

[SACRED ROSE TATTOO]

Karen Roze: So we're going to color in something that we started already.

Noah: Uh huh.

Karen Roze [tattoo sound begins]: All right. I'm just going to go right in. Hi, my name is Karen Roze, and I am the owner operator of Sacred Rose Tattoo in Berkeley, California. We are doing our live interview right now while I'm tattooing my apprentice, Rachael Dobos.

Karen Roze: How's that feel yummy?

Rachael Dobos: So yummy

Karen Roze: Right on the elbow to start? It's not. It's not a test of your fortitude. Welcome to your apprenticeship, rawr.

Noah Baustin: So so what was that first tattoo you got?

Karen Roze: I got a I got a little kanji. A little Japanese kanji...

I went to Tattoo City with my friend who was getting tattooed on the regular there, and I watched her. And when she was done, the guy was like, the artist said, Oh, it's your turn, what do you want?

And I said, Oh no, I'm just here to watch and see what it's like. And my friend said she'll never get one because she's a pussy, basically. And so I looked at the wall and was like, Just give me that...

Just do it. Like, Don't dare me to do something.

I got this tattoo on a dare and that's what did it for me. I thought, OK, here you go. You have your art degree. You like people. You're talkative. You can draw and this is perfect for you. You get paid to draw on people and talk to them all day. Perfect.

So um it took me about a year to get an apprenticeship because nobody taught women how to tattoo back then, ever. And there were like two or three women in San Francisco who tattooed at the time...

who were very protective over their turf.

So it's pretty remarkable that I weaseled my way in and I had to fight to stay there too.

Because while I was apprenticing, a lot of people... who I thought were my friends, like dudes, they're like, Oh, I want to do this, and they thought they'd muscled me out.

and I put up with all of it. You know, the kind of sexual harassment you get going into tattooing back 30 years ago was some serious shit.

I mean, like some serious... threatening with guns, threatening rape, I mean, they didn't want women in the biz.

I got lucky because my mentor was [a] really cool guy and he really liked me and he wasn't that, of that mindset. But I worked with people who were of that mindset. And so I just pushed through. It was one of those things that made me tough.

Noah Baustin: So it sounds like in your early years working in the business, there was all this sexual harassment and toxicity. What gave you the drive to kind of push through that and persevere?

Karen Roze: I don't know. I mean, I was a tough little girl.

I always saw my... I identified with the boys, so I guess you would say I was a tomboy then, I mean look at me I still dress like a 12 year old. I was just me, and I always was my whole life. Always.

Karen Roze: But ultimately... You just have to say this. I deserve this. And one of those things you deserve is respect.

Karen Roze: I'm just pushing it in. See how I push it? Always go the same direction, OK?

Rachael Dobos: Yeah.

Karen Roze: One thing about tattooing is that if you are having emotional stuff and you really just need to get back in your body... Get a freaking tattoo because you'll be [healed]. That pain throws you right back into your body and you realize that you're the boss of your body and you're the boss of your life. And it's an amazing way to control your— when you're flying out there. When you're losing it...

You get a tattoo. Wham... very empowering, especially for women, in my opinion, because everyone your whole life tells you how you're supposed to look and everything. And when you get a tattoo, you're basically telling the whole world, I don't care what you think about how I look.

PAPER PLUS

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Michele Schurman: We tend to focus the holidays in the front. Right now, we're dealing with the Chinese New Year, which is almost over. Of course, Valentine's Day, we got Super Bowl ready to go.

Hi, my name is Michelle Sherman. I'm the owner of Paper Plus in Berkeley... we're a party store.

Uh you know there's the stuff that we kind of started out with, which is like stationery.

And then the wall is just cards of every single thing you could think of.

Baby

Birthday

Brother's birthday

Father's birthday

And then there's your fiesta

Mardi Gras

Gay pride

Bar and Bat Mitzvah

In fact, we do all the Jewish holidays up big.

