

Commons for Justice.

Allapattah CDC

Narrator: Jasmely Jackson

Interviewers: Gabriela Guzmán

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[0:00:00] GABRIELA GUZMAN: We'll start with your name, how long you've been part of Allapattah, and your occupation.

[0:00:09] JASMELY JACKSON: My name is Jasmely de la Cruz Jackson. I've been a part of Allapattah since I was seven years old, so about twenty-eight years. I am the owner of Típico Dominicano—or I should say part-owner, cause my dad is the founder and he's still very integrated into the day-to-day business.

[0:00:33] GUZMAN: This is an interesting question and feel free to elaborate: How did it feel to grow up grow up in a place that is such a central part of the Allapattah community, because Club Típico is like a central part of Dominican culture and diaspora here in Allapattah.

[0:00:55] JACKSON: Very festive and colorful! Growing up in Allapattah was very, like I mentioned, festive and colorful, really showed me what it is to have a family working environment. I would describe Allapattah as a kind of residential area. It was interesting for our neighbors to come out while we're parking our cars to tell us hi and have conversations, the kids playing outside. I grew up in that era where kids actually played outside in Allapattah, so that was very interesting and very memorable. You know, as far as my adolescence goes.

[0:01:50] GUZMAN: All right. And then of course Club Típico. You said you grew up—?

[0:01:57] JACKSON: Yeah, so I would like to say, I was born and raised [0:02:00] in Club Típico. Instead of Allapattah, because my dad brought us to work every day after school pick us up and we went straight to the business. So that was interesting for me just to see how it was predominantly Dominicans that came to visit. Of course, you know, he's Dominican, the business is called Club Típico Dominicano. We had a lot of majority Dominicans, of course, other Hispanics as well, or Latins, but for the most part is Dominican. It was interesting to see the eating food, the dancing, the playing dominoes, all that good stuff, the drinking beer. So, I grew up around all that. And it reminded me a lot of when we would go to the Dominican Republic because that's what I would see there. So, it wasn't really foreign—that movement and that energy when we were here, although to most of my friends that were not Latin was like, What is this? What is this place? But for me, it was just a part of my life.

Day to day. The loudness, the music, the dominoes, the arguing over who won the dominoes. That was normal.

[0:03:43] GUZMAN: The next question that we'll be asking will be because to explain how long Club Típico has been in the community. And that actually ties to how you can describe your dad because you said that was your dad's baby. I'll give you a moment to think about it. Gather your thoughts.

[0:04:00] And then tell me about your dad and how Club Típico came to be.

[0:04:09] JACKSON: Típico has been in existence for thirty-five years, going on thirty-six. The same age as me, we're the same age. Basically, that's how I can remember. So yeah, we've been a staple in the community for a very long time. We didn't start out as a nightclub. It started out honestly as a social club that he created so that Dominicans have a place to gather and then little by little, he started selling food and then beer, and then integrating music, DJs. So that basically was how he started. And then we became Club Típico Dominicano Restaurant and Nightclub. And as far as my dad, so like I said, he started it as a social club, it started with a small vision, and just seeing what was missing in the community. He started integrating those elements. And that's how he was able to create such a beautiful place for Dominicans, but really, for everyone. That's something that since I've taken on the challenge, make sure that we let people know that we welcome all kinds of cultures and ethnicities and backgrounds. And that's something that he also had envisioned. It was just that in Allapattah, there was only Dominicans and I think some Puerto Ricans at that time. So that's all that was present really for the most part.

And then as far as my dad, my dad is there on a day to day, he travels, he's retired, really. But it's his baby [0:06:00]. That's something that he started from the ground up. So, he's very present. I appreciate that sometimes. No, honestly, most of the time, it's awesome to be able to run a business with my dad—a second generation business. And honestly, I don't think I would be able to do it without his guidance. Clearly, I bring in new elements. Younger, more modern. But the essential part is still there. And he's still there. It makes it makes us very authentic and organic, his presence. So you can find my dad, if honestly, if he's not on vacation—he's there fixing something. Every now and then he helps if we're very busy, he'll get in the kitchen, wash dishes, converse with our customers, play dominoes sometimes. So yeah, he's very active and moves around.

[0:07:02] GUZMAN: Great, great, great. So, then the next question is, you've told us the history, you've told us about your dad, and again, thank you for sharing—what is Club Típico to you?

[0:07:18] JACKSON: So, Club Típico Dominicano means to me a place of joy. Like, that's what—if I close my eyes—that's what I envision. Like, that's what I envision. It's a place where people come to eat, dance, drink, have fun, you can bring your kids, we're very family friendly. We also want to make sure that we don't lose our essence and that we stay true to who we are. So no, we're not your fancy restaurant, we don't want to be your fancy restaurant, we want to be your authentic Dominican

restaurant that allows everyone to enjoy whether you're African American, [0:08:00] white American, Caucasian, Asian, we get all kinds of people that come by, and that's something that we take pride in. So, to me, it's just a place full of flavors, honestly.

