

Interview with Christy Lorio

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Loyola University New Orleans

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Interviewed by: Mario Austin and Ella Jacobs

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Abstract: Christy Lorio might describe herself as an “amateur” photographer, but she’s definitely not an amateur in the creative scene. Having written for *New Orleans Magazine*, *Edible New Orleans*, *Gambit Weekly*, and *Slow Southern Style*, to name a few, she has set her life around the New Orleans’s fashion scene, having designed her own well-known Mardi Gras costumes, while having dedicated a number of years to New Orleans’s service industry. In the interview, she discusses the trials, tribulations, and memorable moments of working in the service industry, while finding a creative outlet through the madness of it all as a fabulous writer and Mardi Gras costume extraordinaire.

Service Industry Collection
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[00:00:01.26] Ella Jacobs: Well thank you so much for coming though Christy, I really appreciate that, uh, and I see that, I know before we were talking about how you're from New Orleans and stuff and actually, like --

[00:00:08.11]: Christy Lorio: Yea.

[00:00:04.03]: Ella Jacobs: Was going to long shot ask you...like sort of a local question, but like, what high school did you go to?

[00:00:14.23]: Christy Lorio: So, I went to Immaculata—

[00:00:16.16]: Ella Jacobs: Oh cool!

[00:00:18.02]: Christy Lorio: Do you remember that place?

[00:00:18.20]: Ella Jacobs: I'm trying to like...

[00:00:19.27]: Christy Lorio: It's not around anymore -- they merged it with Blink High School which is like the two all girl Catholic schools on the West Bank, and Blank and Immaculata were rival schools which is hilarious. But I think it's now called Academy of the Sacred Heart, but I can't remember.

[00:00:33.03]: Ella Jacobs: Oh! Okay -- so is that just right over here then?

[00:00:35.12]: Christy Lorio: It's in Marrero.

[00:00:37.11]: Ella Jacobs: Oh! Oh my God, that's awesome.

[00:00:38.17]: Christy Lorio: Yea.

[00:00:38.21]: Ella Jacobs: I know so many people over there.

[00:00:39.16]: Christy Lorio: Yea.

[00:00:39.19]: Ella Jacobs: I love that.

[00:00:39.21]: Christy Lorio: Yea.

[00:00:40.11]: Ella Jacobs: No, I only ask because I went to Mount Carmel, so I was like "oh my gosh."

[00:00:42.11]: Christy Lorio: Okay [chuckles] Yea, you gotta ask - you gotta get that question out of the way - totally.

[00:00:46.07]: Ella Jacobs: Um, no I love that, but um oh my gosh, I saw that you had written for, if you don't mind me saying, like I love that you wrote for like so many different publications and stuff, I mean I have a list and oh my god, and this girl's on it today! I love that! Um, and I even saw that you were doing, maybe if we are going to go back to the whole service industry topic here, that you did a "little" waitressing in college?

[00:01:08.02]: Christy Lorio: I've done *a lot* of waitressing.

[00:01:09.22]: Ella Jacobs: Oh my god, I'm sorry...yea.

[00:01:11.09]: Christy Lorio: Yea, yea so I started waiting -- I'm 37 -- and I started waiting tables when I was 20, and I've been waiting tables off and on since then. So, um, right, I stopped waiting tables back in 2005, yea, 2005, and then um, I started waiting again in 2013 because I had actually gone to back to school in 2013. Um, to finish my undergraduate degree, and then once I graduated, um, I stopped doing that and then I started working um, professionally, in my career path and then, I'm waiting tables again cause now I'm back in school in the master's program. So-

[00:01:57.01]: Ella Jacobs: Oh, cool, then you're going to UNO right?

[00:01:59.25]: Christy Lorio: I'm in the Master's program for Fine Arts in Creative Writing. So, I'll be graduating in 2020, hopefully, I think I'll be up. So- [laughs]

[00:02:07.15]: Ella Jacobs: No, that's awesome - I saw somewhere that, (and that's awesome), I saw that it was with Film, English, theatre...

[00:02:13.09]: Christy Lorio: Yea -

[00:02:15.05]: Ella Jacobs: I'm not sure if they still have that program there, or I know they do, and I love UNO's program, I think it's like really awesome.

[00:02:20.24]: Christy Lorio: Yea, I got two bachelors. I got one bachelor in English and one in Film and theatre. Um, not recently, I wasn't really planning on getting a film and theatre degree but um, when I had gone back to school - like when I had dropped out in 2003, I was a communication's major, or I *was* a communication [major], and I can't remember all the details, but I was a communication's major and then I switched over to English — that's what it was. So, going back I had like 100 credits and I went back in 2015, so I had enough that like I stayed an extra semester. The communication program was absorbed by like the Film and Theatre, so I had enough credits to get two bachelors degrees, well, why not, you know? So, I think it only took me like an extra semester to do it.

[00:02:59.19]: Ella Jacobs: Oh my God that's awesome -

[00:02:59.29]: Christy Lorio: Yea-

[00:03:00.15]: Ella Jacobs: That's amazing-

[00:03:01.01]: Christy Lorio: Yea-

[00:03:01.25]: Ella Jacobs: I love that-

[00:03:02.02]: Christy Lorio: Yea-

[00:03:03.06]: Ella Jacobs: And have you felt like, um— that's kind of led you to your own path of like writing, per-say, where you were able to have this as your own outlet? Or kind of going about on that—

[00:03:14.10]: Christy Lorio: Um, well the reason why I went back to school um, was because I was...I wasn't waiting tables at the time, but I was a retail manager and um, I was a retail manager but a very specific retail manager. I was um, working at a store...you've probably heard of them, they're called Buffalo Exchange, um so, I was there for 8 years, and um, part of my job was doing a lot of writing, um, and I know this has nothing to do with service industry, but um, I was doing a lot of writing, and, or, I was doing a lot of researching of clothing, I should say, and I had all of this knowledge that was very specific to this one job and I was like, how can I tap into that, and I started getting back into writing, wanting to write again. Um, so, I started a fashion blog talking about local clothing brands or southern regional brands, and um, that's how I kind of got back into writing and then I started um, that was um, 2010 I guess? No, it was 2009...2008-2009, 2009, and I started doing that, and that led me into um, starting to get freelance jobs. People started contacting me. I'm actually in charge of writing for GoNola, and the New Orleans Magazine were two of the first publications that contacted me um, because I had kind of like established myself as this um, well people perceived me to be as an expert in the local clothing scene, which I was, I'll give myself credit, um, so I yea, that's how I got started - that's how it kind of like started then, in um, 2013 I was doing so much freelance writing that I started getting burnt out on retail and I had kind of like hit the max with work in where I could go with that career. Um, without leaving the country and moving out of the state. Um, for the company, um, I just decided, you know what I'm going to go back to school, because I really

want to be able to pursue writing in a more full time capacity. So, that's when I started waiting tables again, and writing, I just think that writer's there's so many people who write in the service industry that are writer's, actors, you know, just all kinds of creative fields, that totally support their, their writing habits. So I went into waiting tables.

[00:05:20.20]: Ella Jacobs: Do you feel like you've made a lot of connections, I guess, if you're combining seeing yourself working in the service industry, being a writer, and you're saying that everyone has all of these creative careers. Of course, New Orleans is full of other applicable creative careers...

[00:05:32.04]: Christy Lorio: Yea, like do I feel like I make connections creatively in the service industry?

[00:05:37.20]: Ella Jacobs: Yea, for sure.

