

Grocery Store Study
Focus Group 6/25/2016

Moderator: Katrina Levine – M

M: This recording...trying to set it on the... (static).

Right. Okay. So as kind of a way of introducing yourselves...um... could each of you please state your name your name and how often you shop at ...um... at the grocery store, just in general and maybe like one type of thing or item that you buy most often.

Okay. Whoever wants to go first.

P: My name's P1...um...probably shop...once a week...once every week and a half. And I most often buy tortilla chips.

P: Um. I'm P2. I probably go once or twice a week, yeah. Um...cereal maybe?

P: I'm P3. I probably go...two or three times a week. Um...probably chicken or rice.

P: Um...my name is P4. And I...try to limit my shopping to once a month. Um. It's really hard so sometimes I go, um...maybe, once or twice a month. But I really try to...do really big trips.

P: P5 and...I really go shopping for...around three times per month and uh...the thing I always buy at the grocery store is like yogurt and vegetables.

P: Hi I'm P6; I really go grocery shopping once or twice a week. And I really buy some protein and vegetables.

P: I'm P7. I usually go every week and a half to two weeks. And I usually get things like, milk and eggs and vegetables.

P: My name is P8. I go probably once or twice a week. And I am always buying juice. But other staples, protein, or milk, or whatever to...for recipes.

P: I'm P9 and I go biweekly. And I [inaudible] buying chicken.

P: I'm P10 and I go twice a week and I buy vegetables.

**M: Um. In which stores do y'all usually shop at most often? Do you go to certain companies or brand, and what's your main reason for shopping there?
For everybody.**

P: I shop at Food Lion because it's down the road from where I live.

P: And probably the same too, I also go to Costco that's where I get most of the big bulk items which is why I don't have to go that often.

P: I go to Kroger because it is right next to me.

P: I'll go a split between Aldi and Grand Asia Market because Aldi is cheaper and Grand Asia Market usually has the things that most grocery stores don't.

P: I split between Harris Teeter and Aldi because they're both right next to me and I pick up the things that I can't get at Aldi at Harris Teeter.

P: I usually go to Harris Teeter because it's right down the road and I can trust them more than Food Lion.

P: I'm Harris Teeter too, just cause it's close.

P: I like Harris Teeter and also Trader Joe's.

P: Oh yeah, Trader Joe's. Forgot them.

P: You can't get everything there so I have to go to Harris Teeter.

M: So I'm hearing a lot of convenience, location, maybe cost. You know, from buying in bulk, stores that, you know, offer, you know...when you don't shop as often that will be something to consider. Um, you also mentioned not trusting Food Lion [inaudible] Harris Teeter. Can you kind of elaborate more on that?

P: I don't know there's just...I...no. Harris Teeter just has a more trusting atmosphere I guess.

P: There have also been a number of exposes about food safety at Food Lion. But not Harris Teeter. I don't know if that means they haven't been caught or...they actually do it better.

M: What do you mean by exposés?

P: 20/20.

P: Yeah, whatever the television is showing. Poor co-, you know. Food that's not actually. You know, that's past it's date or whatever. Being spruced up and put out for sale. And just unclean food handling conditions in the back where we can't see it.

M: So, is that an important factor then for all of you also? Is, you know, having trust in the store that you are going to? Like what other factors do you consider when you choose a store?

P: Cleanliness is always going to be a deciding factor but, like, for me and from what it sounded like, most of us, it sounded like more of a convenience thing. And Food Lion is right up the street from my house. So that is kind of where we tend to go to often. But the people in my neighborhood are very uppity about their grocery stores. So I mean I have to say that my Food Lion, I mean it's a really nice Food Lion. And you wouldn't really think that—

P: Yeah, I have no problem with the Food Lion near me. It's just a little bit further away.

P: I mean cleanliness is like number 1. So nobody wants to shop in a gross...grocery store where your feet are sticking to the floor.

M: Could y'all elaborate on what you, I guess what you mean, as far as cleanliness? What sorts of things do you look for?

P: Like if the floors are dirty.

P: Yeah, if there's dust bunnies in the corner.

P: Around produce and meats, I always look for, like if you see people out there. Actually looking at it. You know, if you don't see anybody out there, produce is kinda like there are fruit flies everywhere, I mean obviously they're not selling, taking care of their stuff so...

P: And how it's arranged.

P: Mhm.

P: Well I shop at Aldi; I clearly don't really care about that.

M: P6, how about you? What do you look for when you shop at grocery stores? And you know what kind of things do you look for in terms of cleanliness.

P: Uh...I really go to Costco cause it's cheap and you can buy a bunch of stuff. Cheap price. If I'm not gonna buy a lot of stuff, I will go to Harris Teeter because it's 24 hours and I really like shopping at night.

P: Yeah, that's another thing is Harris Teeter has a lot better hours than Aldi does.

M: So that kind of goes with the convenience, maybe, the...you know.

P: You pay for the convenience.

M: And different costs too. Does anybody shop certain places for sales? That sort of thing.

P: Harris Teeter has super double coupons every couple of months. And everything is like...janky plotting how you get everything for free. And then like, because of Aldi's

business structure, like, they are always really cheaper than everybody else. And so whoever has the best couponing then, cheapness.

M: Okay. Um...great. I'm gonna...unless there are any other thoughts or comments on sort of that train of thought. Before we move on. I also wanna know kind of how often you all prepare meals for yourself and then also for others.

P: For me, it will be like twice or three times a week.

P: I'm probably the same. And I've started...well now we've started on Sundays we'll cook a whole bunch of meals and try to freeze them. So, I guess we don't cook as often now, unless you count throwing it in the oven.

M: Anyone else?

P: I'm the same. I'll cook the protein on Sunday and then rice and vegetables, those are like probably every other day or so.

M: How about you P9?

P: I'll look every two or three days. Cause we are only there for dinner. Everyone else does their own thing.

M: Anyone else?

P: If it's just me, I would be less likely to actually cook. It's a lot of effort for just one person. When my daughter's in the house, then, I'll cook regularly.

M: How about you?

P: Kind of the same thing, cause it's just me. So I try to cook but I don't like to eat the same thing like five days in a row.

P: Yes! The leftovers get old.

P: The leftovers get old. So I tend to go out more than I should probably.

M: P1, you're nodding.

P: Yeah.

P: Yep.

M: So I'm hearing a lot of maybe a couple times a week but preparing a lot of things ahead of time. That's a convenience thing. Also, you know, having, wanting to prepare a lot of meals when it's not just you. Because you've got a lot—it's harder to prepare a lot. Is that

what you were saying?

P: Well it's not harder, it's just less worth it, you know?

P: Yes.

P: It's a lot of effort to feed just me. Whereas the effort seems more worth it if three or four people came to eat a lot of it. And also, the quan—there are so few recipes that are scaled appropriately for one person and they make two, three, four. And when I'm eating something for the third day for lunch in a row as leftovers.

P: It gets old.

P: I'm just tired of it. Or I won't eat it. And then it will sit in my fridge and become a science experiment. And then I'm like well that was a waste, I might as well have gone out.

M: Okay. Great. And then, how many of you, like, what kinds of people do you prepare meals for, that's not just yourself. Does anybody prepare meals for people who are seniors or that are elderly or any babies or infants? Any women who are pregnant or breastfeeding? Shaking heads. How about anybody who's sick or chronically ill? Family members?

P: No.