Wedding

Baby shower

Christening

Candles

Bows

Ribbons

You top it off with pinatas

Noah Baustin: Do you have a favorite thing you sell?

Michele Schurman: I mean, I actually... doing this as long as I have, I actually don't even do holidays much anymore. It's kind of like coal is to Newcastle.

Ronny Carillo: Hi my name is Ronny Carillo I'm originally from Peru. I work here in the store Paper Plus, for about 20 years.

Noah Baustin: And is your title balloon maker, balloon specialist? What do you what do you go by?

Ronny Carillo: Uh, balloon decorator.

Noah Baustin: So you've been working here 20 years now. How have you changed over that time?

Ronny Carillo: Well, I feel old [laughs].

Ronny Carillo: and which one would you like?

Customer 2: Um, eleven, eight and nine

Ronny Carillo: Bow eleven, eight, and nine, So three balloons?

Noah Baustin: I'm curious, can I ask you, what are you buying a balloon for today?

Customer 2: Valentine's Day of course. I'm just trying to show my girl that I'm not always talking. I love her a little bit, you know?

Noah Baustin: Right on, right on.

[buzz of balloon making]

Ronny Carillo: [sound of ribbon] Here we go.

Customer 2: Thank you. I bring this up front?

Ronny Carillo: Yes. Thank you.

Ronny Carillo: I don't have kids, but I have my nephew that has MS. I am his like, his mentor... One thing that I taught him since he was a kid is you are the only one that you can be happy for yourself.

So every time any moment you try to invent your happiness, create your happiness. You're the only one. This is my legacy that to be a good influence onto other people.

[music space]

Ronny Carillo: People support this business, especially in Berkeley... And there's people that I've seen them since they were kids and now they have kids.

Noah Baustin: What do those relationships mean to you with those customers?

[fade out music]

Ronny Carillo: Sometimes it's sad.

Ronny Carillo: Last week came a lady. That six, seven years ago. Her grandkid passed away.

He went to the dentist. Something happened, anesthesia, it was, it was passed away and the kid... She said, I want one yellow balloon and I go, like, is she or no? Because they used to get yellow balloons. So I remember her.

Noah Baustin: So I want to make sure I understand. So you're saying that there's a woman who used to come in with her grandson and they always would get a yellow balloon. And so her grandson passed away and she came in to get a yellow balloon. And that's how you knew?

Ronny Carillo: Right. It was her, uh, six or seven anniversary that he passed away.

Ronny: She told me, Can I give you a hug?...

She says I always think about you about your nephew because the MS.

Our conversation is about life. It's comfortable when you have some people that they don't just come and they say, I want this, I want... they kind of create a connection ... with the customers...

[balloon blowing up]

Ronny / customer: Thank you. So cute. Thank you so much. I appreciate it. You're welcome. Sure, you're welcome.

[SILVERA JEWELRY]

Joe Silvera: OK, so I'm opening the fuel gas [sound of sparker].

So now you've got ... in jewelry it would be a slightly little bit of a larger flame for soldering, but a nice fluffy flame.

Hi, I'm Joe Silvera and we're here at Silver Jewelry School... We're at 1105 Virginia Street, just off of San Pablo Avenue.

Anat Silvera: Hi, my name is Anat Silvera...

Noah Baustin: And so so how do you use this flame when you're actually working with jewelry?

Joe Silvera: So I would take my piece of metal... I'd get it to a certain level red heat. So from a low red to a high red. And then the beautiful thing is you'll see the solder flow.

Joe Silvera: It goes from being a solid into this beautiful mercury-like liquid, and it'll flow into the join and stitch it together. And then when you remove the flame, it goes back to being solid again.

So it's just a really lovely process.

Noah Baustin: Do you all remember, like the first piece of jewelry that you saw or that you got that really inspired you in a major way?

Anat Silvera: Yeah, I do... My grandfather had a tie pin and it was made of sterling, silver, silver and enamel, and that just I still have it. And that was something that just was just so beautiful for, for me, I loved it.