[00:05:38.10]: Christy Lorio: Um, not really [laughs]. Um, I think, I think what happens is a lot, and this is why I dropped out of school in the first place, back when I was 23, um, was that a lot of those people go into the service industry is if they were writer's, they're actors, or musicians, and um some, well a lot of them go in and they realize they made more money waiting tables then they would in their fields, um, so they kind of give up on their dreams a little bit. Um, and I definitely, um, you definitely see a lot of that, you know? So I tried not to - I tried to put the blinders on and not like, let people, or that effect me. You know? From achieving what I want to achieve. So, yea, I don't think I've really...I mean I don't know, I'm trying to think of...I'll get back to you on that. I'm trying to think of any instances where did a make creative connection, but I don't know if I have to be honest.

[00:06:31.01]: Ella Jacobs: Do you feel like it's just because it's like part of your passion and then because you have to work as soon as you go into work it's like head level -- you have to focus on *this*.

[00:06:39.01]: Christy Lorio: Yea, I mean, I've certainly talked about like writing with other people. I've worked with a guy who was a playwright, or screenwriter, and he's also an actor and we do talk. You know we would talk shop and stuff at work, while we were polishing silver and whatever, but um, I think a lot of it is the job of waiting tables, and I say waiting tables because that's what I do, but that's not all that it is, if you're waiting tables, or you're bartending, or whatever, even back of the house, um, it just becomes physically and mentally exhausting that it just doesn't lead you with very much creative...you know it just doesn't leave you with very much to give, to put into your like, your passion projects at the end of the day when all you want to do is go home and you know, have a beer and go to bed.

[00:07:27.03]: Ella Jacobs: Ah, you're just like, yup I'm so done---

[00:07:29.12]: Christy Lorio: Yea, and I think so much of writing um, I guess it depends on what kind of writing you do, but I think so much of writing is thinking about people, you know, because most of your stories are going to have people in them whether they're fiction or non-fiction, um, you just...at the end of the day you just come to a complete disconnect, you know? And you just want to turn your brain off for a little while, so...

[00:07:52.08]: Ella Jacobs: You know waiting tables and everything like that, how do you feel, perhaps, how your past experiences of starting off when you were twenty, um, compared to now which how you have been doing, for going in and out, or like so many places, you definitely don't have to say which restaurant....

[00:08:04.04]: Christy Lorio: Yea - Yea, I mean I can, yea I don't...[laughs]

[00:08:06.08]: Ella Jacobs: [laughs] Yea we're going to say it [sarcastic]

[00:08:08.07]: Christy Lorio: Yea, we're gonna put them on blast! Uh, I think, I mean I've definitely noticed...yea, there's definitely a difference, there's a definite difference in me from when I first started, and there's a definite difference in just like the general public and what they think of in restaurants. Just with proliferation of these celebrity chefs and cooking shows and like, celebrity chef competitions you know, there's just a lot more awareness and emphasis on the industry now, but, um, I think that it's till primarily back of the house versus front of the house, you know, I mean there's definitely that craft cocktail moment, and bartenders way where it's sexy to be a bartender or like the cook now, you know? But being a waiter there's none of that worry in that, you know, it's just like you're doing the grinding work, at least that's how I see it, um, but so yea, when I first started out when I was like 20, um, I pretty quickly....so um, my dad died when I was 21, so, I was dealing with a lot of stuff. Like I was going to school full time, I was working full time, I was dealing with my dad who was sick for a year right before he died, he had cancer, um, so, and I was just also very, um, I wasn't very, like you know, I was 21, I wasn't , like, mature, you know? Um, I was also like paying for stuff on my own, I was living in my own apartment, paying my own bills, school, like thank god for TOPS, um, but you know, all of this stuff was compounding and I took things when the customer was mean to me, something like that, I took it very personally, you know, I took it very personally, I was thinking that they think that I was stupid, you know, thinking they were above me, which maybe they did, you know, but I internalized a lot about that stuff, and it really effected me, and it really bothered me, and it really made me a pretty miserable person cause waiting tables can be pretty miserable.

Um, and especially when you're working long shifts, you're working doubles, you know, pulling like 16 hour days sometimes, um, if you're just in this bad environment, there's usually a lot of drugs and alcohol abuse, um, just in certain you know, just in certain places, especially the French Quarter, um, which is where I was working, for 2 years, um, so yea, there's a lot of...there's a lot of that so that's just all of that stuff you know. Um, but now it's a lot different for me because I'm not waiting tables full time, I'm doing it two nights a week it's just to supplement my income...you know like I said I am a full time student and I also work on campus as a GA position, um, so it's not just like my only innate...I'm not just a waiter, you know, I'm a writer and I do have my byline and all these different places, so I'm a little more like established. Um, I'm older, I'm more mature, dare I say it [laughs], um, and I just have the better awareness of myself, you know, I don't get up in arms just because somebody's rude to me, and I don't like read too much into it. And I do think that people in general are just a little bit better, I mean not all people, I still get some horrible people, but um, but yea it just seems in general people are a little bit more aware of how...of how to dine. You know? And the things aren't so catered...also so much more casual. I don't work fine dining anymore, so...

[00:11:28.14] Speaker Name: Ella Jacobs: Do you feel like in fine dining places when you were in the French Quarter...do you feel like it's just because it's like, hate to say, tourist-like, but people just coming in and seeing it as like "oh you're just there to bring me the food sort of thing"

[00:11:41.05]: Christy Lorio: There's still...yea....there's a little bit of both. I mean all the places that I've worked at...I've worked in two difference places in the French Quarter and one of them isn't around anymore but it was like the number one restaurant in the city, according to Zagat,

um, um, when I worked there. Um, then I worked at a total like, Gram Dame, Old school tourist trap. We used to call the place the "Fine Dining Cafeteria" Um, the food is really...yea...I'm not even going to name that name, um, but so I can like go into a little bit more, um, but yea, it just um, there's the tourist, yea, there were tourist yea, and sometime they were really delightful and pleasant, and um, because there's just so excited to be in New Orleans...and this is all pre-Yelp too so I really feel like an ambassador of the city, you know, like hey you should go check out this bar, or whatever, you know, um, you should go check out this other restaurant you know, so like it was super exciting and I felt like, you felt like a um, a concierge at times and that's how I felt. Like I would always promote the city you know, and I think New Orleans, just naturally brought me to do that, um, so that's um, yea there was that aspect but then there was also the friend's of the owners...like the fine dining people you get, like I got the creme-de la-creme crowd if you will in New Orleans society, and um, people just um, I don't know like, sometimes I got treated really poorly, um, I got, I mean I got from one restaurant I remember in particular, and it's been seventeen years...since I've worked there, something like that, um, you know, I was sexually harassed multiple times, um, I mean it just like..I don't even know..It was just like...we could just spend like an entire hour talking about that...but you know like regulars would like grab my butt like you know just all kinds of stuff, you know, and then, and then they would have like their also like friend's of the owner just like, somebody like high in society and you have to treat them a certain way, um, so I'm just really glad that I don't have to do that anymore...you know.

[00:13:43.19]: Ella Jacobs: Well, I guess I hate to ask then on that topic, but do you feel like as when women make it into the service industry I know that...it can be such a rocky start or topic, but maybe, perhaps, some areas that have changed...

[00:13:57.05]: Christy Lorio: Yes, and no. Um, yes and no...I don't know. Actually I don't know. I mean I knew like the Besh thing is such a hot topic right now, um, and that you know all these people are coming forth, so no. You know. It's still happening, I mean I...like I lost the owner of the restaurant that I worked at, um, this was like 3...probably 3 years ago now when I went first, and I had been at this place for 2 years, when I first started you know, he would make like sexual comments to me, um, and I wasn't...I worked there maybe...but I was...It was under two months that I was there, you know what I mean..for these sexual comments, you know and that was like recently, that was like 2014, 2015, something like that you know, so yea...No, I guess, you know, somethings have never really changed. I mean, like, I personally have not...like I've definitely experienced harassment for sure, um, but I don't feel like I've experienced this as much as others, you know, as other people.