M: Okay. Alright. Now we are going to transition a little bit and I want to get your opinion on some photos that I'm gonna show you. I'm gonna move the slides along because the little clicker's not working. So, and these photos were taken in different grocery stores. They are not linked to specific stores, we are trying to keep the stores anonymous and all. So, imagine that each photo is something that you are seeing during your shopping trip. And remember that, in this focus group, there's no right or wrong answer. We just wanna hear your thoughts and I know it's hard to gauge things just based on a photo. But you know, the best you can, and you know if you are making any assumptions, explain what those are as well. Okay so. Here's picture 1. So, let's start off. Tell me about what you all see in this photo.

P: God, it reminds me of my mom.

M: Your mom?

P: She loves cottage cheese. That's the first thing that came to mind.

M: That's not the reaction I was expecting.

P: It reminds me of a dining hall.

P: A serve yourself.

P: Yeah, I mean like one of those antipasti bars at a nice grocery store.

P: It looks like maybe a salad bar.

P: My other reaction is, oh my god, why is it always honeydew melon?

P: I've never seen a salad bar that neat and clean though.

P: I was gonna say that.

P: The spoons are...only one looks like it has actually been used. It looks very staged.

P: There are no cottage cheese bits that have strayed off into something else.

P: On the other hand, how long has it been sitting there if no one's been eating it?

M: Very good insight. Would you all consider this situation safe or unsafe in terms of food safety and why or why not?

P: I don't have enough context.

M: Okay.

P: I think what P10 said might pop into my head. Like has this been sitting here all day or did someone just clean there?

P: Well, with the fruits, you can tell if they have been sitting there because they kind of look, [sound effect of gross]. Sitting there for, you know, 12 hours.

P: And I always worry about these self-serve bars. Where, you know, you don't—

P: Did somebody sneeze on them? Did somebody touch them with their fingers?

P: Children could go up there and just be like "oh I want some fruit", and take it. They don't think about, oh, you need to use a utensil.

P: It's a grocery store for me and there's a lot of people in a grocery store all the time. And from all over the place too, so...

P: [sighs] eh...

M: So I'm hearing some concerns over how long the food has been sitting there. Who else has touched it or you know if anybody sneezed on it. But also noticing that it has been kept pretty clean. Maybe not used that often.

P: Yeah, if the picture was more zoomed out, you could see if it had one of those protector things that you see.

P: Protects from sneezing.

M: Okay. Um, so if you were shopping on this particular day, would you purchase the food shown here? And why or why not?

P: Based off of safety, I probably would, but in reality I probably wouldn't because that's just...it's almost like it's the single serving thing. That's for immediate consumption. I don't shop for immediate consumption.

P: I sometimes forget that grocery stores even have options like this. So that's why it's not really something that I go for.

P: If I wanted food now, I would go to a restaurant.

P: Right.

P: If I were already at the grocery store and hungry, I might eat it so I wouldn't buy all of the chips that they have in the store.

P: I'm not sure about this one but like Whole Foods hot bar is really good so I'll go to Whole Foods hot bar and use that as a restaurant. Um...or... I guess yeah only Whole Foods I'll go use their hot bar.

M: So it depends maybe while you are on your shopping trip and what store in particular?

P: I wouldn't be worried that I would get food poisoning from eating this but it just doesn't really fit my consumption pattern.

M: Can you elaborate a little more on why you feel that way? In terms of the, you wouldn't be afraid of getting food poisoning cause of it?

P: I tend to be pretty laissez-faire about that kind of thing. You know like, I pour hand sanitizer, or you know, I think people are way overly afraid of germs and their fellow human beings and whatever so. I'm just generally going to assume that if someone is offering me food to buy. Unless it's obviously got mold or nastiness, I'm going to assume it's okay.

M: Are those, um, I guess what other things do you use to determine whether or not you think that food is safe. I mean you mentioned mold is one of them. Are there other factors that you all consider when you are shopping for food? Different things that you feel might or might not, you know, make it safe or unsafe.

P: If there's samples. If they are not just like. If they have toothpicks or something that's not just, stick your hand in. Or whatever. Or if the people at the deli section are wearing gloves or for something like that. If you see people out there, constantly, bringing stuff out, bringing stuff away and kind of making sure that things are where they should be, then I'll feel better about it. But if there's like no one there and I'm kind of alone, looking around.

M: Okay, so I'm hearing employee sanitation with the gloves and what not. And also, kind of seeing the product being moved, so it's not. So you have a sense of time and how long it's been.

P: Yeah, yeah.

P: I mean you can't really look for a smell but I kind of seek a smell out, if that makes sense. If I'm at, say I'm at the, like around all the meats. If it smells like really like I feel like there's like a bloody smell, like a bad blood smell around old meat, you're like ewww. Like it doesn't really smell fresh over here. When I'm in grocery stores, I kind of look out for that kind of thing. If it smells overly like rotting fruit or like sitting fruit, I'm like okay. Somebody, they haven't cleaned up. And you can look for it; look for it next time you are at the grocery store. Like walk over somewhere and take a really big breath and you'll see what I'm talking about.

M: Okay.

P: You can't really look for smell so...

M: Okay, does anyone else experience that sort of a smell when they are shopping for food or.

P: My sense of smell is not that great unfortunately.

M: There's a couple of other pictures, so we can come back to that idea. But I also wanna ask you all, would you, you said you may or may not purchase this particular kind of food on this day depending on kind of what you were shopping for maybe. But would you purchase anything in like that store department so this is probably I guess, the self-serve area. I guess you can consider that the department? Like the deli. Would you purchase other products shown in that area?

P: Probably. (many agree)

P: It's completely spick and span. (many agree).

M: Okay, and then, would you purchase anything in this particular store? Why or why not? So like anywhere in that?

P: I'm already there to do my shopping.

M: Yeah, that one makes sense.

P: There's nothing in that picture to make me turn around and walk out the door.

M: Okay, and would you do anything in response to seeing this picture? Why or why not?

P: I mean if every grocery store serving place looked like that, I would maybe reconsider. I'm like starting to reconsider the whole immediate food at the grocery store kind of thing, if it is really neat. I'll be like maybe I'll go get some fruit from the fruit bar.

M: Okay, any other thoughts or comments on this photo before we move onto the next one? Okay, there's only four of these. How about this one? Tell me what you see in this photo.

P: I wouldn't shop in there.

P: Dude what??

M: So just tell me what you see. We'll start with that.

P: Oh bones for dogs.

P: I was about to say.

P: [chatter] dog meat festival. Oh my god.

P: I would want that away from the food that I am getting for myself.

P: Yeah, what is it on top of?

P: A freezer case.

P: Oh, that's butcher paper I think.

P: No, no, I mean like down below.

P: There's food underneath it.

P: I think that sounds like a bad plan.

P: Some frozen case with ice yeah.

M: Okay so dog bones on some sort of butcher paper on a freezer case or a case with the food products under it. Would you consider this situation safe or unsafe in terms of food safety? And why or why not?

P: Probably safe.

P: It's safe and unappealing as hell.

P: This isn't like obviously this is not a chain grocery store to me. This has to be like a local butcher or family shop.

M: Can you please elaborate on why you think that?

P: The weighing{?}. And the fact that I can see, like, the sink that is right there.

P: The sign isn't branded.

