



Conversations w/Tino

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| | Isleta Resort & Casino |
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Tino Magnatta: Welcome to another episode of [inaudible 00:00:26] Radio, and I'm Tino Magnatta, and tonight I have the pleasure of having a very, very interesting person on our show. Welcome to the show, Adrianna Jiron. How are you?

Adrianna Jiron: Hi, I'm good, Tino. How are you?

Tino Magnatta: Good, good, good. So tell us a little bit about yourself; where you're from, where you grew up, how life was growing up, how your parents were. Because I knew you grew on the res, right?

Adrianna Jiron: I did. I did. I was born in Albuquerque. I am from the Pueblo [inaudible 00:00:57] here, which is about south of Albuquerque, it's about 15 miles south. I grew up with a mixed family. I had a stepdad and I had two brothers in my house, half-brothers, and that was a lot of fun. It was a blessing in disguise, I guess. My parents were very hard workers. They instilled a really, really strong work ethic. Family came first; our culture, our traditions, so it was really a good experience living that kind of life on the res, growing up on the res. It was pretty awesome.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. You said your parents worked very hard, and your stepdad was a firefighter, right?

Adrianna Jiron: He was, uh huh. He worked in firefighting. He did firefighting for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Albuquerque. They had to commute both to Albuquerque because at that time, there wasn't gaming here, so they both had to commute. My mom worked for the government; she's worked for the government for quite a while. And that's basically what they did. They went back and forth, and commuted; and us kids went to school, came home, did our chores, made dinner, had dinner we did for our parents, and just kind of lived a simple life, if you will.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, and you said, "We didn't really know that we were poor." What did you mean by that?

Adrianna Jiron: No, we didn't know. I mean, as kids we were pretty ... we had everything we wanted. We had friends, we had family, we had food on our table, we had clothes on our back, but I never really knew that my parents struggled. It wasn't until later when I grew up and I got older that they really had a hard time, and I never knew that at a kid, and I don't think my brothers did, either. So it's just something that we ... our parents kind of I guess hid from us, because we had everything we wanted.

The neighborhood kids would come over and play in our yard. We'd play baseball until the light on the road went on, and at that time it was time for everybody to go home. Like I said, we didn't know that we went without until we got a lot older. Our parents never made us feel like we were missing out on anything. We were always allowed to play with the other kids, and go to parties, but we never really knew that our parents struggled.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, it was like that was the way it was, right?

Adrianna Jiron: Yeah. And to me, that was normal, that was my life, that was what we did. We came home and we'd play baseball, and we rode bike and rode down the ditch bank, and played with the neighborhood kids, and it was safe, and that was my world. That was what we did.

Tino Magnatta: When did gaming come along?

Adrianna Jiron: Ooh, I don't remember the year exactly, but I was about 14-years old; 14, maybe 15 when gaming came. And I only knew that it was here because my mom worked in the pull tab trailer that we had set out of our bingo hall. They built us a bingo hall, and it was actually a tent, so it was one of those kind of pop up things.

In the beginning, the bingo was run by British American Bingo, and like I said, I didn't know that we went without. But my mom did work two jobs; so she worked at the government and she worked in the little pull tab trailer to kind of set me up to hopefully become successful one day. She worked the two jobs so that way she'd earn enough money for me to, to send me to a private school in Santa Fe, New Mexico, which is about an hour and a half north of where we're at off the reservation. It was a good little deal. We had bingo and pull tabs, and that was kind of how New Mexico broke in, obviously, to the gaming business.

Tino Magnatta: What was it like when gaming came in? How did you guys react to that, and what were people's feelings about it?

Adrianna Jiron: In the beginning, there was a lot of pushback because it was new. No one knew what was going to happen. No one knew how it was going to run. Noone who was going to run it, where were we going to get the money to start it. Noone knew. It was all brand new to us, and in my native culture, it's natural to not really trust a whole lot, especially when it came to money and expenses. So it was kind of, it was a little scary.

I was curious because like I said, my mom, she worked in the pull tab trailer and I was always like, "Oh, what are those? What do they do? What do you do with them? How do they work? How do you win? Do you know what times they're going to win?" So I've always had a curiosity when it came to the gaming side of it, so her, I guess, kind of starting into it just kind of let me more into it, and me wanting to learn more about what it was and what it had to offer.

Tino Magnatta: When the bingo days were there, did you start seeing some difference in the community from the revenue from the bingo?