[00:14:56.27]: Ella Jacobs: Do you feel like you've, I guess, had more freedom in knowing where to stay clear from as opposed to some people where you have to work out of financial difficulty. Of course with everything happening, like, there would be like some sort of outlet with people like coming out, or do you think, maybe, digressing or progressing back kind of it area?

[00:15:09.18]: Christy Lorio: Um, I think that...I don't know, I do think that people are being...I mean me, I don't know it's hard to tell because it's like, I'm like now choosing the places that I'm wanting to work, you know? Like I'm purposely not going and working at like, certain types of

restaurants because I know what the atmosphere is going to be like, the work culture, before you even get stuck working at that kind of place, you know? Um, so, that said, I don't know. Like maybe I've just chosen really well places that I've worked, um, but, um, yea I guess there is a little bit. I think -- I think like, the meat head of culture has subsided a little bit, you know, um, like I mean I'm not back of the house so, I'm not in the trenches with them, but um, I do notice that people, like, there's not as much plate throwing, and stuff like that in back of the house [laughs]. Yea.

[00:16:01.09]: Ella Jacobs: Oh my gosh. Well then, maybe on that note, I guess just because sometimes people like can't really pick and choose...it's kind of just like where they can work, or with their finances, um, and so I love that you're talking about that, or like, you know, of course if you don't want to say anything, or, comment or share about that...(which you have shared that), I guess back to the front and back of the house, like, what are your experiences with that, I suppose, or what have happened...

[00:16:25.00]: Christy Lorio: With front and back of the house?

[00:16:25.29]: Ella Jacobs: Yea.

[00:16:26.14]: Christy Lorio: Um, well, they're very different. I don't know much about back of the house, because I've never worked back of the house. Um, you know I've never, yea, I've never, I mean, my experience back of the house is going and picking up the food and...

[00:16:37.21]: Ella Jacobs:...and you're just like...

[00:16:39.07]: Christy Lorio: I drop the dirty plates off to the dishwasher, you know, I don't really interact with it that much...I mean of course you do, because it's like, you're talking to them, they're...they're working in the same building as you, but it's very...it's a very different

experience, I mean, you're dealing with the customers and they're dealing with you know, preparing the food, um, I will say that the place i work at, well currently work at, a very small restaurant um, which is a lot nicer than, which I find smaller restaurants in general when there's not as much of a divide between back of the house and front of the house. Whereas larger places you might never talk to the cooks, you know? So, it's little bit more, like, "family-ish," you know? So...

[00:17:15.19]: Ella Jacobs: That's good, cause I was reading, um, this is so funny, I saw this article "Confessions of a Fine Dining Waitress", and that was probably, maybe, a bit back ago, but I was like, oh my god I love this! I love how honest you were, um, putting everything in, and so, I appreciate you talking--

[00:17:29.24]: Christy Lorio: Oh! The one I wrote for "Uptown Messenger"...Oh my God! That's so old...

[00:17:33.27]: Ella Jacobs: That's so funny!

[Both laugh]

[00:17:35.12]: Ella Jacobs: I was just like, I just don't even know if I should say this, but I love how like, I guess, honest you were about that,

[00:17:40.02]: Christy Lorio: Yea

[00:17:40.27]: Ella Jacobs:...and that gave me like, a really good outlook into it, because of my aunt's work as chefs, but I know nothing else...

[00:17:47.28]: Christy Lorio: Uh-huh

[00:17:48.11]: Ella Jacobs:...A part from that, just from what I have heard.

[00:17:50.17]: Christy Lorio: Yea

[00:17:51.02]: Ella Jacobs: It's just like, a friendly face, you kind of go in, you just accept it, which is kudos to everyone, for like, putting that on..

[00:17:57.25]: Christy Lorio: Yea, it's really difficult to put that face on everyday, I will say that...I think, yea, to give myself credit I mean I was thinking about when I was um, when I was 21 my dad passed away, and I was thinking like, damn I was really an asshole at that time in my life [laughs], you know? I mean I had so much going on, you know, like, I really should have, like, taken off more time of work, and I had all these things in the back of my mind, you know, and um, but yea, I should give myself credit because that-that was really hard to-that was a really friggin' hard thing to do, you know? It's like you've got all this stuff about you going on in your personal life and it's not like you're in an office job where you can just like sit and sulk and feel bad about for yourself, and, and have that moment to yourself, you know? Like you're-you're performer. It's-it's really, it's your performance. You're a performer, you know? You're like, [makes a smile for example], putting on a face, and you know, and when somebody...and I don't have a good poker face. Like at all. Like I, I'm just...you can tell what I'm thinking all the time, so, if somebody says something to me, and I'm just like [makes exhausted face], you know, like [laughs], I just can't help it. Like, I'm better where I work at now, like more self-aware, but man, it's just , you know...yea, it's really tough when you're dealing with stuff at home and then you have to go home, and then you have to go and put that face on, I mean, but that said, like, now, like now, um, now that I'm older, and I kind of like, um, more self-aware and better like, like better able to um, to kind of like channel things, or compartmentalize things, now, it's kind of like, okay I can kind of like leave my stuff at the door and just like, think about this, you know, and it was the same thing when I worked retail too. You know it's like, it's different but it's - it's

the similar in that you have to like, always have your smiley face on, you know, and you're there to serve people you know...yea.

[00:19:39.25]: Ella Jacobs: And like, that's...I appreciate, again, with you telling me about that, it is hard. You're an actress. You're coming in and have to do that, and I feel like, you know, a lot of people assume that it comes as a part of the job, or at least with people going to a restaurant that it just comes with the whole package deal and everything. Which, I hate to ask, but do you think that a lot of people just do that? Again, I don't want to say tips or anything, but um, just because like they have too...or it's just that sort of...

[00:20:04.21]: Christy Lorio: Oh! Totally! Totally-totally!

[00:20:07.18]: Ella Jacobs: Or do you, might think that, like, I don't know, I would hope so at some point, in the future this kind of like, nuance between being able for people to just accept that, or people going to the restaurant to just be like "they're a person" like, "stop it, I hate when people do these things"...

[00:20:21.03]: Christy Lorio: Yea, I mean, I do think, ah I have like a lot of opinions about that, but um, I do think that, yea there are people who put it on for the tips, and I can always tell, like when I'm in a restaurant and like, the waiters like a little too smooth, you know, and like, he's like here she's a little too smooth, overly friendly, you know, like, they're really trying for that tip, and it's like go ahead, make your money, you know, but um, yea, I would just rather like, a more like, organic, natural process with somebody, you know, um, but yea, but do I want to, like, as a patron of a place, do I want to go in and the waitress is sulking and being nasty to me, like, no, of course not, you know? And that's also your job, like that's what, you know, your job is to like serve me in that moment and like you know, and I mean obviously like, I, I give people out of a

lot of leeway, since I know what if like you know...but yea, it's not like, yea like, like having that experience with somebody, oh you know it's okay, you know, like, um, I agree with that, but also, it's not an excuse for somebody to be crappy to you, you know, like if I'm having a bad day, it's like, well you know, everybody has bad days. So,

[00:21:34.17]: Ella Jacobs: Right, it's like, finding that perfect medium between personal and work of course, which is like, again, which is just like an obvious little question there...