P: Yeah, it's very at home, at home feel. It could, they very well could be operating up to regulation. Like cleanly standards. But there's also a certain amount of good old at homeness that you get at local shops versus going to a chain. That's why this screams like local to me. It's really not bad. It's totally fine.

P: There not gonna give you meat—bones for your dog that have gone off or something. You know. They have no more interest in poisoning your dog than they do you.

P: And also, if they are open, they probably be US health code stuff or something like that. Like if they weren't, they probably would be closed down pretty quick.

M: Okay.

P: I think people are just used to seeing the dog bones like that, like in a package.

P: I didn't know you could buy dog bones. Obviously you can.

P: Honestly, I'd probably give that to my dogs versus the ones that are in the grocery store. Cause I don't know how long the ones in the grocery store have been sitting and they have been sprayed with preservatives and all this crap. If this thing is from a local butcher, I'm like, this thing probably died yesterday.

M: Alright, well let's talk more about the food that's underneath it. So how about that in terms of food safety.

P: Probably not great that what's on top of it is raw.

P: Although the stuff, it looks like it's canned.

P: Yeah, it's not open food.

P: But still.

P: Well what if the raw food was down in the display case, like they do, I mean, you know.

M: Any other thoughts on perhaps why that food in the case you would say is safe or unsafe? How about you guys back there in the corner?

P: I might be a fridge or a something like that? Because I see some reflection of the light so I guess it's some glass, reflects the light. So I thought it's a fridge.

P: It looks like it's totally covered.

P: Yeah, it's not actually exposed to the—there's no way for the dog bones to wander in there.

P: The ice is my concern, because I will often see news which bacteria is in the ice. And the water the use to make the ice is not clean enough.

P: It's packaged food though, that's in the ice. Not like, stick it in your mouth food. I can't tell what it is. The picture does not look good enough.

P: But I do agree with the ice cause sometimes you really don't know. Even if it is packaged when you open it.

P: Maybe the canning process is longer.

M: So yeah, there's definitely, I hear a question of actually what is under there. Is there open food? Is there enclosed container food? And then, what's the quality of the ice? How clean is that ice, in terms of the bacteria?

P: Okay.

P: If it's frozen, I'm gonna figure probably the bacteria aren't surviving on the ice very well. I mean, ice is you know, cold. They don't like cold. I don't think, but that's why we freeze food.

M: Okay.

P: Some bacteria can live in ice. Listeria.

P: Yeah.

M: Does anybody else know any more about or wanna share anymore about bacteria and ice and...P10 you brought up Listeria do you wanna elaborate more on that?

P: Most recently there was a recall because Listeria is not killed when it is frozen. Most bacteria are but listeria isn't. So that's why there all these food recalls because they can't find the spores and it survives well in cold temperatures.

M: Anyone else heard of any recalls or anything related that...? Okay. And would you purchase any of the food in that case, why or why not?

P: I'm not sure if I would purchase anything in this picture.

P: Not a dog bone?

P: No.

P: I'm a cat person.

P: I would.

P: I probably would too.

P: Cause I've lived abroad and like, I lived in Hong Kong for a while where you have open meat markets in like 100 degree weather. So...this is actually pretty good.

P: And again, this is...it has to be a local shop. So when you shop at places like...there's like a seafood joint right up the street from my house and they have just huge fish sitting out everywhere. And then they have frozen stuff like right there. So something like this is...it's fine.

P: Yeah.

P: It looks like something you would find at like the farmer's market.

P: Yeah.

P: I would not let something like that put me off.

P: Part of my concern is I don't know what type of bones those are.

P: Well, they are for your dog. Does it matter?

P: Yes. Because you aren't supposed to give dogs like chicken bones because they splinter.

P: Yeah, yeah.

P: That would be the scariest chicken ever!

P: That would be a giant chicken.

P: I know it's probably not chicken...

P: But they are a local butcher so you can be like, yeah, what is this? When did it, when was it, you know, when did they slaughter it? Versus when you are in Harris Teeter or Food Lion or something like that, they may not know when. All they know is this is when it got here. You know what I mean. This butcher may know a little bit more about this product. That's why it doesn't really bother me that much, like they're right there so...

M: Okay. Well I'm gonna recap a little bit before we go too far down the road. So I'm hearing a lot of, it's relative in terms of, you know, we were talking about a foreign country versus here and kind of whether or not you might purchase an item is kind of relative based on your personal experiences. Would that be fair to say? And maybe the culture? And also, like locally? You know like shopping at locally owned places or shopping at farmer's markets. Maybe being, you know different in terms of how you view those products versus like a mainstream grocery store. And also, you know, communicating with the butcher or the deli person or whoever's behind the counter at that store. You know, being able to ask them questions and how much they know or don't know about the product. And maybe you know, like you mentioned, those local places, they might know more about the product than someone who is at, you know, at that space at a mainstream grocery store.

P: [impersonating a boy]: I don't know they set it out before my shift started.

M: Okay, okay.

P: I mean, don't get me wrong. There are plenty of people, like the managers in your chain grocery store. They do know what they are talking about. Like actually, like I talk to them. I don't shop that much so they kind of recognize me as the person who's going to come in with the large order. So I do talk to the managers like wherever I do shop, and they have like a very general, a good idea of where their product is coming from. It's just that for some reason, I trust a local butcher and local fishmonger a little bit better...

P: There's usually fewer steps in the chain.

P: Right.

M: Are there any other reasons why you would prefer that? Just, I guess, elaborate a little bit more.

P: Like why I shop locally? It's just something I'm trying to do more.

M: I guess I'm looking more in terms of the trust part.

P: I mean like she said. There's less people in between. The process is shorter. For example, we eat a lot more seafood in my house, we are more pescatarian now. And the people that own that shop, they are in, they work with the actual fisher and they bring that catch in like earlier that morning. So they know exactly when it was caught, and it just came out of the ocean so it's like super fresh. And that's just why I...I mean. But at say at like Harris

Teeter, I can be like, hey man, this truck from this farmer, but it still had to go from the farm, to the slaughter house, to the packaging plant, to the truck, to the Harris Teeter, to the shelf. You know what I mean. Whereas it's like, off the boat, in the truck, in the shop, in my bag.

M: So there's that, um you know—

P: Less people touching it.

M: --in the process. Does anyone else agree or disagree with that?

P: Well I was just thinking, like the local, sometimes like they care more about what they are putting out or what they are, cause it's all coming right back to them. You know what I mean. I'm sure the Harris Teeter manager cares a lot too but it's like this might be, you know, like his family has run this for years or something, you know. And it's kinda coming...I don't know, that's just...pops into my head for the local.

M: P7, you were going to say something?

P: Oh, I don't know, like the Harris Teeter manager could quit, you know, and go to Food Lion, like there's no pop top, there's like a loyalty in there. And there's that human connection with them. Like this is their joy and pride, whereas if you worked and Harris Teeter you could stop and go to Food Lion any day.

M: Okay and kind of going back to what I think P4 made another comment on talking to the managers. Do any of you talk to either the managers of the stores you shop or the person behind the counter? Does anyone ask them questions?

P: All the time.

M: We know you do.

P: Seriously, especially at the produce department, if anybody has dogs, this is how you do it. Go to the produce manager and talk them up because they will give you the produce that looks...that's been bruised or something like that. It's perfect dog food. It's right there and it's like super cheap so you should... (inaudible)

P: It's what they are there for.

P: I think when I buy seafood. I ask them how long should I wait to eat it. Like should I eat it today or can I save it for two days?

