

Script 3 Primo Restaurant

FAITH LAPIDUS: It is another busy day at Primo Family Restaurant -- a popular dining spot in Alexandria, Virginia for more than twenty-five years. C.A. Savoy says he does not like the atmosphere or food at the chain restaurants. Instead, he enjoys eating at Primo's.

C.A. SAVOY: "Everything in here is home cooking. It's all fresh food and delicious."
Server Tina Mitrakas has worked at Primo's since it opened.

TINA MITRAKAS: "I like the customers. Everybody is friendly. I like the people I work with. It's like my second home."

Lynne Sepple's son Nick is here, celebrating his birthday.

LYNNE SEPPLE: "My son has been here since he was six days old. He's been here once a week since then and now he's 10."

CHRISTOPHER CRUISE: Mary Wise often stops by Primo's after work. She plays the role of Martha Washington, wife of the first United States president, at nearby Mount Vernon. It is the home and property where George and Martha Washington once lived. Ms. Wise says enjoys Primo's because it feels comfortable.

MARY WISE: "It is a place where you can consistently have good food, not too expensive. You know you're never going to be confronted with something that's a surprise. I think people like that."

Another appeal, she says, is owner Jim Nicopoulos.

JIM NICOPOULOS: "I like to get involved with my clients. I find out about them. I touch them. I have to be involved with my customers and my staff at the same time."

Everyone calls him Jimmy, including Mr. Savoy and his wife, who are long-time customers.

C.A. SAVOY: "We've become part of Jimmy's family now. He refers to Joyce and I as his mother and father."

FAITH LAPIDUS: Jimmy bought Primo Family Restaurant five years ago. It is truly a family business - from the photos on the wall, to the dining area, where his father-in-law seats patrons. And in the kitchen, Jimmy's cousin Spiro Routoulas prepares Greek specialties.

SPIRO ROUTOULAS: "He's a funny guy. He comes inside the kitchen and tastes what I make. Oh, it's fun."

JIM NICOPOULOS: "It's quality control, Greek-style."

Besides the food and friendliness, Jimmy says Primo's has another appeal over the chain restaurants.

JIMMY NICOPOULOS: "Chain restaurants have to go through a process of buying their food from large industries and distributors. We can get our produce local and our meats."

CHRISTOPHER CRUISE: Elizabeth Bessel notices the difference and stays away from the nearby chains.

ELIZABETH BESSEL: "I don't find the food to be that great. When I eat here, Jimmy will come to the table and tell us that he got that produce from somebody's farm."

Jimmy says he thinks there is room in the neighborhood for both family and chain restaurants. His customers agree.

C.A. SAVOY: "It's been here for twenty-five years and I see it being here for twenty-five more years."