[00:21:40.17]: Christy Lorio: Yea, you can't be just like...if I just sat down and was like a jerk to you right now because of something bad that happened to me before, like, that wouldn't be cool, like you didn't know that, you know, so,

[00:21:50.27]: Ella Jacobs: Yea, of course, I guess, again, it's just more for the people coming in to not be. Because of course, I guess, you've seen that, and that's not cool. They're giving you service, give them what they deserve, it's nothing like...

[00:22:03.03]: Christy Lorio: Yea, I guess it's like the biggest thing, people...if it's like really super busy and people are just really demanding, it's like, you know, if you've got like full tables and full turnaround, let's say you have a full restaurant and you're like down a server, so you're like hustling extra hard because you're like working two sections or something, like, sometimes, people can like see that it's really busy and they can kind of like catch you a little slack if the service is a little bit less than it should be, but um, sometimes people just have no self-awareness or that, you know, and they just, um, they're just um, really demanding...and they give you like a bad tip or you know, and that's the thing with tips too, like, um, in New Orleans, and I think this is pretty common, um, in other states too, servers make \$2.13 an hour, um, my current job am making \$5 an hour, which is like, ooo, you know, but it's like \$2.13 and hour plus tips so, you

know, you are relying on those tips, to pay your mortgage, you know, pay my car note....I don't have a car note, but you know, but like, yea, that's how you get paid, so like and when someone gives you less than you know, 15-20% that really, it stinks, you know, because even if it's like...that's the worse part, is when you do a fantastic job and someone still gives you a crappy tip, like I had that happen to me, this past weekend I had this table of like 14 people, and um, the bill was like split 6 ways and a couple people put a 0% tip, and I told the woman that the tip was not included and they still did that, like one person did overtip, and I think like they were overtipping for the others, but it's still left me with like less than 10% and on a night where the bill was like \$450, so that should have been like, \$80-ish, you know, and the \$80 ballpark range, um, and we tip pool, so that means that everybody shares tips, but man, like that would have been my whole night, you know, instead of making \$80, I mean, \$40, on that table...that would have been...terrible, you know, I mean I'm not...I'm in the position where I'm privileged where I um, don't rely on this job, like I said it's just a supplement, um for me, so it's like I don't rely on this job to like pay my bills, you know, but if I was, you know, that's a tough situation to be in. So...

[00:24:12.21]: Ella Jacobs: Yea, like I can only imagine — because I know my friends were telling me about that, and they're just like “oh yea, I work like 16 hours a day”...and I was like, oh my god that's insane, that's like, I can't even imagine that...

[00:24:20.16]: Christy Lorio: Yea, it's...

[00:24:24.13]: Ella Jacobs: So when we go out to restaurants and he sees that, we know how much you guys work, I guess, and kudos for every waiter or waitress. I know that I could not do

this, so I'm like obviously commemorating every person who has this position, oh my gosh, this is like amazing..

[00:24:37.18]: Christy Lorio: Yea, New Orleans is hard too, because between summer time is the off season, so you don't make as much, and also there has been so many more restaurants now, so it's like everything's spread a little thin, you know, so like for example, in the summer time, like a good night, for me at least, would be like \$100 minimum, was what you should be making, and um, \$150-\$200 is nice, you know, it's good, but like during the summertime, sometimes I walk home with like \$40 bucks in my pocket, you know, or like even less than that sometimes, and like, for somebody who's like, you know, that's your primary source of income, that's how you're making your living, it's hard, and waiters do not save money, they just don't. You know? Cause it's feast or famine, you know, so it's like you're, um, you're like living like, you're living like a king when you're like making that money, but then it's like, you're so deprived during the summer, and you're like, you know, living like....this is like, at least me when I was younger, it's like, I was living on like you know, ramen, because I was like trying to pay my bills, or maxing out your credit cards or whatever it is or doing to just like survive until the busy season, and when the busy season hits, you know, you're just "woowoo" you know, um, and maybe I was just really young and not good with my money, and that's also a fact here, but I do know most...a lot of waiters, you know, they just go and they blow their money, you know, and they don't save for the slow times, cause the busy times can be really lucrative, but then you forget how bad the slow times are, so...

[00:26:11.08]: Ella Jacobs: It's just like, balancing that whole—

[00:26:13.01]: Christy Lorio: It's really, it's a tough balance, it's-yea, you have to be a really discipline person, but it's like a....and I know there are people who do it, you know, there are people who make careers on it, back when I waited tables, in like 2004, like before Hurricane Katrina, at this one restaurant, I mean there were waiters buying houses, you know, and it was like "whoa! people can do that?" cause they're making so much money just waiting tables, which is crazy, cause you don't think of it as a job that would be like that, you know, that could be that uh, lucrative. So...

[00:26:42.14]: Ella Jacobs: No, that's awesome!

[00:26:43.10]: Christy Lorio: Yea-

[00:26:43.19]: Ella Jacobs: Well, I'm going to pass this onto Mario. I feel bad, I know he has been waiting. I could just go on for a good majority of that, but no, I really, really appreciate that. Thank you so much Christy, and I know that Mario has some wonderful questions and a great follow-up. I know I have a billion, but I should probably give him the reigns...[laughs]

[Christy laughs]

[setting up]

[00:27:30.01]: Christy Lorio: So how many people have you interviewed so far?

[00:27:31.27]: Ella Jacobs: This is our first one just because, well I'm sorry, overall for the whole class we have done about three so far.

[00:27:37.26]: Christy Lorio: Okay

[00:27:38.13] Speaker Name: Ella Jacobs: Um, but yea each person has to do it and stuff, so it's just kind of like awesome!

[00:27:42.03]: Christy Lorio: Cool!

[00:27:44.11]: Ella Jacobs: But yea, I love it~

[00:27:44.22]: Christy Lorio: Yea - I didn't realize it was going to be videotaped. So I'm glad I didn't wear something embarrassing.

[00:27:50.12]: Ella Jacobs: No—Oh my God! You're fine! [laughs] If not, we could have just cut it out and kept going with you sitting here with us...

[00:27:56.16]: Christy Lorio: [laughs] sounds cool

[00:28:03.23]: Mario Austin: Okay, okay let's see...okay so leaving off from the uh, whole service industry I want to get into more of the whole fashion and costume design for Mardi Gras that you've chosen.

[00:28:16.13]: Christy Lorio: [laughs] Y'all getting all of my secrets today! [Laughs]

[00:28:21.14]: Mario Austin: Yea, we did our research...

[Both laugh]

[00:28:25.10]: Mario Austin: So, uh, just tell me a little brief story about how you got involved in everything revolving around the fashion and costume design for Mardi Gras, and what's your favorite costumes that you've designed.

[00:28:35.15]: Christy Lorio: Okay, so I, um, y'all make me sound like I know what I'm doing, um, so, I've always just been really into costumes, I'm from here, um, like Mardi Gras is like my Christmas, you know, it's like the only holiday that I really celebrate, um, and it's just great to have this experience of...when people come into the city where they can kind of like....where else are you going to go dressed like that? You know?

[00:28:59.23]: Mario Austin: Right.

[00:29:00.05]: Christy Lorio: Like, it's so much fun, I don't know, for me I love costuming, and I love costuming because it's fun and it's a creative outlet for me, but I also really love, and I do take it very seriously by the way, um, I love that I'm like, I feel like I'm contributing to like the culture of this thing. You know? Like I feel like I'm contributing, like I would never show up Mardi Gras day and just like, throw something on, you know? Like I feel like I have to bring it, you know? Like you're...like I feel like I'm being representative of this city on Mardi Gras day, and um, I guess I just started costuming....I guess I just started costuming like when I was like in my early twenties like, just like really little stuff like throw on a wig and a corset and then, when my stuff just got more and more elaborate, and I've always liked to sew I don't know...I've never like, um, I'm not like a great...I'm not like really great at sewing...not like a seamstress but I know, like, I know how to cover things up really well, I can like cover my flaws up [laughs], just put some more feathers on it, but like, I have like a good eye, like I can envision what a costume's gonna look like you know, but I'm not like super technical about it, and um, it's just like a good outlet for me I guess, um, my favorite costumes, and I think this is a favorite for a lot of people, um, in 2012, I did these like, really...actually I brought them back this Halloween, um, I did these flamingo costumes, and they were all like hot pink and I didn't um, they were, my husband and I match, we always do this...