M: Okay, so you're asking them about, you know—

P: The fish mainly.

M: Right, the shelf life. Okay. Anyone else?

P: For me, it depends on where it is and what experiences I've already had with asking people things at that store. So I've been to a Harris Teeter by me, and my friend and I were looking for a particular kind of meat and it ended up being way too expensive. So we were trying to get something cheaper and the guy was just downright rude about it. It's like 'well, you can't get anything close. This is it.' So, I won't ask them anything anymore. If I go somewhere else, I'm more likely to ask them a question.

M: Okay, so what other things would you ask or wanna know from those people? Would you ask them any questions about anything else that might tell the freshness or the quality or the food safety or any other—what else would you ask, I guess? Or would you?

P: No.

P: With the other, the picture before I might simply ask, 'how often do you change these fruits?' or 'how long has it been sitting here?' kind of thing.

M: Okay.

P: If they are out of something, you can ask them 'do they have any more?' and then they will tell you 'oh we don't get our shipment til this date and you kind of get an idea of—

M: Kind of when they are getting their products and how long it's good for. Okay. Awesome. And, let's see. Would you purchase anything in this store's department if you were shopping here? I guess that's considered the deli.

P: Could be the meat section.

M: Yeah, or the meat section...Anyone?

P: What would we purchase? From here?

M: From this store...this part of the store. Why or why not?

P: I would purchase the dog bones, but I probably would not purchase the stuff in the refrigerator.

P: I probably wouldn't, not for food safety concerns, but just cause it doesn't really look appealing. So if I'm not really in the mood, it's like meh, I'm just gonna walk out of this department.

M: So aesthetics and whether or not it's a product you actually would buy anyway. Okay. How about this particular store? Why or why not? I mean we've heard some association with it being a local store and wanting to purchase more food from local stores. Aside from that, does anybody else, would they purchase anything from this store this day?

P: I would hope the rest of the store is better lit. It is very dimly lit place. So I would hope that the rest of the store, if it were brighter and it looked cleaner. If it looked a little more appealing, then yes I would. But this place, I can see how it's off putting. So, I mean, this looks like a destination like I'm definitely going to.

P: Yeah, that's okay. I tend to be a purpose driven shopper. If I've gone into a store, it's because I have a purchase to make there. I'm usually going to execute on that unless I have a very strong reason not to.

M: Okay. What might some reasons be that you would not want to shop there?

P: It's hard to tell. Cause it's so yellow, but it kind of looks dirty. But it's kind of hard to tell cause it's just, it's like all the same color.

P: The wall color and the lighting just kind of make me think the rest of the store might have fruit flies somewhere.

P: For me, I would be concerned about what the staff's wearing. Even he's wearing a hat, which is good, but I didn't see him wear an apron or something. There's no tag around his neck. So I cannot tell whether he wears gloves or not.

M: Okay. Some concern about the employee would be hygiene I guess. Whether or not they are wearing gloves or an apron but lighting. A bunch of the lighting would be a factor too. What's so important to you all of you about the lighting? And why is that—

P: So you could actually see—

P: Dim light is harder to evaluate the product—

P: I'm kind of the opposite of the whole group. To me, they are probably putting their money into the food rather than the store. So the store's status doesn't really matter because it's where you are diverting your budget to. So, if they have dimmer lights or they never repainted the white walls or have the big sign that has dairy section that means they are putting that to the food or their employees or something.

M: Okay, the aesthetics may not be as important to you because they might be using that money more for the product as opposed to the overall look of the store. Any other comments or thoughts on that? Would seeing this at a particular store affect your impression of the store or the company? Why or why not? I meant to ask that for the last two pictures.

P: If I saw this in Whole Foods, I would be like 'what in the world happened?' but I mean if it's just like Larry's Raleigh butcher shop, then I would be like, 'okay cool like there's Larry.'

P: If this happened in any chain, I would assume someone wasn't reading their three ring binder.

M: Okay, great. Well, let's—are there any other thoughts or comments on this photo? Anything else anyone wants to share?

P: I wanna know what's in the fridge. That's all I wanna know.

M: I know some of these are a little difficult to see. I guess there are sometimes when you won't even be able to see. I guess we can move to the next question. How about this one? Tell me what you all see in this photo. This is picture 3.

P: Dirty cleaning stuff on top of—

P: Yeah.

P: There's a bucket for a leak.

P: Yeah cause it looks like it's all splattered.

P: Oh.

M: So I hear leak. I hear cleaning. Alright. Would you guys consider this safe or unsafe in terms of food safety?

P: Unsafe.

P: Cause sometimes they hand you, even though the stuff they hand you is wrapped, sometimes they set it on top of the counter. So depending on what's in that pail.

P: For me, either way it's gross. If it's cleaning—let's say it's warm water and cleaning stuff in there, that's gross because you are cleaning. You are putting it on top. Yeah it's all encased but that's still gross. And then too, it's like a leaking roof right on top of the food. That's still gross. All of it is just...

P: Not to mention, anybody with a random elbow could knock that pail over.

P: Or is this...are we assuming this store's actually open or is this just at night and they are cleaning.

P: Well even then!

P: And tomorrow they are gonna wipe the counter off.

P: Even then, they could random elbow; tip the pail over on the food.

P: But that one has a glass thing on it too.

M: So there's concern about what's in the pail, first of all. And then, whether or not, even if it's a chemical or stuff leaking from the ceiling, you know, that potentially spilling on the food. Or setting food on top of that area. Anything else or thoughts that anyone has?

P: If they think that is acceptable, I wonder what else they think is acceptable to do. So if they, like, okay, leaving the bucket on there. Even if it's just water, what other practices do they think is fine which may not actually be sanitary?

P: And this looks more like a chain store to me, so something like this is really, I will not accept that. If I were in Harris Teeter or Whole Foods, I would be like, even Tra— anywhere, I would say like, you have got to be kidding me. Like where's corporate. I would call people and report this.

M: Okay, so you brought up, you know, talking to corporate. So if you were to take action, is that something you would do or anyone else? Would you take action if you saw this or do something?

P: I mean, I would definitely say something to the store manager. Be like that's kind of disgusting and maybe you should know about that. Cause I'm only assuming that the store manager doesn't know about this.

P: I mean if the roof started leaking, you know, calling corporate because the roof started leaking five minutes ago seems like an overreaction.

P: That wouldn't go all the way to the top. Unless the store really was like...

P: Unless, it didn't get resolved. Like if this is my regular grocery store and I come back a week later and roof is still leaking, then I've got a problem.

M: So you would reach out to the manager if this was a ceiling thing as opposed to being a chemical one. That's how I look at the two different situations.

P: No, either way.

M: Someone mentioned, P7 I think you mentioned whether or not the store was open or not.

P: Oh no no.

P: Who? Who?

P: It was me.

M: I'm sorry. Whether or not the store being open, would that affect anyone's perception of this also. If that was before the store was open, off hours—

P: Cause I hate to say you don't necessarily know what they are doing when the store is not open.

P: Right.

P: Well they could always do that and we just never know.

P: Right, which means that it wouldn't be, I wouldn't feel any better about them doing it in off hours, I just wouldn't know about it.