Anat Silvera: I remember him wearing it. He would go to work. He was a door-to-door salesman insurance salesman

Anat Silvera: I remember one day him coming from work... and he was wearing it and he was really tired.

Noah Baustin: Yeah, that must have been a hard job. Door to door salesman.

Anat Silvera: Yeah. I mean, the minute he retired, he died.

Noah Baustin: Hmm. So I'm almost wondering, like does that make that piece of jewelry that you still have like, is that hard to look at it sometimes if it's associated...?

Anat Silvera: No I think for a long time it was. I just had it in a box for a long time, didn't really look at it. And now I do pull it out... It's just so pretty.

Noah Baustin: So I'm curious, how did you two meet?

Joe Silvera: I really met her at the Open Studio Pro Arts in Oakland annual sale. And we were the two jewelers in the room and we started talking and all of our friends quietly disappeared [laughs] and left us there talking. And um we got to know each other and we went out to dinner and...

Anat Silvera: You never left me alone after that.

Joe Silvera: That's true. I date by attrition and...

Joe Silvera: There was that connection. Like, we just...

Joe Silvera: It's like all of a sudden you had something with which to measure how different everybody else you dated was...

Anat Silvera: Yeah well said.

Noah Baustin: And what was it, what did you realize?

Joe Silvera: That I should have been dating older women. [laughs]

Noah Baustin: What's the age difference?

Joe Silvera: We're about eight years apart.

Anat Silvera: Eight and a half.

Noah Baustin: How long was it from that first time you met at that event to the altar?

Anat Silvera: Nine months.

Noah Baustin: And how long have you been together now?

Anat Silvera: Twenty-three years.

Noah Baustin: Has there ever been a time in your life where someone in your life said, you know, I don't really think that's how you should be spending your time making jewelry?

Joe Silvera: [laughs] Besides our parents?

Noah Baustin: Did your parents say that?

Joe Silvera: My mom was very supportive... But she did at one point tell me that I'm pretty sure you're going to end up on a street corner, drawing caricatures of people in a way like, you know, barely getting by.

Anat Silvera: And a lot of people also out of fear you just they feel uncomfortable. Or they wish they could do it but they can't. They don't take a chance. You know. They work the nine to five and get the really good pension. But at a job they were never happy with.

Noah Baustin: How do you feel about it that you didn't work the nine to five and get the really good pension?

Anat Silvera: Now that I'm older? I um, I feel good.

Anat Silvera: I mean, I struggled a lot and worked really hard, but I made it and, you know, so I feel good. I'm really glad that I took that chance and, you know, didn't give up.

[ALBATROSS PUB]

Andrew McGee: When I first started working there, this was 2004, when I first started working there. There were a lot of people who were going to the albatross who had been going to the albatross since it opened in 1964.

My name is Andrew McGee. I'm the. Yeah, I mean, I was the owner of the I still am technically the owner of one of the owners of the Albatross pub.

We had there were little brass plaques. That would go around the armrest of the of the wood of the entire bar. And those brass plaques were all people who were regulars. And whenever they passed away, we would memorialize them on the bar itself.

A lot of the a lot of the other Old-Time regulars, they've all passed away, you know, and and that's, you know, I'm the one, you know, who has all those stories now.

Various people would come in... There was a conductor. Yeah, there was famous, yeah, well-known conductors that would come in. And and this particular conductor, he he liked to tell dirty jokes. Yeah. So, so he he came in and he he was with a lot of like very orchestra people, very proper orchestra people. And this conductor came in and said, Oh, Andrew, how were you? I said, Oh hey, what's up? And I just launched into a really dirty joke. All of, all of these, like really proper people were just kind of just a little like. And the conductor just laughed his ass off. And it was just like, That's why I love this place. That's why I love this place and just, you know, ordered drinks for everybody.

COVID is what made it challenging. Nothing was challenging about it until COVID.