[00:30:25.23]: Mario Austin: Oh, he wore the pink?

[00:30:26.00]: Christy Lorio: Yea

[00:30:26.18]: Mario Austin: [laughs]

[00:30:27.07]: Christy Lorio: We're head to toe pink, like the head piece, the flamingo, and those were all store bought stuff, but then like altered it, you know, and like, and embellished it, and um, those are really fun and I forgot we wore them for this Halloween, um,

[00:30:40.18]: Mario Austin: This past Halloween?

[00:30:41.16]: Christy Lorio: Uh-huh, this pass Halloween 2017 all the way in, and I forgot how much attention they give, because it's bright pink and then the hat, it just like adds another like, probably like two feet, one foot tall.

[00:30:54.23]: Mario Austin: So, is this kind of like how the Indian's have, or like a regular like, a regular flamingo costume?

[00:30:57.00]: Christy Lorio: It's a regular flamingo~

[00:30:58.22]: Mario Austin: Oh, okay!

[00:30:58.25]: Christy Lorio: Yea, yea, it's a flamingo. It's like...it's like it's own interpretation, it's like the hat is a flamingo. Well, the hat is actually a flamingo.

[00:31:05.19]: Mario Austin: So it's like the hat is a flamingo...

[00:31:06.22]: Christy Lorio: Yea, but I had on high-waisted, hot pink, ballgown skirt with a black bra that I had put on with sequined flamingos, and apple cages on my boobs, and then um, everything was like pink feathers everywhere, and he had a like hot pink, sequined um, like tuxedo jacket.

[00:31:29.18]: Mario Austin: Wow!

[00:31:30.04]: Christy Lorio: With shorts that I made for him, with hot pink socks - it was really funny.

[00:31:33.19]: Mario Austin: Wow, straight from the pimps.

[00:31:34.09]: Christy Lorio: People friggin' loved it! It's so funny, because people want to take pictures with us, and like, and I forgot how much attention...how attention grabbing they are.

[00:31:41.06]: Mario Austin: So, did y'all go to the um, walk, um the walk on Canal street with the—

[00:31:45.11]: Christy Lorio: The walk? Oh like the, Krewe du Vieux or something?

[00:31:48.16]: Mario Austin: Yea!

[00:31:49.00]: Christy Lorio: No, I didn't, because I think I worked that night, but I just go out, like, um, we just went out that Halloween night, yea, the night of Halloween, and I never recycle, yea that's my one cardinal rule, is like it's a cardinal sin in my book to repeat something on Mardi Gras day, so, you can't...you just can't. You have to have something fresh every Mardi Gras. Kind of like Mardi gras Indians, I guess, I mean I'll recycle some pieces, which I just started doing this year, because I have a costume collection with probably about 100 things, but like I'm talking about gloves like, you know.

[00:32:19.20]: Mario Austin: Yea, you have the basics you can really work with.

[00:32:24.23] Mario Austin: What motivated you to make all these crazy costumes? Like the flamingo costume, what pushed you to make this your hobby?

Christy: It's just fun. I take a lot of pride in it because I hand sew everything I don't hot glue. I will glue some things if I have to, but I have like a lot of pride in it. Im also a very competitive person. I'm not competitive in weird ways and I want to be one of the best dressed people out here.(laughs)

[00:32:34.29] Mario Austin: It's a competition amongst other people or just within yourself?

Christy: it's a competition with myself but me and my husband will always joke. Where like you know what these costumes say? These costumes say F you.(laughs) like when we are walking and we feel good.

[00:33:13.01] Mario: Chest out, chins up

Christy: Yeah that's right, you know we're here

Christy: You know you want to feel like you're contributing you know like you want to feel like.

[00:34:10.21] Mario: What's like the most feedback that you are getting our customers are probably walking around a Mardi Gras and I get a lot of pitches from people out of town.

Christy: A lot of pictures know people are going to take a lot of pictures.

Christy: Have people have to take a lot of pictures and they also just when people say I'm one of my favorite things was like one I can remember which costumes this was or what year. But this guy came up to us and he's like I came all the way from wherever it was Germany New Zealand whatever. And he's like This is why I came to New Orleans you know and I was like that felt so good. felt so good to me now. And yeah it was like it was amazing.

Christy: You know I'm like I feel like yeah I again like representing my city like showing up and.

[00:36:47.05] Mario: What was the worst experience you had when you kept coming to create a costume. I was like the. worst one.

Christy: The worst one any time like I'm trying to like make something and it doesn't work like it just the logistics like a logistical nightmare. Oh you know what I'll see. I like I made these cloud costumes. We were clouds one year and it took like a cloud. I mean Cloud hat. And I just didn't I didn't make it wasn't as. They were really I don't ill conceived because they looked great but I used like you know like sunshades that you put into the windshield of your car.

Christy: Yeah that's what I based it on. So it was like a very lightweight and very flimsy. And then I took like a pillbox hat. It's like those little flat hats. And it should be used like a baseball cap or something as the base to make it really sturdy but it didn't. So they were like just like really large they were like this big party like the saw. There were really large and it was really cold and windy that day. And we remember like my husband has an office on Canal Street like an MidCity. So we like we drove there parked the car there and we biked down on Canal to get to the quarter. And that's so large and so like a bit like the wind would just push them up and link them offer. And then it was like a nightmare in the crowds because we were I'm short. I'm five foot one. So it's like I don't have very much clearance. So sometimes we can fit through doorways. I mean like I went into a bar.

Christy: I went to live feet's and bourbon to get drinks and had to take the hat again I'm five one to clear the crowd. I had to take the hat off and lift it over my head. So it will be fun. So yeah I could find we can find each other really easily in a crowd. I will say that. Yeah. So they were cool but I don't think I'd wear them again.

[00:40:38.24] Mario: I was about ask I know Mardi Gras pretty much like our winter. Time a little bit it's like a little bit colder it can be hard to. Do.

Mario: That. Like have maybe like me the costume like to where it was weather appropriate at a time where you feel like everything is my short sleeve or.

Christy: It's never appropriate.

Christy: I don't think about that. And I always regret it.

Christy: I I'm really good with the layering tights. Like one year it was like really cold and raining and a lot of people didn't go out. I think that was like 2014 and I had like had wool tights

on over any regular stockings like or like bull tights and then regular stockings fishnets over that and then like yeah I never think about the weather. I do have a couple of like jackets that are pretty costumes that I can throw over it.

Christy: But it's hard because like last year there was like 80 degrees. And I was wearing shorts and bikini top. So you know. I was like OK well that's good because if it wasn't I would be kind of screwed to put a North Face jacket over it ruined the whole look.

[00:42:57.23] Mario: So you ever made costumes for anybody else. I reached out to you before to make their costume.

Christy: I thought about it and actually about two years ago when I graduated from undergraduate with my bachelors. I was trying to think about things to do and I was just for enjoyment and also maybe for the love of cash I thought about making costumes to sell. And I quickly realized that that wasn't going to happen because like I said I'm not a very good seamstress and I'm also very slow. So I realized that I'd have to charge a lot of money to recover like recoup not only my costs with the services but the services and my time. So but I learned I learned stuff out to friends you know because these things need to be out in the world you know. But I've never like salts. I've had people ask me this. I've had people inquire you know like about making stuff that I've never actually done it.