P: So my local Food Lion, the one right up the street. It underwent renovations and they have things like this like sitting out. The store itself is still open but this section was under renovation. Not that they were selling out of the construction zone but the fact that it was so close, kind of wasn't good for me. So I went somewhere else. So something like this, I just...it's a no. Cause I don't wanna see...if there's a leak in the deli. I'm sorry, the whole store needs to take a timeout and get that fixed. Cause I'm not like---

P: It looks like...there's still food in the case. So it's not like, what you were saying, where that section was shut down.

P: It looks like they are still operating.

P: Yeah...

P: That is really gross to me. Like I'm totally fine with the butcher in the previous slide, throwing the dog bone on top...but this is like, c'mon guys.

P: Where's that pail been?

M: [inaudible] whatever is in the pail, [inaudible], getting onto the food. P6 how about you guys back there? Any thoughts? Any concerns or thoughts about what's going on over here?

P: I agree for the most part, I just thought maybe the store just closed because you can see two different light shadows, the one on the top is kind of darker. Even if it's closed this kind of situation—if I saw that, it won't make me feel comfortable.

M: Okay. So would y'all purchase the food in that case?

P: Noo.

M: Would anybody?

P: This is just a—I don't really know the answer to this question but say the seafood is like that? Overnight, is it just left in that or do they take---

P: No, they take it—well at least at the Harris Teeter right down the road from me; they take it in at like 10 o'clock at night. So if I show up late, I'm SOL for fresh meat and seafood.

P: So if that's a concern for me. Let's say if they are cleaning, it's when the store is closed when they are cleaning and it still looks there is all this seafood down below. Like your...process is out of whack here. If you go and clean everything first and then you take your hands, that you just cleaned, that you just scrubbed the floor with, and you are moving fish from one place to another. That's an issue for me.

M: Okay, does anybody else have issue with some more...would you buy anything that's in this department? Not necessarily that but maybe somewhere else in the seafood department?

P: If I never saw this picture before, yeah. It looks like a clean place so I'm sure.

M: How about anywhere else in the store, that store in general?

P: Elsewhere in the store, probably.

M: I kind of wanna go back to that idea of, you know, the person cleaning and then reaching in there and touching the seafood. Can you elaborate on that and why that would be a concern to you?

P: Well, I mean, even if they are wearing gloves, let's say they are wearing cleaning gloves. It's just...it's like what you touch, you know what I mean. My mother always taught me from the...you clean from the cleanest to the dirtiest thing. You're not going to scrub the pot that's covered in tomato sauce. You know what I mean. It's just a process that you go through. So you do the cleanest thing first and then you end with the dirty, which is actually cleaning the place. You move the food first so that your hands are at its cleanest. And then you go from there. So even if you are wearing gloves and you are scrubbing something down and you change your gloves and you go to move food, that's...that process is still kind of ehh...for me.

P: Well for me—

P: Not like you're spraying all over the place. I don't know it's kind of gross.

P: Well for me, it's kind of the same cause even if you are bleaching whatever and then you totally change everything, the bleach is in the air, so when you move the food, you are moving it through that chemical. And that just doesn't sit well with me.

M: Okay. Anyone else? Any thoughts?

P: The little... [inaudible]...gladly... [inaudible]...seafood purchase free. And I think that if they were cleaning at the moment or if that was a leak, that might be a big concern take that and, with the leak or something going on.

M: Let's see. And then, would you all, I think I sort of already asked this, but would you do anything in response to seeing this photo? You mentioned talking to a manager. Would anyone else do anything?

P: I definitely wouldn't buy anything that day.

M: From that section or the whole store or...?

P: I would have to see the rest of the store but just like, when my Food Lion was under renovation, I didn't shop there because I was like, 'I'm just gonna be pissed. Get yourself together, then I'll come back.'

M: Does anyone else agree, disagree?

P: I would shop elsewhere in the store. I mean if—

P: I think I would just avoid that forever. Just kind of go there elsewhere for something.

P: I would probably finish my trip here and then not come back for a while.

P: I would probably, I would finish my trip, not shop here, and then if it were...if the situation had persisted, I probably would stop going to the store.

M: And for those of you who said you wouldn't come back, like ever, or for a while, why would you choose to do that? Elaborate more on that.

P: It's indicative of an attitude that seems unconcerned to a degree that I'm not comfortable with. I mean I would want...that's why I would come back at least once a week later and if they haven't, if they haven't righted the ship. But you know, I would give them a chance to fix it but if they didn't worry about fixing it in a timely manner than I would have serious doubts about attitude towards food safety as a whole.

M: Okay, P10 you're nodding.

P: I would continue going to the store, I just wouldn't buy anything in that area. I don't know. If they fix it or it happens and I don't know it and then go back the next day and they clean it up. If it's unappealing.

M: Okay. Anyone else any thoughts? I'm kind of going back to that idea of this maybe indicating kind of their..., the way they handle different problems or situations in their

store. Does anyone else kind of, would that affect anyone else in terms of shopping in a store?

P: If they left it there, like I agree, it's kind of their attitude towards the whole thing. I would expect to at least...in this particular section. Let's say the seafood manager came up and he was like 'sorry, we found a leak this morning but we're not using this freezer, whatsoever. We're waiting until they come and fix this.' Then I'd be like, 'okay cool.' And I would actually continue to shop in that...in the end, I talk to the managers so...I like to know everything that's happening in my grocery store.

M: So kind of getting that affirmation from the person that works there. Situations being dealt with..

P: Yeah.

P: We know this situation isn't okay, we are taking care of it.

P: Right.

P: Versus like, meh. Yeah, we'll get to it.

P: Yeah, and I mean, outside of the picture, there could be a sign that says something to the effect of 'eh, there's a leak, we're not actually selling seafood today. Please don't try to buy anything, we're not here.'

M: Okay, so having, you know, that store, the management showing, you know, acknowledging the issue and kind of giving their direction, explaining what they are doing. And I guess going along with that, would that affect your impression of the store or the company? Why or why not?

P: It would depend on how they handled it. I can't make a judgment from the picture.

P: How they handled it would affect my opinion, either poorly or neg—negatively or positively. Depends on how they handled it.

M: Okay.

P: Yeah.

M: What if you literally walked in the store and saw this?

P: My reaction is probably, 'oh man, they have a leak in the roof. That sucks for them.' You can't control stuff like that really. That happens to everybody. But it's how you deal with unfortunate things that's important.

P: I agree but then they just put one bucket, they don't put any plastic or towels or...it looks kind of just like 'oh whatever, we'll just put that there.' Depending what that scary pail is, they probably had a better container that they could have put there.

P: It could also just be one terrible employee. Maybe no one else went, like when you had to go tell the manager and he has no clue it was going on. You know. But it could be the same thing, okay, their whole store falls apart.

P: Even if they have one terrible employee, these are the people who are handling my food.

P: I know but I need to have a bit more vigorous hiring practices then.

P: So I wouldn't shop in the seafood section and hope that in the produce section, the employees treat things a little better.

M: Right, so there's the idea of how much do the employees know, what's there, maybe education or training involved in this, is that consistent or...? Okay, are there anymore thoughts or questions on this? Or comments? Not a lot of questions. Okay. Let's move onto the last photo.

P (all): [gasps]

P: Oh god.

P: Why?

M: So tell me what you see in this photo?

P: Big mess. Big big.

P: Ah, that's gross.

P: The floors look dirty too. Cause you can see the grout, over by the fri—or whatever that box thing is. It's white but closer to the door it's darker colored. And then it looks like on the door frame, it just looks dirty. Rusted and paint's chipping off and stuff like that.