Adrianna Jiron: We did. Things were changing, times were changing. After the bingo, once bingo progressed and it caught on, they went ahead and they built us a bingo hall, and that building is still there today. It's a really nice, nice, huge bingo area. We use

it now as our [inaudible 00:07:14] connection here for the resort and casino, and that's basically what we use it for. But everything started changing within the community. Things were getting better. Programs were starting to develop because we had this gaming revenue that went back to the tribes, or to the tribe, I should say. So they started doing home improvements, more programs, more books for the schools; just different things through the community that I definitely saw a change in it, and I was relatively young.

Tino Magnatta: Things started changing. You could see the beginnings of it. Now your parents really, really looked out for you; so much so that your mom worked, your mom and dad worked extra hard to send you to private school, right?

Adrianna Jiron: Yeah, they did. They both worked, my mom especially. She's always been a huge supporter of mine. I mean, I'm glad, because if she didn't push me, I don't know who would have. Like is said, she just kind of [crosstalk 00:08:26] my curiosity in gaming.

Tino Magnatta: At the time, you hated it, right?

Adrianna Jiron: I didn't like the private school? No. It was in Santa Fe, which was about an hour and a half-

Tino Magnatta: Now why is that? Why was that?

Adrianna Jiron: It was the distance, I think. There were a number of things that I think it kind of wrapped up into. One was the distance, because it was taking me away from my friends; away from my little bubble; away from my res; away from the world that I had lived in, but I didn't know-

Tino Magnatta: Your safety net.

Adrianna Jiron: Huh?

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, your safety net, your safety net.

Adrianna Jiron: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. I was being kind of plucked out of my ordinary and being thrown into the un-ordinary for me at the time, and I didn't like it. I resented my parents, and I was upset, and I was angry, and I would call them on a daily basis begging them to come pick me up, and I didn't want to stay there because it was a boarding school; it was away from home.

I didn't know anybody. I didn't have any connections. I was basically on my own, and I didn't like it. And it was a Catholic education, and that wasn't easy by far. It forced me to change, and I didn't realize at the time that it was going to be a good change because I kind of had to open myself up. I needed to make new friends. I needed to change my thought processes. There were other students there from different tribes, different nationalities, and that was completely out

of my realm because I had gone to the elementary school here in [inaudible 00:10:07] on the reservation, so that was completely different. I had to change; for the better, I think, I hope. And now I'm glad.

I'm glad that my parents sent me there, and I'm glad that they worked hard. And I knew that they were working hard, and I knew that my mom was working another job and I didn't want to waste her money. I didn't want to be a disappointment, so I pushed myself even more with the help of my parents. So being there just taught me a lot of, it gave me a lot of gifts, and I'm eternally grateful for that because without it, I don't know where I would be, to tell you the truth.

Tino Magnatta: So you think that because it was a boarding school and it took you out of your bubble, it actually helped you be independent, right?

Adrianna Jiron: Absolutely. I was on my own. I had to learn how to be on my own, and that was something I didn't know how to do because I always had my friends, I always had my cousins, I always had my aunts, my uncles, my parents; everybody was there around me all the time and I was used to that. In being in Santa Fe away from everybody, that was really awkward for me. I didn't know anybody, I didn't have any friends at this school, I didn't know any of the teachers, I had to live there, so that was difficult for me in the beginning.

But I had to interact with other students. I had to be someone different than what I was used to. But I'm really glad I did it. I've developed a lot of really long-lasting friendships, and I'm still really good friends with people that I went to high school with because I was in such a small, small class.

Tino Magnatta: And what was the, when you arrived at the school and you started into it, what was the, what were the things that you were amazed about the most? It was the first time you had been out, right?

Adrianna Jiron: Right, absolutely. I was amazed at how small it was, and how it was more personalized. The discipline was one of the other things that honestly kind of freaked me out because I didn't have that in my other school's setting. But being in a Catholic school, being taught by a-

Tino Magnatta: When you say discipline, what are you talking about? What kind of stuff?

Adrianna Jiron: Discipline? I mean education wise, focus wise; schooling, learning; just kind of get in there and not taking advantage, and listening, paying attention, doing my work, turning it in, getting it done; just kind of everything. At that point, I was like well, I guess it's not all about me, because up until that point it was. But then, I didn't want to let my parents down, I didn't want to let anybody else down, and I didn't want to let myself down, so I kind of had to change my thought process and quit being so spoiled.

I didn't really have a whole lot of discipline. I wasn't a bad kid or anything, but I probably could have used some discipline when I was growing up until I got sent to the school. And like I said, I had to really buckle down and hit the books, I mean because there was nothing else for me to do there. So I had to focus on my studies, and that's exactly what I did.