[00:43:30.22] Mario: So what would be your plans for this upcoming Mardi Gras.

Christy: That's a good question. I am not sure yet. I'm not sure yet. Yeah. There's this one costume designers that I've been kind of stalking on Instagram and her stuff is amazing. It's kind of like really high concepts very fashion driven and I'm thinking about like maybe like kind of like doing like a rap on that. It's very. Yeah. It's I don't know. It's gorgeous are so hurt. First thing.

Agnes I can't I can't pronounce the last name. I think she's like in Sweden or something but it's like all super amazing stuff. Yeah high end stuff but so I'm thinking about playing with that.

Christy: But we'll see.

[00:44:28.11] Mario: You really pull a lot ideas straight out sky. like its never something that sit down and plan this out let me think what I'm going to do this year based off last year. Its more like I feel like doing this right now so I'm going to do it right now.

Christy: Yeah. Yeah. Some stuff like a general usually what I'll do is. It all depends. I get an inspiration from like so many different things. One year like this are the clouds I base that off of and they do look nothing like it so I'm not comparing myself to Alexander McQueen. But I saw this really cool Alexander McQueen like costume. And it was like rainclouds coming down. It was like amazing so mine was like a little bit more like. Cartoonish and costume-y then than the original. Didn't look anything like the original. I was like oh cool rainclouds. And sometimes it could just be like I'm like I'm a big thrifter and sometimes it could just be like I find something cool at thrift store and then base like everything around that one piece. You know but sometimes yeah. It's kind of rare that I like Ike. I'm like OK we're going to be like. I'm a bee but I'll set for example I'm going to bee, someone to go make this. You know like it's always like I don't always like starts out like I have a hat like I find I find a hat that somebody else made and then I'll go off that.

[00:45:26.01] Mario: It starts off very small its never Just the whole planned out thing.

Christy: Yeah like the flamingos like I found the Flamingo hat. It was already me. It's like something you could buy like a party city. You know and then like it just build on that and then it

doesn't look. Nothing nothing about those costumes look store bought but most of those pieces were store bought but I embellished everything. So.

[00:46:40.04] Mario: So how much do you usually spend on a regular costume?

Christy: Oh my god so embarrassing. A lot. I would say probably for both of us probably like 300 costs 300.

[00:46:48.11] Mario: 300 and that's with what all the store bought stuff and the materials and the time sewing and all that stuff?

Christy: No that's not the time. I mean God the time was the hardest part right. The time is priceless. But yeah. I'd say probably about I'd say at least 300. I always say this the thing is I'm a thrifter. So it's like I always start out saying that I'm. Going to be thrifty this year but it just keeps just keeps going up going because I have to buy all the sequins and all that stuff.

[00:47:29.17] Mario: Oh do you have any pictures on your blog or anything of your own that you have like a whole section dedicated to the costumes.

Christy: I don't blog as much as I used to. I haven't. I haven't blogged in a couple months. But yeah there's there's a whole section of our costumes. Yeah.

[00:48:43.20] Mario: So is your husband completely supportive or he's just like imma do it.

Christy: Oh he's totally into it. Yeah he's totally into it. He loves it like he even the Flamingo he loves the flamingo. Yeah he's all about. It's funny because he he said he keeps his head shaved pretty close. You know a lot of them think he's in the military because his stature and his hair. But he has a bigger. OK prime example. This Halloween he's like is this my balloon where hers. He has a mini wig as I do. And it's fun because he puts it on he takes this like he's just like the hair. So funny. He's just as into it as I am.

[00:50:06.01] Mario: The amazing thing to have somebody from a support 100 percent and then want to do their own thing with it as well.

Christy: Oh yeah. And he will go out and shoppers and stuff too. Like I'll make his stuff. You know but he'll he will. Actually one of my proudest moments. I have to say this is one of my proudest moments as it wasn't for Mardi Gras. I take. Mardi Gras more seriously than Halloween. I mean I still don't skimp on Halloween but we went. For Halloween for Halloween two years ago. We went as I guess was a British safari kind of like thing and we had like the pith helmets and he had like this big like like fake mustache you know yellow like the Ascot and like the jacket and oh I had some old I have. A playful suit. So and I had some old metals that I had just found from high school so we put on the jacket like we like he was in the British military. So anyway so so editor from Vogue magazine was in town for Mardi Gras. And like he's not really he's like like fashion worlds famous but he's not like everyday famous you know. He's not like Anna Wintour like everybody ready to who Anna Wintour is. So he was like walking in the quarter and I was like You know I was like oh my god. It was smart. It was Halloween night. I was like oh my god that's Meech Bows. And. He's British so maybe slaughtering the pronunciation of his name. And I was like oh my god and he turns around. And.

Christy: He heard his name and I was like should I go say something. I'm never that person who's like can I take a picture with you or you know I'm just not like that. Yeah I'm just playing it cool now and then. And also it's like sometimes you know you see celebrities in person and you're not sure it's them you know because it's like out of context or whatever. But it was him and and I know it was him. So I went and I didn't follow him on Instagram but I went and found his instagram and I saw he was in New Orleans and like. It was him. So I was like going to like meet

some were making some friends. We were going to the Quinton show at one eyed jacks and when he. So I post I was like Man I wish I would've said something. I was like so like that like I missed opportunity to tell him hi or whatever. And then I posted on his Instagram like hey like welcome to New Orleans saw you on Royal Street. You know Hope you're having a great time. And he commented I had a picture of my husband in his costume and he commented that was a great costume and I was like.

Christy: Well I think it's screen shot at like 20 times. Like.

[00:51:03.20] Mario: Let everybody know.

Christy: Yeah I did.

Christy: Actually my husband was the one in charge of his own costume that year. So I can't take any credit for that.

[00:51:36.19] Mario: He probably just opened his eyes.

Christy: It was amazing. Yeah it was like oh my god. It was a great moment.

[00:51:53.03] Mario: How many times does your husband actually come with the original idea of the costumes right. Or is it just more your side.

Christy: It's pretty collaborative but I would say it mostly rest on me.

[00:52:17.24] Mario: Right. So for Halloween how you are treat the whole process it's a different process or is it like. We still go for like the whole playful look or we going look more scary.

Christy: So we're usually don't do scary I think we've done like yeah we can do scary. I kind of want to have never done it before but basically like I said I have a wardrobe. I have a costume like wardrobe really. I mean like it's all in boxes. But if I took it out it would be a closet full of

stuff. So I treat Halloween like I'm just getting dressed for any other day you know. And I'm like I just go in and I'm like OK I'm gonna wear this. And you know because.

[00:52:42.15] Mario: Like a practice run.

Christy: Yeah it is like practice and it's like so much stuff that are already own. So I try not to buy things for Halloween because also when I work like I said before I worked at Buffalo Exchange this is you know used clothing. So I got a lot of stuff from when I worked there. And so I have so much stuff that I just I just use that instead of going out and buying something new and I'm also really big into secondhand clothing in general look just like from the waist aspect of it. So I just try not to like turn into buying new stuff like Halloween stuff is just usually like the costumes are usually like bad fabrics like back to the environment like polyester. You know it's just I don't know.

Christy: I just think it's so much fun to like such a source of pride for me when somebody like comes up to me and says like I love your costume and you're like thinks I made this or put it together versus buying it out of a bag.