P: It's scuffed off.

P: It would be gross without the cockroach.

M: So I hear some dirtiness, the fact there's a bug right there.

P: The tiles that are at the base of the wall are all, scuffed.

M: Okay. And would you consider this situation safe or unsafe in terms of food safety? Why or why not?

P (all): [laughs]

P: I mean to me it looks like it is in the back so that doesn't make me feel better cause if that's where they are keeping the food.

P: I was gonna say, 'the back is where the food comes from.'

M: So about the proximity to where the food is being store and where this is taking place.

P: Kind of going back to the other picture, if that's what they think is okay, what else are they not doing?

P: Yes that. I mean even if this is a bathroom. They are obviously not caring really about keeping things nice and clean.

P: Or even if this is like, the employee break room. That's still not cool.

P: I mean, I've worked in a grocery store so it's...there are roaches there.

P: I feel like there's a lot of stuff you don't know about anyway.

P: You can just ignore that...I mean. You know how people say, 'roaches like clean houses so they are going to come out anyway.' Some people like to lie and say that. But that's still disgusting to me. And even if it was a chain store, if it was a local store, I don't want to see your bugs. We all have them and that's fine. But I don't want to see it.

P: Yeah, I mean bad luck for you if I saw that.

P: How did y'all get a picture of...is that roach dead? How did you get a picture of it?

P: Cause if it's not dead then I'm impressed it sat still.

P: That thing is huge.

P: It's a wood roach, it's not a cockroach.

P: Still, ew.

P: I'm not gonna lie, I killed one of those in my apartment last night.

M: I don't know if I can completely answer that question. Again, just assuming this is what you see, again would you shop in this store on this particular day? Would you buy anything?

P: I would probably buy the packaged food, I might not buy the fresh stuff, but like...that's an impressive roach if it can get into packaged food.

P: Anything that the store couldn't actually interact with.

P: I don't know that I would though.

P: I wouldn't come back.

P: You are also assuming that they are going to remove things that are out of date for packaged food.

P: Well I mean, you just look at the date I mean.. you know.

P: I would be super careful and finish my trip probably. I don't, and then I would not come back.

P: I don't think, I'm in agreement. I don't think I would finish the trip. I probably wouldn't shop there. Because that grosses me like...all the way out. That's one of those...like...I don't even...will starve.

M: What are everyone's concerns with there being like bugs? Like what does that mean to you?

P: There's got to be more somewhere and I don't want to be here when somebody moves that one can.

P: It's not like it's a little one. It's like a dog one.

M: Seeing one as a potential for there to be more.

P: It's not a Harvey Oswald bug. It's not acting alone.

P: If this place sold like produce and stuff. Are the bugs going to be walking all over the fruits and vegetables?

M: So concern that there could be more or that one's could be immediately touching the food.

P: You are fooling nobody with the broom.

P: It's a really old looking broom too.

P: Well that means it gets a whole lot of use.

P: That's really really old.

M: Let's see, would you do anything in response to seeing this?

P: I would probably take a picture and post it on Facebook. Not gonna lie. Oh my god. Look what I just say at grocery store X. Ew.

M: You would share, you know, use social media. Anyone else use social media?

P: No.

P: I would look for their rating. Or if there were a food cleanliness regulation thing somewhere posted somewhere. Like if this were at a restaurant, I would want to know what their grade is immediately. Because if it was an A, I would be like 'somebody is lying here' and that's gross.

P: Well they only check once a year or every six months or something.

P: But I look for those kind of things. Cause when I'm at a restaurant I look for what the grade is and how long it's been since that grade has been there and if it looks like it's been more than like a year—

P: Funny story completely off topic, I was at Starbucks with my daughter and it was really early and we haven't had caffeine and she saw the sanitation rating and she misread it and she's like mom what does sanitation rating 98 mean? I was like yes you are going to get sanitation [inaudible].

M: Would anyone else do anything if they saw this while they were shopping?

P: I would wanna go talk to somebody and say 'you've got a situation in there that you might wanna fix.'

P: Honestly, I probably wouldn't bother with the people in the store because my assumption would be, based on this picture, they're not gonna care.

M: Why do you say that?

P: Well, um, the whole thing looks generally not well taken care of. Sorta dirty and just...the situation that allowed for that bug to be there, it is probably not an anomaly. It's not like you are in some spotless place and then all of a sudden, you see this completely out of place looking bug and you have the feeling you are going to tell someone and they are going to be like 'oh my god, no, really' and mobilize half the store to hunt down the bug, you know? I just feel like telling someone would be like 'oh I saw a bug and bleh.' And they would be like 'okay.'

P: 'Oh that's Steve.'

P: Yeah.

M: You guys are funny.

P: I'm not sure I would bother with the people either because I saw a bug in X department, that bug's not there anymore and it's just gone. So they probably know that the bugs exist.

M: If you see a bug around the store, chances are the employees already know about it.

P: Either they already know or they don't care or both.

P: I would go talk to someone. Like I understand when they're receiving shipments, the doors will probably be open more and I don't know, a bug could just fly in and sometimes like...I've seen birds fly into grocery stores before so it's just like, it just happens so it's just like they aren't aware. Maybe it just is kind of like, it just could've happened.

P: Right, it's not just the bug, it's the whole—

P: Cause like, I went to an Aldi once. And they had a...in the produce section and they had just a box of moldy oranges and I know like they probably just didn't see it. It's kind of like the bug where it was like 'okay, you have a box there' and they are like 'oh we didn't see that'.

M: Or you know, employees don't notice they were there either. So it sounds like context also matters. So P8 you were saying like, it depends on what...like the whole picture.

P: They probably need to get someone to do like a pesticide guy. Cause most of the apartments do there where every month they come out and they spray the houses or they probably don't get their store sprayed too often.

M: What about...does anybody else have any other thoughts on grocery stores using pesticides to spray and control bugs?

P: I surely hope they are having exterminators out.

P: As long as it's on the outside.

M: Okay. As opposed to inside.

P: Can you exterminate inside? I mean I know most of the time you just go outside and like, spray the perimeter and that's just it.

P: Well, my exterminator comes in and puts it down at the corners of the rooms.

P: I've never went inside. Mine's always outside.

M: Would that affect anyone's perception of—

P: I wouldn't want them coming inside near my produce and spraying all that.

M: Okay.

P: Maybe they do it, I don't know.

P: I'm hoping that they store everything away, like they remove everything and put it all away. If not that's really gross.

P: That's why you wash your produce when you get it.

M: Tell us more about, so you wash your produce and tell us more about what you do and why you choose to do that.

P: I can't control what other people other than me do and I don't know what they've been doing so...all I can do is do what I can do to make sure that my food is as safe as possible so...you know, I wash anything before I cook it. That's just what you do.

P: I've had a really bad reaction to some pesticide that was on grapes and my whole face broke out and I thought that I was having a really bad allergic reaction so I wash everything. And only buy organic grapes. Cause I had washed them and they still smelled like chemicals. I have poor nose senses so I didn't realize so...

M: Does anyone else wash any foods?

P: Yes.

M: What foods do y'all wash?

P: Anything that I eat the skin of.

P: Yeah. Anything that...usually whatever's not in a package.

P: Yeah. Any...let's see. I guess I don't wash steak but—

P: But you can wash chicken though.

P: I do wash chicken.