Tino Magnatta: It was a Catholic school, right?

Adrianna Jiron: Correct, mm-hmm (affirmative).

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. That's good. I went to Catholic school, too. Great place and a lot of great people there.

Adrianna Jiron: Absolutely.

Tino Magnatta: You talked a lot about your discipline and focus, right?

Adrianna Jiron: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Tino Magnatta: There's a lot of people out there that are going to be wondering, and they'll think what do you mean by that. Explain that a little further, the discipline, the focus. Because it's something that you've brought up a few times in the conversations that we've had.

Adrianna Jiron: When I say discipline and focus, I mean I wasn't a bad kid before the Catholic school; don't get me wrong. But I think I felt more that I needed to work harder because I knew that, one, this schooling wasn't inexpensive by far. I knew that my mom was working two jobs to send me here. I knew that the other kids in my community weren't in the same boat that I was; I knew that. And so I needed to be focused, I needed to have that discipline to get my schoolwork done because I didn't have anybody pushing me anymore. I didn't have anybody to say, "Adrianna, is your homework done? Can I see it? Let me take a look at it. You'd better turn it in." There was no one ... I was kind of independent overnight, and that took a lot because I was spoiled. Everything has always been done for me, and I really didn't even learn to do my laundry until I went to college because my parents did everything for me.

And like I said, I didn't know that we went without. But I really focused on that to be successful. My mind was set that I wanted to go to college, but I also knew that I needed to follow these steps to get there. So that's what I mean by the focus and the discipline, because I had to focus. I had to discipline myself because no one was there to poke me and prod me, and nag at me and say, "Hey, you need to do this. Get your homework done." I didn't have that. I was kind of on my own and it was up to me; either I was going to sink or I was going to swim, and I swam.

Tino Magnatta: That's cool. What happened after you graduated?

Adrianna Jiron: I graduated. I had learned a few things about myself. In my opinion, I was less selfish, realizing that everything's not always about me, and what I want, and how I want to do it. I was, at that point I was disciplined, I was driven. I knew what I wanted. I knew what I needed to do to get there, and I just kind of ... I learned to appreciate things. Like I said, I was very spoiled, I was always given everything until I was on my own. And then nothing was handed to me anymore, and I was like, oh, this isn't good. But I learned.

It was a very good lesson learned, and I learned to appreciate everything; each and every thing from the sun up to sundown, to the dirt on the ground, to the people that I met, to the birds in the trees, to the person that was teaching me how to speak French. I learned to appreciate everything and to not take everything for granted like I felt like I had been previously.

I graduated and I went to New Mexico State for a little while. And then my grandfather had passed away, so I came back home and I lived with my grandmother for a while so she wouldn't be by herself. And I thought, you know what, I'm going to go apply for a job at the casino. And at that time, it was still just bingo, but they had also implemented keno, so that's kind of ... I started as a keno runner and then I just kind of progressed from there.

My very first job in the casino was as a keno runner, and I think it was called the [inaudible 00:18:27] Bingo Palace at the time. Gaming became my forte, and I fell in love with it, and here I am.

Tino Magnatta: You said that finance is one of your stronger points, right? You like finance.

Adrianna Jiron: Mm-hmm (affirmative), I do. I like finance a lot. I thought that was the route that I was going to take. I mean, don't get me wrong. Every aspect of gaming involves finances in some way, fashion, or form. I started in keno, and then the very next day, or day 91 because they had you on a probationary period, I was invited to transfer into the vault. And back then, you didn't really have to go through a process or change paperwork, or whatever; they just kind of moved you.

And so I moved into the vault, and then after that I started moving up quickly. Then I was in the vault; I became a supervisor in the cage. At that time, that was when we got Class II gaming, so we had slot machines. Gosh, what else happened since then? From there, we had a new building built, which is our current sort of resort and casino, and then they gave us everything. We had table games, we had keno, we had Class II and Class III gaming. We didn't have any more pull tabs. I say that that time in the cage I was a shift manager, and then I was an interim cage manager, but then there were a lot of issues I think within the tribe and the casino, and the management at the time. And so I just thought this isn't for me right now.

I was here for nine years when I left. So I ended up leaving; decided to go back to school. I worked and traveled a little bit. I worked in Miami, worked in Kansas City, and then had my first son, and I decided I really need to get serious now. I have a child to take care of. And I decided I'm going to UNLV and finish my schooling in gaming, and that's exactly what I did.