[00:53:07.07] Mario: So when you said you know you said you wanted to try to do the scary stuff or are you more into the costumes. Would you be more into the whole makeup of like all the effects and stuff and you can do with it.

Christy: I think the effects and stuff are really cool but that is not my jam. I just like I don't like having stuff on my face and I'm not a very good makeup artist. Like I can barely like I'm going to a wedding and I'm like oh I can barely do this. So that's not my thing. But I wouldn't be opposed to it. I don't like masks like I don't like. Again like I just don't like stuff on my face.

Mario: Is more open to just like let me just find a piece of clothing that is very out of ordinary.

Christy: Yeah exactly.

[00:53:23.21] Mario: Maybe this little thing on my head and thats about it.

Christy: Exactly. Yeah exactly. Something crazy. So.

[00:53:48.12] Mario: So for Halloween also as well when you do come up with your outfit for Halloween. So you don't recycle.

Christy: Will I do reuse stuff so I will on Halloween. Halloween this year we brought back the Flamingo costumes for Mardi Gras from 2012. So it will wear stuff for Halloween.

[00:54:37.24] Mario: So this is technically just a practice run for yall.

Christy: Yeah.

[00:55:19.00] Mario: It's just like full game. We got to be on our A-Game. We got to beat everybody.

Christy: Yeah. But I'm also I have to say I'm getting cocky here but I will say like me like just kind of like try running. This is pretty damn good. So.

[00:55:54.15] Mario: We still number 1.

Christy: Still number one.

Christy: Yeah yeah yeah. I mean it's not like I'm not like making something specifically for Halloween at least anymore. It's like I've already got so much stuff. I might as well might as well use it you know. Yeah.

[00:56:26.00] Mario: You ever been into the Indian costumes and how they take there's like you're trying to be involved in what they do.

Christy: Like the Mardi Gras Indians? What do you mean like.

Mario: Like how I know you have like your costumes and you make them from the thrift stores and like them with them they like do it for like as a culture thing. Have you ever tried to be more involved. Like let me see what their culture is let me see if I can be involved in like helping them do their costumes?

Christy: Um no because I don't know. Well actually I take that back. I have worked in the service industry. I have worked with people who were Mardi Gras Indians but I wouldn't impose myself onto like somebody else's thing. You know and I don't know. Yeah. You.

[00:57:14.20] Mario: Don't know how serious that really is if it's just costumes. It was more like intimate.

Christy: I know how serious it is because I knew it was people you know I knew the craftsmanship that goes into it. But that's not like yeah I wouldn't think.

[00:57:55.24] Mario: Has it ever been an inspiration?

Christy: Oh totally totally yeah. I mean like the way like the way that they do all their hand beating and I mean just the collaboration you know I knew like people entire families like work on their costume you know work on them. And I think it's just incredible. But I mean it's not like. It would feel like a little bit like appropriation if I don't know.

[00:58:20.18] Mario: Yeah I understand. It's more like you just leave it to the people who grow up and our families are tied into that. And then you just continue to do your own thing.

Christy: Exactly yeah. You can. Yeah I mean I definitely take inspiration from like the craftsmanship and the cult like the culture and the you know the history behind it. But I like what I bust out like make my own Mardi Gras Indian outfit like. Definitely not. Huge. Yeah yeah. No.

[00:58:45.14] Mario: So what. What costume did you get anything head like probably the worst feedback besides the cloud? Have you ever gotten one that someone like you just didn't get any comments on it saying it could have been better.

Christy: Never. No nobody's ever done that's me. I mean first off I think that its really rude for someone to say your costume sucks. I will say this that this was a turning point for me. I made like these like like Amazon warriors. Kind of like loose interpretation of that. So we did that for Halloween I guess it was like 2008 2009 and I thought. This was a turning point for me probably and I hand beaded a chest plate for my husband. I don't like these like wooden beads. And it was like really cool and we both had like and I hand sewed like fabric leaves on like the bodice of this like a corset or the tank top. So it was like very very very elaborate like stuff. And I still have it and. I a friend of mine was like I had pictures and you like everybody does now have pictures of it and it was on Instagram and a friend of mine was like your costume was so amazing. But I was too drunk to appreciate it. So after that like that after that I was like I'm not putting this much effort into another Hollywood Costume again because it's like yeah it's true like people Halloween and Mardi Gras are very different. You know people it's dark outside. You know it's not as well it is not during the day. People can't see the details as much. And yeah people get not the people don't get drunk on Mardi Gras Day but it's more of a slow slower day. Right. Exactly.

Christy: Yeah like people are getting like hammered you know on Halloween or just any everyday. And they're just not paying much attention to it you know. So I was like I'm not. Why am I bothering me and took me. And I got I'm really slow. So it probably took me like 20 30 hours.

[00:59:18.10] Mario: That's the longest that you have worked on a costume?

Christy: Yeah. No I don't think the longest. It's hard.

Christy: I don't I don't hit a timer you know when I make an A but for the most time it takes me days months to do them sometimes. Well usually I try to like compact it all so I'll usually like. I'll usually work like 30 to 50. You know it actually might work 50 hours on time because usually I'll try to. Every year Sam work on I'm in the summer. That never happens. You know. But usually yeah it takes me like 30 to 50. I'd say 30 to 50 hours. Yeah because all will all stay up like all night like 8 8 hours a week. Work on them for like eight hours. Like multiple days a week leading up to Mardi Gras.

[00:59:42.29] Mario: So this is. So you start working on your costumes right after Halloween. Or as we wait to get closer to Mardi Gras?

Christy: I wait till we get closer. I kind of like wait and so again I'm a I'm a big procrastinator and like everything I say I'm going to start working on them. But then I don't. But this year is different because I'm in grad school so I need to make sure. And that's another thing too is like just because I'm in school doesn't that mean it's not give me an excuse like I still needs. So all of an example this is funny in undergrad. This might have been cause to remember. There might have been the clown costumes in undergrad. I was. Yeah. It was like February. Mardi Gras in February of that year like January February it was like working on my costumes and I was in school. I wasn't in school full time but I was like taking nine hours. So pretty close to full time. And. I had to read Frankenstein for famous British Literature class was like the hardest boss I had to take and I was like I am not going to let this book stop me from working on my costume. So I had it on kindle. I should have bought the audio version of it. I had on Kindle so I listened to it on my Kindle. So it sounds like you know that's like it's like listening to like Siri read you a

book. I guess a kind of ad is the full Frankenstein feel of listening to the book. sewing my costumes. It hides multitask so that might happen again for. and I'm thinking about starting in December this year.

Christy: So you like in between my in my winter break.

[01:00:08.04] Mario: So it wouldn't really affiliate with your school too much would like you know. There'd be a little bit easier for you.

Christy: Oh definitely. Yeah.

[01:00:32.14] Mario: Have you decided to take it into the fashion like You know how to have more abstract fashion just like regular clothing you ever thought about like taking it to the next level?

Christy: No. Like. Like. Like making it more like fashion or like not really because it's not like there are people who do that really well and I'm not like I said I'm not a seamstress so I don't have like really any desire.

[01:00:43.23] Mario: Have you ever cut your finger trying to sew and stuff.

Christy: I think about how have I never I don't think I've ever cut myself but I have like sewn my skin thats really gross. So like.

[01:01:21.23] Mario: What it was like as far as like errors and everything like when you're making a costume like this is like oh my god I start this whole process over and something like it is me just come back.

Christy: I have had this. Have you ever had that happen before. Like yeah I've had that happen.

We're like I've done something backwards you know like I was making the cloud hats I was

making so I was making the exact same thing. And I think I like. I can remember what it was. I screwed something up so I had to like undo all my handiwork and start over again. Yeah.