M: Does anybody else wash anything other than produce?

P: Nah, even if it's in a package, I'll still wash.

P: I wash strawberries.

M: Berries? Okay. How about you P10?

P: Anything that I consume raw...herbs. [inaudible].

P: No. Right, right.

P: I do wipe the tops off on canned foods. And that might just be something that I kind of do absent mindedly but I was thinking about like, cooking process. That is something I look for when I'm shopping for food too. I don't, I try not to do a lot of canned food but I do look at the actual can itself and I know dented doesn't really matter—

M: Unless it's at the top—

P: I look for punctures and stuff like that. Whenever I'm cutting or opening a can, it falls in anyway so I wipe off the top. So I do clean, maybe, okay I clean everything.

M: Okay. I guess going back to this photo. I guess we sort of touched on this but just to formally ask. Would you see...would seeing this at a particular store affect your impression of the store or company?

P: Talk about a pro forma question.

P: Yes.

P: The chipped paint on the door doesn't bother me too much because that's gonna happen especially if you're pushing carts all over the place. The grout is a...that is kind of gross. I understand grout stains but...bleach is a thing. We should all be using it.

P: It's not all of the ground that's dirty.

P: Even, like you can see the tile on the border—

P: It's got white streaks on it. Even if the grout's not dirty, the tiles look dirty.

P: I would definitely...I would say something to them. Be like, 'hey, maybe, step it up a little bit.' And then if they didn't, I just wouldn't return.

P: I don't think I would make that much effort. There are so many grocery stores to choose from, you know, it's like, I'm not going to fight a crusade to have my local step up its act. I'm just gonna find somebody else that does.

P: Yeah.

M: So, if there's not an issue about one store...you know, not being necessarily loyal to that store but being willing to go somewhere else and find some place that you feel does a better job.

P: I have four grocery stores within a mile of my house. I can be picky.

M: Do other people agree?

P: I'm loyal to certain...I'm actually loyal to stores but not to companies. Like I like the...I like two...there are two Harris Teeters that I like and I only like my...like the Food Lion that's closest to my...so I won't go anywhere else. Like, let's say the Trader Joe's on Wake Forest has a roach problem. I am probably not going to drive all the way to Cary. I will only go to the Trader Joe's on Wake Forest. But that's just a convenience thing.

M: Okay. But you are talking about being loyal to certain stores but not the company. Is that more of a convenience or is that—

P: No, there are some terrible Food Lions out there and I'm sorry if anybody loves the Food Lion on Western Boulevard but that one can just go—

P: Exactly.

P: It can die in a fire.

P: So that's the Food Lion that I prefer Harris Teeter to.

P: Oh my god.

P: That one is terrible.

P: It's so gross.

P: Like the Food Lion that's like on Raleigh Boulevard that's close to my house. There's some great people in that store so I will go to that one—

P: The Food Lion on Maynard near my house is acceptable as well.

P: Yeah. There's certain—

M: So is it like the people that are—

P: It is the people—

M: —in the store or anything else about the store.

P: Yeah and the produce manager at the Harris Teeter in North Hills, I like him because he saves me all of the bananas. My dogs love bananas. So he will pull bananas to the side close to the end of the month, knowing that I am gonna come in and buy all of that produce. Whereas the produce manager at the Harris Teeter in Cameron Village like, he's just terrible and he knows I'm coming. And he won't ever save me produce. So I don't like him.

M: P9, you were going to say something earlier.

P: I forgot.

M: Please remember because it's important. Everything is important.

P: I'm really lazy when it comes to where I go grocery shopping. Cause I love the Harris Teeter that's up the street from me. But it's like a mile past the Kroger. And since I live by myself and have my dog home and he spends entirely too much time alone, I don't like taking extra time to get to the Harris Teeter. So I'll just go to the Kroger and get whatever they have, unless it's a particularly disgusting day in which I will—

M: So in general, it sounds like convenience and then probably cost are like two things. Then also, you know, any relationship that you have with the employees at the store. Okay. Alright, we're done with the pictures and I just have a couple more questions and then we'll wrap up. So kind of transitioning, so we talked a little about food safety and some different ideas of what you would consider safe and unsafe. But if you could come up with a definition for food safety, what would it be? Everybody has to answer.

P: Something that would prevent your food from getting bacteria and getting you sick.

P: I would just say food safety physical, chemical, biological, and personal hygiene. Those four aspects.

M: So physical, chemical, biological, and personal hygiene. Okay, P6.

P: Edible.

M: Could you say that again, I'm sorry?

P: Edible.

M: Edible. Okay, one word. Got it.

P: Clean and fresh.

P: Has to pass the five sense test, I guess. Like if it looks good, smells good, I guess not hear good—

P: Well, melons sound.

P: Okay, you're right. The test of touching it. Is that all the five senses? As long as it looks—the five senses is pleasing, I guess it's like, yeah.

M: Okay. Pleasing the five senses. How about you P9?

P: The appearance of it is very appealing, like, clean or not clean, if you can tell it's going better.

M: Okay, P10?

P: Proper management would be one.

M: How about you P1?

P: I think if I can eat it without getting sick and like depending on what it is, after cooking or precooking or whatever. Like I'm not going to eat steak and...raw...and be like 'oh I got sick' that's poor food safety—

P: Well, steak tartare—

P: —but like, apples. I should be able to eat apples and not get sick.

M: Okay. How about you P2?

P: I was thinking like as an employee that deals with the food, kind of like, okay, if you had to eat this yourself from how you're dealing with it, would you eat it yourself? Kind of like treat it the way you want to be treated kind of thing.

P: Knowing what you know—

P: Knowing you saw that roach, would you eat...yeah.

M: Okay, interesting. I hear a lot of the appearance and the...using your senses. Also, kind of maybe trusting the judgement of someone who knows the food or how it was handled or you know, knows what then you do, perhaps, about it. Whether or not, it's going to make you sick, bacteria.

P: Maybe, the regulation of the whole process too. Because if you're a disgusting slaughterhouse, I don't want you butchering my cows for my steak. That's gross. Or if you're a nasty canning place, I don't want you canning my food and then putting it on the shelves and then, you know, cause it all starts somewhere so I think it needs to be regulated from the very beginning all the way to the end.

M: Everybody in the process, kind of.

P: I guess, rules, state and national rules, if I go to the deli and I see their sink in their bathroom and it doesn't have the employees must wash hands, then it's kind of like, that's a violation if you don't have that sign up. So it's like, what else are they doing?

M: Right, so following those state, federal regulations. Are those things that you all would trust? State and government regulations?—Alright. In light of anything and everything that we've discussed in regards to food safety in grocery stores, is there anything else that anyone wants to comment on or anything that we missed or anything that you want to clarify, any other thoughts?

P: Any sort of news story. I guess I was thinking about that. Cause I guess they saw that--I don't really shop at Whole Foods that much and then, [inaudible] one of their facilities when they produce some of their pa--, I don't know what kind of--like meals or some hot thing, they have so many violations but they [inaudible]--that's why I don't shop there. [inaudible] validation for that ticket. Those types of things for me, when it comes to food safety.

M: Are other people influenced by what they see in media, hear, read?

P: I don't watch enough tv to catch it most of the time. It has to be a total public relations disaster for it to get through to me.

M: So seeing it on multiple media outlets and not just television or just--

P: Yeah, if WRAL runs some local exposé, [whispers] I'm not gonna catch it.