Tino Magnatta: Wow. Great story. From the time that you went to high school to when you got out of university, what kind of person did you become? Because that was like, you were like totally different, right? And then you ...

Adrianna Jiron: I was.

Tino Magnatta: How did you transform? What are the things that happened?

Adrianna Jiron: When I was in high school, I was the cool, popular kid. I was the queen bee. I had friends. By then, I had already made friends, and it was a small class; there was 24 of us in my high school senior class. There was a group of us that all hung out. We were all really good friends with each other, and so I developed those relationships. But then as time went on, I learned how to kind of ... I grew, obviously. My attitude changed. I wasn't a spoiled brat like I was prior to my high school days; prior to being thrown in a Catholic school. The discipline and the focus changes you, and I was a lot less selfish in my mind.

I made a lot of changes within myself. It wasn't all about me, and it took me awhile to realize that. But once I finally did, then I was like, you know what, this is it. How am I going to do something for my people? What can I do? Because at that point, it wasn't about me anymore. Before, it was all what do I want? What am I going to do? How is this going to help me? Where am I going to benefit? But after I left the high school, I was like, okay, it's not about me, so I need to figure out what I'm going to do with my life, how I'm going to benefit my tribe, what am I going to do. How can I make the difference? And that's when I decided to go to UNLV to study gaming.

Tino Magnatta: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Tell us a little bit about that, because you left the tribe and then you returned to school. You said you worked in Miami, right?

Adrianna Jiron: I did, mm-hmm (affirmative). I worked on a casino boat that went three nautical miles into the ocean, and then they would turn on our slot machines. I was a cage manager for that, that fall, and then I worked in Kansas City for a little while. And then I found out I was pregnant actually, and then I wanted to come back to have my son here in New Mexico with my family. So I did, and I thought you know what? This isn't good for him. This isn't good for me, but mostly not for him, so what am I going to do? How am I going to fix this? So, that's when I decided I'm going to go to UNLV. My heart and my mind were already set, and I'm one of those people if my mind and my heart are set, that's it. There's no stopping me.

So we moved out to Vegas in August of 2005, and I got into the gaming operations management program there, which is in the [inaudible 00:24:29] College of Hospitality. I got my gaming operations management degree in 2008, so it took me two and a half years, but I worked, or rather I didn't work. I went to school every semester. I took 21 hours, and I didn't take any summers off. I finished in two and half years, and totally worth it. I met some amazing people along the way, and in that program it's mainly taught by people ... of course there are professors, but they also have adjunct professors who are from the business, and they teach you things you can't learn in a classroom; attitudes, styles, games, processes, all kind of different things that they teach you.

I was fortunate enough to have met some pretty awesome people in my schooling, so I'm really glad I did it. I have no regrets at all. And that was kind of how I transformed my finance and accounting and cage experience into table games, so I found something new.

Tino Magnatta: Right.

Adrianna Jiron: That was kind of something different, completely different, but I'm glad I did it because it kind of gave me a well-rounded insight, of you will, on gaming as a whole, not just from the accounting perspective. It was totally worth it.

Tino Magnatta: How did you find, through all this stuff that you did, because now we're at UNLV and we're about to go into another phase of your life. But being a woman, and on top of that being a Native American woman, how did that affect things for you, and how did you overcome that?

Adrianna Jiron: In the beginning, it was difficult. It was challenging, completely challenging. And I don't know if it's just a stigma or really what it is, but being a Native American woman, being an educated Native American woman, it's very difficult in this business. It's very difficult on the reservation. It's very difficult among my people. And I haven't figured out why, but I don't mind when people ask me questions and I'm happy to tell them. I'm happy to tell them about my experiences, what brought me to my career choice, how I got here. And I think it's just a matter of time before more Native women start coming into and getting into the business kind of like I did.

Tino Magnatta: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah, I see what you're saying. Well, you've got to start somewhere, right? Someone's got to-

Adrianna Jiron: Absolutely.

Tino Magnatta: [inaudible 00:27:39] end up somewhere. Your path took you way beyond to where you expected, but that was because you made, worked hard and made sacrifices, right?

Adrianna Jiron: Absolutely. I worked. Nothing was handed to me by far. And like I said, from my past it was different because everything was always handed to me when I was a kid, and it just kind of came hand in hand. But now as I've grown older and I started realizing that gaming was what I wanted to do in my career, it wasn't easy by far. The education piece of it wasn't; the work part of it wasn't; just it wasn't easy. And being a woman just kind of made it even more, more of a challenge, I truly believe. But this business, this is something that I chose to do, and I love it and I'm glad that I did.

