's not, uhm, hence the need to guide a little bit.

[00:36:39.27] Gabe Borges: I, uhm, I just thought of this, but where I work there's like, I don't know if i'd say competition, but there's like a lot of beef and competition between the waiters and like who made more tips and like ya know, I don't know -

[00:36:56.02] Chris Evangelista: People do that, but I really don't care. You know, if it didn't show up on Tuesday, it'll show up on Friday. Ya know, its all, it's kind of like everyone goes to split the check, and I just kind of chuckle as i see all the receipts coming out and there all within two dollars of each other. It's like, why did we split this check? Like, it's...nobody, ya know, uhm, -

[00:37:26.04] Gabe Borges: Do you think there's competition when it comes to getting positions at different restaurants? Obviously, there is, but thats what comes with being a waiter. Is there, is there..yeah.

[00:37:39.05] Chris Evangelista: Well. there's definitely different kind of like, like you said before, youre doing this for a just a job for the moment, uh, so you do definitely have that sector of wait staff. which you then have to turn around and balance out in your own mind if your are running the ship, like you know. I can already see that this person has an expiration date. How long do I need this person? How much damage can this person do before that persons no longer worth that warm body that it was for the moment? Because that is part of the problem now, you are at a saturation point where there is not enough, uh, of a certain caliber of staff that people are looking for. But, you know, the counter to that is that if you're looking for a certain caliber of staff and youre not finding it, usually if your start raising the dollar per hour, their gonna come out, but again, you have a system wide thing within the

industry. You do cap out at a certain, because you're own affordable is compromised at a certain point, cause of the way it all operates. you know. Front of house, back of house doesn't matter, we're all \$2.13 an hour, i'll keep 10 of you on the floor. \*laugh\*

[00:39:22.00] Gabe Borges: Did that ever get you down, i don't know, the whole waiters being paid 2.13 an hour. what kind of effect did that have on you? Or still does?

[00:39:22.06] Chris Evangelista: I mean it's a weird thing uhm, coming from California prior, where it's a very regulated machine because of the that whole wage difference. Because you are getting paid, I don't know what it is at this point, 8, 9, 10 an hour.

[00:39:59.27] Gabe Borges: Waiters get paid that?

[00:40:01.22] Chris Evangelista: Yeah

[00:40:01.22] Gabe Borges: Really?

[00:40:02.17] Chris Evangelista: Yeah and uh, like we were, I guess it was depending on the place you were at, but like ya know, one of the spots we were at was like regulated, you know, management would come up and make sure, like if have you taken your 15 minute break yet? And that was just part of the process of, even if you were part of wait staff you had to figure out how to work this 15 minute break in or clock out for half hour lunch, like stuff like that. There was the regulations that were followed through in California versus the ones that are here. Uh, which is your right to work? Which is a weird phrase, it's not right to work, it right to terminate. Ya know,

[00:40:51.23] Gabe Borges: Well I saw uhm, a video a while back that was talking about, because you know, the minimum wage for waiters can be as low as 2.13, many people survive and live just of there tips and there is a big issue with waiters feeling like they have to go the extra mile or be someone that their not, or do something they aren't comfortable with, uh, just to like get those tips. And like, uh, for example, female waiters, feeling like they have to flirt extra with tables to get more tips, uhm, because they don't make enough money and just have to...

[00:41:38.08] Chris Evangelista: I mean there is some slippery slope with that, uhm, again, because I guess I'm at a point with this that I uh, I guess I'm a little salty, but I don't care I'm just very matter of fact and if I've had you as a repeated customer you understand that I'm just gonna be matter of fact with you, uh. And I'm not a tape recorder. Like, ya know, that some of the things I've seen over the years. People just like hit play and blah blah blah blah. I'm not like you weren't even there for that entire conversation were you? Like at all. Uhm, But yeah stuff like that.

[00:42:35.26] Gabe Borges: So you do feel, I mean, do you feel its true that, I mean, cause like when it comes to mental health and that whole situation that the pay for being a waiter has an effect on people's mental health and well being in that industry?

[00:42:56.12] Chris Evangelista: Uhm, I guess it depends again, if you're making enough to survive, I mean it's that threshold, are you making anything different than like, I guess one of the big questions has been like some people I work with are tryna go on the being a school teacher versus maintaining a job with the restaurant industry, but the pay in the restaurant industry much greater and you're still dealing with the same mental stress. You know. So, what is your base level pay for the amount of stress you can take. I think it doesn't matter or what like yeah, it's the restaurant world, but it's also retail, its school, it's also law enforcement. At what point is your pay like..like...what is your worth? You know. Can you handle the stress? are you happy with you check in the ends? Are you able to channel out the issues that you get along the way or do you internalize it and it becomes a problem? Uhm, any industry that deals with people constantly, is gonna be on that level of stress.

[00:44:44.21] Gabe Borges: Yeah, so uhm, just to wrap it up here..if somebody told you they wanted to do what you do, and they wanted make a career being a waiter, what advice would you give them?