[01:01:38.14] Mario: So isn't it isn't as noisy as being a hobby. It's still fun to do. But it has never been like a wear and tear on us for a day like know you have to do so much.

Christy: Oh totally Yeah I mean mix my back hurts. You know it hurts my back because you're like hunched over you know I don't have I don't have a permanent. I have a two bedroom house so I don't have like a dedicated space I can just like you know like leave all my stuff out like an art studio and does not have to like you know.

[01:02:11.07] Mario: Like it's just like it just like it affects the whole house when it's time.

Christy: Oh yeah totally. Yeah I like this one like we have a spare bedroom so I have like this one like a table where my husband usually has a keyboard set up so he'll like take the keyboard off and I'll have like my sewing machine. And that's like my space you know and I kind of like sequester myself off and some music just kind of like get busy on it TV it's like you know you can like look back and you like or you know like see how much progress you made.

[01:02:27.19] Mario: So you haven't got your family involved into it.

Christy: You know I no my family is not into costumes.

Christy: My brother. Actually it's funny because my brother and his boyfriend. Just moved back home from they just me back like they hadn't lived in New Orleans since Katrina and they just moved back from Louisville they lived there for a couple of years. And they didn't even go out for Halloween. And then I was trying to get them to like. I was like Hey you guys want to go out and you can bars and costumes from us. Lord knows we have plenty. And they didn't even like.

Nothin now. Yeah and then actually we came back. They came back home for Mardi Gras for the

first time last year before they move back. And my husband I you know we went out on our costumes but they just wear jeans and t shirts. But my sister and my sisters borrowed stuff before. That but yeah now I'm like the only one my grandmother loves that she gets a kick out of it. I always show her pictures of our costumes.

[01:02:44.04] Mario: So as far as I know I have mentioned that you had like your own separate blog for everything. Has there been any like any recent comments on her blog.

Christy: Have you ever like kids like zero traffic or. Yeah yeah I mean it used to be like a thing. It used to be. But when I was blogging heavily it was like I was like the only fashion bloggers in New Orleans. There are very very few of us so it did. I mean I wouldn't say I wasn't like you know like you know like people on Instagram now they get like 10000 followers. You know like it was I wasn't like that you know. But I mean I was like it was it was a fashion blog. You know I was like highlighting like local boutiques and like local designers original designers. So I mean a lot of connections in that world. And it's but it's more. It's it's like sense my blog is like morphed into like it's a personal blog but I haven't actually looked at it recently and I hadn't updated it since like April. So but. I still like it still do stuff because you know it's people. People do you find me on Twitter. You know.

[01:02:19.27] Mario: I'm just really right by how often. Like the Flamingo thing I know I have to see. There's also you know that's probably like you've been praising there's got to be like the best costume you feel like you've made.

Christy: It is and we kind of joke about it because it's like what like how we're going to top it like we're always like trying to like figure out like how we're going to top the flamingos costumes. So you know.

Mario: When they have like when you're walking in Mardi Gras do you have a walk with the floats and everything. Like what. Like what parades do you walk.

Christy: We usually don't we don't walk for parades. I don't like them. So Mardi Gras Day Parade but. We just kind of like I just throw caution to the wind. Don't make any plans and I just kind of like I kind of just like see where the day's going to take me. But I do I'm in like completely separate. I mean I'm a marching band they play piccolo in a marching band. And so I do like I do like for four or five. We didn't parade last year but I'm hoping we parade this year. I heard the ushers will be a great.

[01:02:44.05] Mario: This year is going to be really great as far as weather and.

Christy: I hope so yeah.

[01:03:08.25] Mario: Usually it's just too rainy and cold. That's why I asked the question like the cost of everything being and and everything you have to really layer up.

Christy: I do. I do have to layer up. Yeah that's something I think about. I usually just. Grin and bear it. Shot of whiskey.

[01:02:11.05] Mario: Has it been a time where you got all your costume dirty or anything?

Christy: Yes. Yes I got my costumes dirty but I have to say like I'm a pretty clean person in general. Like I really for whatever reason I really take care good care of my clothes and I at my costumes the same way because people talk about like why you can put so much money into your costume if it's gonna be trash. I'm like I don't really ever I can never really get trashed where I get to the cloud costume. I keep going back to the cloud costume even its one of my least favorites. I like the little silver cap that I made that cute scratched bit but it got stuff all over. I don't know what is looks at coffee stains all over it. You can't really tell. But that's like one oh

and then we have some hats that got destroyed. Yeah we hadn't had. I got destroyed. It's very rare very rare because I keep good care because I've put so much effort into it.

[01:03:00.25] Mario: And what year did you start this was anything pre Katrina?

Christy: Yeah there was pre Katrina pre Katrina wasn't as good. But. Because I lived away after Katrina I lived I lived in Phoenix for three years so I didn't you know. I didn't come back to New Orleans for Mardi Gras. During that time. But yeah I did stuff before Katrina. There wasn't it wasn't as elaborate though.

[01:01:13.17] Mario: Its really when you got back and you felt like being coming back home is when you like. I think I want to be more involved in the culture and then that's where you started taking more involved in the culture.

Christy: Also had like more like more established in my job. Helping more income to throw at it. Not saying that you can't but you do have to spend a little money to get this you know.

[01:02:19.13] Mario: Like you say like three hundred dollars. Like as far as like a hobby and something like you know how like incomes going where they can be kind of like.

Christy: Yeah I just its head hurts so. I mean I never actually like my I do sometimes sit with a calculator and add it up. But yeah it hurts when I look at how much I spend.

[01:02:44.01] Mario: Has you ever tried to stop you like OK we need. Oh he just let you go full crazy.

Christy: He does. But I will say this I was looking we were looking at somber costumes and I was looking at these costumes they're made like Thailand and they were ones that were like twelve hundred dollars. That's where I would draw the line. I would not spend twelve hundred dollars on a costume. But I was looking at this 1200 hundred dollar ones just fantasizing about

them. And then you start looking at the 300 dollar ones and you're like That's not that bad. You're like wait a minute. No I can't. Like I want to but I can't.

[01:02:03.06] Mario: You know one thing you I really want to see myself and really just go like all I'll like no limit or anything.

Christy: I do feel like I go No Limit. Anyway. But I wouldn't by like like I wouldn't for me. No limit would be like buying that like 300 dollar piece. You know I don't think I could do it because I'm probably going to wear that once you know or I would wear it again. But for like something else and we do go to like balls and stuff like we went to this this thing. Oh that's another point of pride for me. We went to this thing called it was like it was a party at the Music Box and we went and I used a hat. I didn't make it but I bought it. Somebody else like me didn't I bought it at Buffalo Exchange. When I worked there it's like live like a lily pad. There's like a frog on top like a pond scene really cool. So we went to this like aquatic themed ball kind of thing at the Music Box and I wore that and I don't think I spent that much time that we spent under 50 probably like 30 bucks. But then I didn't realize it until a friend of mine was watching Big Freedia to show Big Freedia to perform that night. And anyway I mean I'm me and my husband were on the show but I didn't realize it. I didn't realize they were filming for the show. And then my friend like me like oh my god you're on TV and they're like you know.

[01:02:35.14] Mario: You just get all the special moments you always run into the right place right time.

Christy: I was like thrilled I was like to become even cocky I was like thrilled that I was on I was like oh my god this is so cool. I'm like well of course I'm on it. We looked good.

[01:03:01.27] Mario: Chalk it up as a "W".

Christy: I'm like All right.

[01:03:26.07] Mario: That is pretty much it as far as the interview process. Thank you for your time with everything. And I got us into flamingo costume Yeah all right I'll show you I got a picture.