M: Okay. Anybody else? Thoughts on that? Has anybody seen any recent things on the media, in terms of food safety?

P: I mean you always hear the...I hate it when it's...especially when it's produce and it's like ahhhh there's no more spinach.

P: Why the spinach? Why E. coli, like why?

M: Do you remember what it was talking about with the spinach?

P: I can't remember, it was...I think it was some time ago. I don't know what's under, like now, what is being recalled. I think it's a lot more of the packaged stuff is. And I think that's because they were so many, there was so much going on with the produce. Like, a lot of farmers and all those regulations got stepped up and so maybe they aren't looking so much at packaged food now so that things like, whatever happened at Whole Foods, like that violation, I just wish that they fixed it all, like across the board. Like can we please just have healthy, safe food to eat, without having to worry about 6 inch roaches running across the floor. So I really don't think that's too much to ask.

M: So you're saying, maybe they are focusing more on the farmer's regulations as opposed to--

P: It just seems, the spotlight just seems to go from frozen packaged food to oh no, now it's baby food, oh no now it's produce, now it's eggs. Know what I mean. And it's like if you keep seeing these problems popping up, why don't you just take a step back and look at the bigger picture and see that maybe--

P: Because there is neither the money, nor the will for proper enforcement of existing regulations.

P: I mean that just seems kinda crazy, you know what I mean. Like if obviously--

P: Regulations are bad for business.

P: --that's definitely it I guess.

M: Does anyone else have thoughts on that?

P: I keep hearing that supermarket chains, like you go to Harris Teeter, there's a recall list. But I'll shop a lot at Grand Asia and I've never seen a recall there. And I know they are probably under the same regulations and everything, like there's a recall but the products are just different so--

P: They're not buying from large business corporations.

P: --so I'll constantly hear, Food Lion's products are recalled. Or when Blue Bunny ice cream was getting recalled. So it seems to happen to these chains. But like local, smaller places, it isn't an issue.

M: So seeing more food recalls or outbreaks related to--

P: They don't save as much money cutting corners as large businesses do.

M: --like related to larger brands and products as opposed to smaller companies, is that what y'all are saying?

P: Yeah cause like Harris Teeter, you can have like fifteen different types of mac and cheese but if you go to Aldi, it's like three products for mac and cheese. So their products, they have less variety of products but their products are, I feel like, safer.

M: Okay. So having a smaller variety maybe--

P: Aldi off-brand quality is exquisite.

M: --so would you say having a, less of a variety is maybe safer.

P: Yeah, you don't have to get in contact with too many companies. That whole connection, it goes from the slaughterhouse from the farm to the packaging. It's smaller. Like you know the three companies versus fifteen people to talk to.

M: Okay so that idea of the food chain--

P: Well like, Kraft has like 20 billion different products, where like, one store might just like, one...pasta company might just...all they do is pasta. So they can be better focused on chain of command and how it's produced and everything.

M: Do other people agree or disagree with kind of that idea where in a larger company maybe that has more products to be safer or not as safe?

P: I think it depends, like the variety of those products. So if they are just doing fifteen different kinds of macaroni and cheese, hopefully they are really good at making macaroni and cheese but if they are making macaroni and cheese, cotton balls, and toilet paper, and stereos, then I would be a lot more concerned.

M: So maybe a company that focuses on smaller or particular type of product then...

P: But that is all by chance. I think bacteria is everywhere and I think it just happens randomly. But if you were where it was, would we have so many recalls?

P: I'm really big into microbiology and food science, cause like even a plant that processed sunflower seeds. Like recently it was sunflower seeds. There was this one plant that just focused on sunflower seeds had listeria and that's why all these different products that are being recalled, I think like Special K bars, regular sunflower seeds, anything that contained sunflower seeds was recalled, it's not--cause they ship it out to these other companies that just want sunflowers. So I think it's just by luck.

M: Do people agree, disagree? So you know, there's that risk that's out there and it might just be a bad day or there's a chance that it's always there. Alright, any other thoughts or comments or...? Okay. Well, that pretty much wraps things up. Let's see, please feel free to ask any questions about this. I'm going to let M2 just quickly summarize the basics of what we discussed today. Putting her on the spot.

M2: So we talked about where you shop and had lots of very...some people shop a lot, some people shop a little. You buy a lot of different types of food, you shop at lots of different places. But a lot because of convenience and price and maybe, loyalty to them. You prepare food, a lot of you said, it's harder to cook for yourself but, for you know, different amounts of time, you don't have any high risk populations. In the first picture, you said it was a serve yourself bar, maybe like a dining hall or salad bar. You said it looked really neat but how long that could have been there is maybe an issue. For risk factor you wanna know more about how long it's been there, what's touched it, because lots of people are in grocery stores. Some...people wouldn't buy it because of safety but maybe not because you

guys don't buy immediate consumption foods. It depends on the nature of your shopping trip. You said the department looks clean so you would purchase from there if there's nothing that would make you walk out of the store. You wouldn't take any action based on that. The second picture which was the dog bones, you said it looked like dog bones on butcher paper. The frozen products underneath, it didn't look like a chain store. You said it might be safe, might not be safe but it is definitely unappealing. It could be unsafe because of the raw products depending on what that is. Some would purchase from that department, some would not. If you would purchase, it's probably because it's local and you trust that place. If not, it might be because it's not labelled. About buying, you wouldn't buy the stuff below because it's not appealing. If the rest of the store is more appealing, you might buy there. It might affect the image if it's a well-known chain but not if it's a local place. The third picture which was the cleaning supplies or the leak or whatever, you said it might be unsafe because you don't know what that is in that pail. It could spill on food or get on food. It looks more like a chain, so what else would they let slide. There could be a contamination with cleaning and then touching the food. For action, you tell store manager, but you would definitely want to see it resolved in a timely manner. You might not shop there, definitely not in the department, may shop elsewhere in the store but some may not come back. It might give you a negative impression cause they might seem unconcerned about food safety, if they don't acknowledge it. But if they acknowledge it and have the sign, that maybe would give you a positive impression, which is them taking care of things. Picture number 4, which is that one, we said we saw a big bug, dirty floors, even the brim looks worn. The safety depends on the proximity to the food but no matter where it is, it's gross and there must be more bugs where that came from. In terms of buying, you probably wouldn't buy fresh food but might buy packaged food. You might finish the trip but some wouldn't come back. That would depend on the whole picture. Action, some would share on social media, some would talk to employees, some wouldn't bother talking to employees, and some would need to look at the bigger picture to take action. We talked about they may need pest control. Then we talked about washing foods. The impression of this store was more so, the negative impression was more so about the dirt than the bugs. We also said that impression might depend on the loyalty to the store. Our definition of food safety included biological hygiene, chemical hygiene, physical hygiene, if it looks and smells, and everything, clean. If you can eat it without getting sick. If the food is properly managed from start to finish. If you trust the employees and you're following all regulations. And then we talked about news stories and how the spotlight can change. We talked about recalls and how it can be related to brands and how it might just all be by chance.

M: Sound good. Great! Well thank you all so much for being here and I've got your gift cards right here. So just come see me on your way out and feel free to

M2: Don't they need to fill out this.

M: --oh sorry. There is one more form. Sorry. We do have one more form. This is just kind of general demographics form. And it's front and back. Just take a couple minutes to pass it around and come bring it to me when you are done and exchange it for a gift card.