You know everybody said, well, it'll be a couple of months, it'll be a couple of months. And then, you know, when it was December of 2020 and there was still no no end in sight, you know, we still had to pay rent for everything so we didn't have unlimited money. So that that's when we that's when we knew things were getting really serious.

Noah Baustin: What was that moment like when you did have to make the decision that you were going to close down the bar at that location?

Andrew McGee: Well, it was. It was. It was incredibly frustrating and maddening. We were and still are determined to try and try and resurrect it as something. It just kind of stinks because that particular space is what the albatross was so much because it had been there since 1964.

You know, we didn't need... I didn't... There were a couple of people whose phone numbers I had, but really everybody just met at the albatross.

I didn't need the phone number because it would just be like, alright I'll see you on Thursday or I'll be here. You know, they all knew when I was there.

Andrew McGee: That kind of sucks because there are tons of people who I wish I had their phone numbers.

I just always saw them there.

[Auto Doctor]

Joe Ahmadieh: This is our show room, so to speak. It fits around 15, 16 vehicles, used vehicles.

You have this two thousand three, Nissan Pathfinder, uh, beautiful car sunroof, leather interior.

Two thousand Porchse boxer. Stick shift. Nice car.

We have here 2007 Lexus IS350 Maroon color peanutbutter interior...

My name is Joe Ahmadiéh. I am the owner of Auto Doctor in Berkeley. 1830 San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley. I've been here in this spot for 26 years... and I'm selling used cars!

I migrated from Middle East. I came for the purpose of pursuing my education... I went to Santa Clara University. I studied biology.

And then when I graduated... I told myself now I'm poor and I don't have much money. So why don't I come to business selling cars make some money, maybe a couple of years, and then go back to school and finish, you know, my education.

The next year when I came to business, the letter came from both Universities. California College of Podiatry Medicine in San Francisco. And you know, University of Pacific Dental School, that we are not going to hold your seat next year.

So if want you need to come in and register. And I didn't go there.

And now I'm regretting every day I think about it at least once a day that I why I didn't, you know, finish my education.

All those years, it's 32 years. It passed by like 32 seconds. ... I wanted to go to research and stuff, you know, and education is better than selling used cars, I guess. Hmm.

Noah Baustin: Why is it better?

Joe Ahmadiéh: Because you can use your mind. ... OK, the customer comes in, my name is, Joe, what is your name? This. What kind of vehicle are you looking for? Two door, four door, automatic, stick shift?... But if you go to research and this stuff, you know, there is a lot of experiments to be done and a lot of things. Yeah. And you have different respect than being used car dealer if you're a scientist.

Noah Baustin: I'm curious, so this is the path you took. Was there a moment? In the last 30 years where you really felt like, wow, this is really rewarding doing this work?

Joe Ahmadiéh: I never thought I didn't... I don't like this business. although I'm very successful, very successful.

And I have been successful in just one area, unfortunately.

For example, I don't have any children. I was married for 15 years. I got divorced. You know, she divorced me, actually. She said... You are always at work and I don't know if you need me or not...

Gradually, you know, we just. You know, mentally, fell apart, you know. At 3:00 in the morning, somebody calls my car broke down, I'm in the middle of Highway four or something. Please, please Joe could you come? And I have to sit in the car and go, and she's not happy with that kind of lifestyle.

And I don't blame her, you know? I don't blame her. I don't blame her and she you know, she just unfortunately, she left.

Noah Baustin: Are you dating now?

Joe Ahmadieh: No, no, no.

Noah Baustin: Why do you laugh?

Joe Ahmadieh: I'm dating my business. Every day, six days a week.

Noah Baustin: And how old are you, Joe?

Joe Ahmadieh: 63, 63. But I can't believe it. I really can't believe the time goes by so fast. God, God, God God, I can't see it. But that's what happens. You get old.

Joe Ahmadieh: And one other thing I was going to tell you about my business by my name of the business is Auto Doctor, right?

That's, you know, that's the name of the business Auto Doctor, because I was trying to go to medical school all my life, and maybe today I still unconsciously, I'm trying to go there ... but I can't.