[00:44:58.24] Chris Evangelista: uhmm, make sure you have thick skin and know that it's not all about, it's not all about the money. Like, know when to back off and work on yourself. If your gonna do this, in many cases you can't plan for your future as you can in other industries. I guess like Galatoire's has giving me this nest egg thing happens that other restaurants don't have or other people in this industry don't have, I guess another exception would be hotel restaurants. They get packages type things. So, know that if you're in this industry and you dont have built in structure for your future to know that you need to do that as well and a whole thing with the taxes if your front of house. If your just getting cash tips, it;ll catch up. It always catches up and then it just goes ugly. \*laughs\*

[00:46:41.02] Gabe Borges: \*laughs\* it's not fun.

[00:46:42.17] Gabe Borges: Well, is there anything else you'd like to talk about?

[00:46:49.19] Chris Evangelista: Uhh, in the restaurant world? hahaha.

[00:46:58.11] Gabe Borges: Anything in your life, working on anything? Do you have anything you want the people to know about?

[00:47:09.04] Chris Evangelista: Lets see....uh, you get to a tipping point in this city right? Like, you know that you are enjoying it and I guess you try to decide how much deeper you wade into it. cause I know some people who been here for awhile and there still not in the city, even though they've lived here for years. Uhm,

[00:47:41.17] Gabe Borges: Do you mean just like the mindset of being here?

[00:47:46.05] Chris Evangelista: Yeah...yeah, yeah, yeah. Uh, I think that was part of the draw from Galatoire's for me, within a few months of my working there, I experienced more of the culture of the city than I had had prior. Like within, a short amount of time I was just...like I had said, for a time everyone around me was just cajun for awhile, uhm, I worked with at least half a dozen people that were in different second line crews around town. So all of a sudden it was like this doorway to the city I didn't have before that uh, continues to blow my mind now. Uh, Cause that is the weird special thing...it's not just Galatoire's, but the city in general. the people, especially now because it's being marketed so much as a destination city. Like come do you bridal shower here, come do your bachelor party here, come, ya know, hire a brass band and second line down bourbon street. Its, uh, an interesting place to witness this happening because uh there is kinda like a whole standardization of culture on one level but if you stand out, ya know, lemme show you why I stand out, so that's what happening here. It's an interesting thing to have been here before and after katrina and to watch the evolution and then to be Puerto Rican and to have Maria happen and to watch the exact same thing happen and then watch the exact same thing happen again. So it's kinda like watching the reinvention of self and uh, be a part of it. Ya know.

[00:50:08.17] Gabe Borges: Do you spend most of your time downtown? Actually in the city.

[00:50:16.20] Chris Evangelista: uhm, I guess, versus like uptown right here?

[00:50:22.03] Gabe Borges: Well i feel like there's like, when it comes to being involved, because I have a lot of friends who I guess i can say what youre talking about, like their here, but their not here...Ya know what i mean. It's...

[00:50:37.18] Chris Evangelista: Yeah, to get involved with the city. Yeah, you need to get out your ward.

[00:50:50.24] Gabe Borges: yeah I know people who haven't left this area and don't like leaving this area for some reason, its weird.

[00:50:56.23] Chris Evangelista: Yeah, cause part of its...like.. uh, like I got sucked into the whole second line culture, like, I find it incredible, uh, and then two years ago. After being a groupie for so long, my friend was like

alright, why don't you just come in, ya know. So it's like a whole other culture of going and participating in the second lines uptown, downtown. So it does take me to other parts of the city that i wouldn't normally be in, just to, ya be immersed in that.

[00:51:46.21] Gabe Borges: How long you been second lining?

[00:51:46.21] Chris Evangelista: Uhh, I will come on Feb. 3rd for the second year. and then the year before. So three years before I was the rope man, so I was one of the dudes holding the rope before the line. and then I just been going to events for a couple different groups for awhile and its uh a whole other world uh, but uh, a very tight knit one, like it definitely is a layer, interwoven city wide. I almost .....I hear a horn and I'm like "where is it?". And uh you know, Galatoires is a weird intersection of that, because we have a brass band in front of us all the time and if it's a really over the top friday lunch you have a second line band just come off the street and work their way around the room, cause somebody wanted then to come in. Its yea, a weird intersection of magic. It does like, it's part of what doesn't make sense if you're an outsider sitting there, trying to enjoy what you thought was a certain type of meal, but then every customer in the restaurant who does get what's going on has gotten up and is following the band around the room ya know, and sorry they bumped your table, but you just, the culture just engulfed you completely, ya know. Live it. It doesn't happen everyday.

[00:53:49.01] Gabe Borges: Well said, it's kind of like a circus. \*laughs\*

[00:53:53.08] Chris Evangelista: Its is, I guess, and at what point it was like the same thing where I got to this tipping point where during mardi gras I was like alright, alright, now what? ya know.. and my friend was like why don't you go be part of one of the krewes and I was like...ok. And so, Krewe De Veux , couldn't pick a better one.

[00:54:17.01] Gabe Borges: Alright well, thanks for doing this interview, that was great. We good.