

1. Can you describe your childhood in Guatemala?

- **J: Okay, I was born in Guatemala in 1983. In a poor family, I think. In a small town called. El Uruguay We left that small town after I was seven years old, I think. We moved to a different town. It's called Santa Rosalía. So I grew up there after seven.it was doing everything for my parents. I did, you know, my studies. So, I was doing primary school. Um, Until um, I was. 18 years old, I graduated from high school. That was a very simple childhood I think. Uh, because we were a big family, uh, 12 brothers and sisters all together. So, I think that was a very cool childhood.**

2. What do you remember about your brothers leaving to the states?

- **J: What I remember, um, is that I felt is excited about. I, I mean for them because it was very very funny. Because um, everybody who came to USA at that time you know, would become famous. You know, the class of a family who had somebody in the USA changed automatically to a rich family, for example. So, I was excited that I had somebody and the USA. So, that's why. I think. That's the only thing that I remember.**

3. How did you make the decision to come to America?

- **J: Um, I think I took that decision because my brothers who were already here, they convinced me to come to this beautiful country.**

4. And why, why did you choose New Jersey ?

- **J: Jersey because they already were living here. So, that's why I chose New Jersey. Because they were already here.**

5. How was the experience working here in the first years?

- **J: Okay, the first years um, working here It was very sad for me, because I didn't work in Guatemala, i just you know, i know how to study to go to school and do things for school. But work to make money. It was very um, complicated for me, I think. Um, Because, nobody was . The reason why telling that, because is that i felt. that nobody was protecting me. Nobody was behind me. You know, giving me everything. Because the last years in Guatemala, my brothers, you know, they gave me everything. But here, when I came here, I had to do everything myself, everything for me. If I worked I could have money to pay rent, to pay my food. So everything was in my hands. So those first years um, I cry a lot. I sat down in, uh, I remember I once I sat down and a chair, and looking outside the way of the**

window. And cry cry a lot, because I felt nobody loved me. I felt that I had to do everything for me, and I also the English. It was another barrier, so that's all.

6. What lessons did you learn in those early years?

- **J: Um, the lesson that I can say is that those years, they make me to be a strong man. Somebody to, you know to do everything. That I can do everything, I learned those things, so, it was very, very important for me.**

7. It seems that your experience working at 28BBQ was key in your path to becoming a business owner. Could you elaborate on that idea?

- **J: Yes, I remember many things on that place. Because, um, they [the owners] left me by myself many times responsible for all the partners working there. So, I remember that I could learn a lot uh, from the place. And um, I learned also how to run the business and take decisions, very important decisions about customers, who complain. So It was really important those years working at 28BBQ.**

8. How did you make the decision that you wanted to open a restaurant?

- **J: I think. That idea came because, um, I was already married, living together with my wife. The idea I think came because somebody offered us a place. So we decided to take advantage of that chance. And we started to look for loans to cover that amount. Uh, because we didn't have that money to open it. And, you know, I think, um, it was because my wife is a successful woman. So that's why she helped me a lot and, you know, to start the business. And also, every time that I felt that we couldn't do it she pushed me to go up, you know, to get up and and do it, do everything. So that's all.**

9. Can you elaborate on the challenges you encountered when starting a business?

- **J: Uh, the first thing was to find the money. To find a loan. I remembered that we had to go to El Salvador to find the money. So, That was very difficult for us at that time.**

10. Why did you decide to expand Los Antojitos?

- **J: Um, The same thing as the first one. Uh, the opportunity came to us. Someone who I know offered us the place. Uh, the one is Los Antojitos barbecue in Plainfield. Um, and then we decided to take advantage of that place that the opportunity. The first three years in that place were very difficult but after that, the pandemic came and it helped us. To go up, doing deliveries. And, that was a very, very good time for us.**

11. How did the Covid pandemic affect your business?

- **J: Affect a lot, because we didn't have a chance to serve a dine in, only to go and delivery. So, it was difficult because we didn't know how to confront this pandemic. So, That's the thing. It was very difficult for us.**

12. Any plans dreams for the future of your business.

- **J: My idea is to have how do you say? Franchise my business. But, That is gonna happen only if my Daughters and sons like the place to work. If they like, to work in restaurants, but uh, it's gonna depend on them.**

13. What role has their family played in your journey.

- **J: My family is my motivation. To do my things every day. I wake up every day thinking about them. So my family, I mean, my wife, my kids. So everything I do is because I see them with love. And, That's it.**

14. You have a very interesting story. What would you recommend to an immigrant arriving today?

- **J: To work hard. Um, because everything is possible in this country. Uh, in this country, we have many opportunities. So, That's my recommendation to work hard and do everything.**

15. What would you recommend to an immigrant hoping to start a business?

- **J: Um, if somebody wants to start a business, I recommend to don't give up, because sometimes problems come, Uh, just to raise their business. And many, many barriers and also Obstacles come every day. But My recommendation is to don't give up. Also For customers, look for customers. And, That's it.**