I don't think it's something everyone can do, men or women, but I'm definitely glad that I found it. I do wish there were more women in gaming, learning, or in hospitality in general, doing what I do.

Tino Magnatta: Now I love the next part of your story, because you actually did a stint in Vegas, and this is a very interesting part. So tell us what happened after you UNLV.

Adrianna Jiron: When I graduated from UNLV, or prior to me graduating from UNLV, there was a gentleman by the name of Mark Gilbert who was ... He worked at Caesar's Entertainment in [inaudible 00:29:24]. And what he was doing was he was, they had started a program and he was out looking for students at the college to see if they could or if it was possible to train graduates fresh out of college how to be floor supervisors in the table games department.

I wasn't there. I didn't see his presentation, so I don't really know how that whole thing went. But I got a call from him one day, and he was kind of like you know, this is who I am, this is what I'm doing. And I still to this day don't know where he got my information from or how he knew I was a gaming student, but he just kind of explained everything to me, and I was like, no, I'm not interested. I had already taken a position with the Bellagio on the Strip from a lady by the name of Marie Ramsey. She was the VP of Finance at MGM Grand, and luckily for me, I was fortunate enough to do my internship with her that we were all required to do as a student at UNLV. She was the VP of Finance, so I was obviously taking an accounting job at the Bellagio.

So I was telling this Mark Gilbert gentleman no thank you, I'm fine. I'm set. I have a job. I'm good. And he was like, "No, no, no. You need to get into table games. There's not a whole lot of women in table games. You're a Native American and it would look great on your resume." And I'm like yeah, no, I'm not a table games person. I don't want to do table games. He was really persistent, and it kind of got to where I was like, "Yeah, stop calling me." But he kept on-

Tino Magnatta: Wow, wow.

Adrianna Jiron: The program was they would teach us all the games, and there were four of us that were selected. They taught us all of the games, and then we would have to go down and [inaudible 00:31:26]

Tino Magnatta: Now this is at the Bellagio?

Adrianna Jiron: No, no, no. This is with MGM ... no, no, no, no, no ... Caesar's Entertainment.

Tino Magnatta: Oh, Caesar's Entertainment. Okay. So this it's at Caesar's Palace, right?

Adrianna Jiron: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Uh, no. It was ... We first started our training at the, at the time it was called the Imperial Palace; I believe it's The Link now.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, of course, yeah. Yes, I know. That's where they saved all the Caesar people.

Adrianna Jiron: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: [inaudible 00:31:52]

Adrianna Jiron: So yeah, mm-hmm (affirmative). So we started at IP and we learned our games. We would have to go deal our games, so they put us in a rotation so we were dealing. We dealt at the Flamingo, and then from there then the supervisor training came about because they wanted us to get a feel for what the dealers go through as a supervisor. So we did that; we shadowed floor supervisors from all of, I believe there were nine Caesar's properties at the time. We shadowed the floor supervisors for a week, I believe, and just kind of learned the process; learned what they do; learned how to settle customer disputes; how to write comps; just different little quirks that you have to do as a floor supervisor. The end result was that we were going to be placed at one of the Caesar's properties.

One of the guys dropped out. He ended up leaving for personal reasons, but upon completion, there were two of us that were placed at Caesar's Palace; I was one, and the other gentleman was placed at the Rio. And so we were told that we were being placed based on our skillset, our guest service skills, how quickly we learned, how easily we are to adapt to our environment; just a lot of different things that took into accountability. So I broke in my table games experience in Caesar's Palace high limit room, which is, there's only two in the world, two people in the world have ever done that, and I'm super happy to be one of them.

Tino Magnatta: Wow. So what was that like? I know you had some issues that you had to overcome, but you're [inaudible 00:33:55] really a genius, so tell us the story.

Adrianna Jiron: It was really hard. It was really hard for me because, there again, I didn't have any friends. I didn't have any family there. I didn't have anybody. I was, again, kind of in a new environment, and I had no net, no net to fall back on. I was in the high limit room, which was a completely crazy experience compared to anything that we had been exposed to at Paris, Bally's, at Harrah's, at the

Flamingo, at [inaudible 00:34:34], IP or anywhere else, at the Rio. It was pretty brutal.