It's too late.

[EVERETT AND JONES BBQ]

Employee: Hey, you can come on in. OK, thank you. You're welcome.

Noah Baustin: So if I had walked in a couple of years ago and your mom was sitting in the front, like, what would she, how would she have been dressed like? What could I have expected?

Shamar Cotton: She definitely would have had her Everett and Jones visor hat on. She would have some shades, some shades. She would have had an Everett and Jones shirt on and then... if you looked at her, she would have greeted you and said, hello, how are you doing? If you if you said, I have never had the barbecue she'd be like, where have you been? I mean, I've

only been here for thirty five years, so you're missing out, some of the best barbecue out. So that was that was my mom.

Employee: Number 11.

Shamar Cotton: Hi, my name is Shamar Cotton. I own the restaurant with my brother and sister. Everett and Jones Barbeque here in Berkeley.

Shamar Cotton: Everett and Jones is a family run business. My grandmother started it back in nineteen seventy three. It's always been family owned. I grew up in it.

Noah Baustin: Can you tell me, like, when did your mother take over running this restaurant?

Shamar Cotton: I don't know the official date, but I think it was sometime in the 80s. She owned it for most of the time it was here, like three decades.

Noah Baustin: What was your mom's name?

Shamar Cotton: Mary Everett. My mother was a very happy person she loved celebrating life. She was a very giving person as she always was a very she was a very Christian oriented person as well.

Noah Baustin: And how did she enjoy life? Like what'd she love to do?

Shamar Cotton: Well, she loved to throw a yearly party every year for her birthday... it was a party to actually collect toys for the annual toy drive she used to have.

Shamar Cotton: We used to go to a church every Thursday and my grandmother used to feed the homeless. So I think that was just way one way my mother just wanted to keep my grandmother's legacy going, as well as just giving back to those that are less fortunate than we are

Noah Baustin: And so when was the last one of those parties that she hosted

Shamar: Uh right before COVID.

Noah Baustin: I'm curious, do you remember like what your mom wore that night? Like what she looked like?

Shamar Cotton: like a little princess, a little Disney princess. She always had a custom dress.

Of course, she had her beautiful hair made, have her makeup done, earrings, nails, shoes and the dresses always matched with her grandkids... She had them all made together.

and she always made sure they twirl because my daughters like to twirl, turn around like they're princesses, like they're dancing. So she always had it where it was a long dress for them as well, and they could spin around and have a good time.

Officially, my brother and myself and my sister, we took over once my mom passed September 24 when she passed from COVID... so up until then it was always we just did what my mother said we just wanted to be a good kids and we wanted to make our mother happy, so took over last year.

We didn't want to, especially not this way. We wanted mom to still be here... where she can enjoy just life and her grandkids. But we've got thrust into it.

It was surreal. You know, walking in, it was actually the day... actually the day my mom passed away I came to the restaurant because we had... Still had still had day to day operations coming and people still bringing supplies. So I walked in, walked to the restaurant, put a sign on the door and just kind of sat outside.

And just was like my mom's not here. I've got to take care of the restaurant. I got to keep this going. So I couldn't believe this moment was here, especially like this.

I knew one day, I know we all here on Earth, we're all going to go some way... I didn't think it was coming any time soon, thought I had my mom till she was at least 90, 100 years old. She was only sixty five, so it was early.

My dream is basically don't disappoint them. Don't don't let this be a failure. Don't let this. Don't let what happened to plenty of other families or businesses when, like the matriarchs are gone, it kind of just fall.

Just keep it going, keep it simple, KISS like my grandmother say, kiss. Keep it simple. Stupid.

So I just want to make sure I keep it going to the best ability that I can and do all this, that she taught myself and my brother and sister. Just keep going.

Ambi / employee background: gotcha, anything else for you? No caramel in there right now, just the 7up and the lemon. Thank you... Alright y'all. Appreciate it. Take care.

[door opening and closing]