[0:08:18] GUZMAN: So now, one other question I have is, could tell us a little about your community involvement. We know Club Típico is everywhere.

[0:07:43] JACKSON: Yeah! Okay, so, we try to be as involved in the community as possible. We understand, as one of the first—we're the second oldest business in Allapattah—so we understand sometimes—that it costs for us to be involved. But we have really two businesses and one, we are a restaurant, and we are a nightclub. Most nightclubs, they only sell food during nightclub hours. We are a full-time restaurant and a full nightclub. So that is basically two businesses in one. Our schedules, and my schedule can be very hectic, but we also understand the commitment. And we also understand that we play a big role. You know, all eyes are on us, especially being one of the second oldest businesses. So we try to be as involved as much as we can. For me, I'm part of the ANA neighborhood association. When you guys call me, you know, here, I try to, you know, take part in the community meetings. So we try. We do donations, we do book bag giveaways for our community. We partner up with certain foundations like the Miami Dolphins—their feeding initiative. So, we try to do what we can [0:10:00]. And that's something that honestly, we take pride in. We wish we can do more, but it's a tough business (laughs).

[0:10:09] GUZMAN: It is a very tough business. And then of course, you're the second oldest business in Allapattah, and you've gotten to see how the communities change. We've talked a little about developments coming in (unintelligible). So I'd like to ask you, as a business owner, someone who's got a vested interest in Allapattah, who knows the history, who knows the flavor of the community. What would you like to move towards? What would you like? What do you think Allapattah needs?

[0:10:37] JACKSON: Okay.

[0:10:38] GUZMAN: And then what would you like to see in Allapattah—strive for?

[0:10:44] JACKSON: Okay, let's see. Being that we've been here for a long time, there's two things that I would like to see happen in Allapattah. Of course, we know changes are coming. They're evident—from condos to businesses to art centers and things like that. So, I get it. And that's not something that I'm totally, I'm not opposed to. I think that if many communities are able to benefit from quality things, I think we should be able to—however, I believe that we're still missing culture. Like right now, there's about three to four places in Allapattah, that are businesses that bring that authentic, cultural, ethnic, ethnic background, like me and the Típico Nicaraguense Restaurants and the Placita Dominicana, which is a Dominican store. But there's like a handful and for us to have so much history, [0:12:00] and—it scares me that gentrification can probably eliminate some of those things. So I feel like we need more

culture. I would like to see culture continue to thrive and businesses continue to flourish— they have a lot to do with culture. And then—what was the other part?

[0:12:26] GUZMAN: [unintelligible] And then what, as a neighborhood—in five minutes, what would you like Allapattah to have?

[0:12:31] JACKSON: I would like Allapattah to have a sense of security. Honestly. I want people that live here to continue to want to stay here. I want them to feel safe, that they don't have to move out because of the new things that are happening. I would like to see more beautification. Maybe not with art—with trees, with parks. I think that's something that kids can benefit from. Families, as we know, Allapattah has a lot of family housing, and this community is still one that still has the whole family living together. So, I think that we can benefit from things like that. Parks, dog parks, and yeah, I think that's about it.

[0:13:26] GUZMAN: All right. Perfect.

[0:13:27] JACKSON: Yeah.

[0:13:28] GUZMAN: Now, last one.

[0:13:29] JACKSON: Okay.

[0:13:30] GUZMAN: If you could describe Allapattah in three words.

[0:13:36] JACKSON: If I can describe Allapattah in three words it would be culture. [14:00:00] It would be change. It would be—flavor. Yeah. I think that would be it. We have a lot as a melting pot. So, I think there's a lot of flavor around here and potential. You know, it's not only a Dominican place, it's not Puerto Rican. We have Nicaraguenses, we have Cubans. I was just driving by [0:14:00] and I just saw a Latin restaurant that was promoting Cuban coffee. So, you know, we see those things and I think it's flavorful.

[0:14:59] GUZMAN: Perfect. I really have one more question.

[0:15:00] JACKSON: Okay, go ahead.

[0:15:04] GUZMAN: What is your favorite spot in Allapattah?

[0:15:08] JACKSON: (laughs) Let's see. In Allapattah, my favorite spot—that's such a hard one because I don't go anywhere. I stay in Típico. (laughs) It's so sad that's such a sad question! (laughs) My favorite spot I would have to say La Placita Dominicana. Yes. So my favorite spot is La Placita Dominicana. I would say mine, but I don't think that's fair (laughs) because, I mean, I say, I work, like I eat, I work at my business. But I like them you and why? Because they have really good Dominican things that you could only find when you go visit the Dominican Republic. I mean from, like, hair products, the actual

dinosaur cookies that you can only find there in Santo Domingo. So that's a really cool place. I really like them. Yeah.

[0:15:53] GUZMAN: Thank you so much.

[End of interview]