I started in November, and at that time all the holidays were rolling around. Christmas rolls around, and then we go right into the New Year, and then we get into Chinese New Year. It was like a never ending cycle of work. It was hard for me to adjust in the beginning. I was the rookie; I was the Native girl; I was educated; I was a supervisor, and this is kind of the funny part, is I wasn't juiced in. I had no in, if you will. I was just kind of placed here.

Tino Magnatta: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Adrianna Jiron: And there again, I opened up again and started making friends. I thought, "Ooh, this is what I'm going to do." I came up with this little plan one day, and I thought I'm going to find all of the older dealers and I'm going to make friends with them. And they're going to be my friends, and they're going to see that I'm not just some person out of college, some know-it-all rookie. They're going to want to be my friend.

And so I started talking with them. I made friends with them, and a lot of these older dealers, all they wanted to be was heard. That was it. And of course, I was interested because a lot of these people had been there for years and years and years. They've dealt to the mobsters, they've dealt to the owners. They have seen things that they probably shouldn't see, and so it was a lot of fun.

Tino Magnatta: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Adrianna Jiron: It was a pretty crazy experience, but I listened. I listened to them. That's what they wanted. They wanted to be heard. So I listened to them, I built relationships with them. We would hang out and go to dinners and go to lunch, and we all there again got to be this little group of friends, and just kind of had fun. We went to each other's birthday parties. We went to each others' weddings, baby showers. It was a blessing, and I'm really and truly glad I've met some wonderful, wonderful people along the way that I'm still friends with to this day in Vegas. So when I'm out there, I make it a point to go see my friends there at Caesar's.

Some of them, unfortunately, have passed on because at the time that I was there, they were a lot older already and time goes on. But that was what I did. I made friends with the old timers and listened to their stories, and won their favor, and I was in, and it worked.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. That's fantastic. What a story. Yeah, and I mean being a Native is one thing, but being a Native woman and being in that kind of environment, and you were really the only one in the building, right?

Adrianna Jiron: Actually, there was another young lady that was there. She was there a few years before I was, but I think she had started in as a dealer and she kind of moved up through the ranks.

Tino Magnatta: Right. You were just put in as a supervisor.

Adrianna Jiron: And I was kind of hired in, yeah.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, yeah.

Adrianna Jiron: So she had dealt for a long time before she was on the floor, so yeah.

Tino Magnatta: What did that teach you? How is that experience still valuable to you? Because talk about being away from your bubble; you were away, you were in a different city. You were in one of the most prestigious gambling, one of the most prestigious casinos in the world with some heavy people who had so much experience, and there you are. How did that affect you, that experience?

Adrianna Jiron: It was a positive experience. I learned everything that I could possibly learn. That was when I really, really truly fell in love with table games. I mean, I had convinced myself already when Mark was trying to get me to go into this program. I was like, "No, no, no. I'm accounting. I'm an accounting person. I want the cage." That was my bubble, yet again. But in reaching out, or branching out rather, it was a blessing in disguise and it taught me a lot of crazy things. It taught me a lot of patience, and it taught me ...

It taught me how to prioritize. It's a lot about time management. It's a lot about organization, because some nights you're on a game, watching a baccarat game where the guy has a \$6 million credit line, and you're writing markers and redeeming markers, and watching the hand, and watching the dealer, and taking commission and not taking commission, paying attention to the surroundings, and then the next minute you're on a \$100 a hand blackjack game with some drunk college kids who were just there to party and have a good time.

It taught me a lot of acclimating to different personalities; giving people what they need. Still listening. Some people just, they come in and they only have a set amount of money, and this is all they can afford to lose or whatnot. And being in the high limit room, it's different. It's quite an experience. Even people with money kind of are limited to their money, to the money that they have to spend on gaming, and of course, we try to get as much money as we possibly could. But still, they want to be heard. They want to be catered to. They want to have a conversation. They want you to know about them, who they are, what they do, where they come from. So it's a lot about listening.

I watched a lot of people, baccarat, blackjack, roulette; we have single-zero in our high limit room. There were times where I was in the private parlor with a

high roller. There were times I was in a public game watching two games at one time. But I had a good support system. My casino manager at the time, he was awesome. He kind of took me under his wing because he knew that I didn't have the table experience. I had the education, but not the experience that most people that are juiced in come with to Caesar's. He was a great inspiration to me, and I still keep touch with him. It's about building relationships, and keeping those relationships going.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, that's the name of the game. Tell us a little bit about when you went back to [inaudible 00:41:42] and what happened.

Adrianna Jiron: After I left Caesar's, I went over to The Cosmopolitan. I worked at The Cosmopolitan for about a year, and then I got pregnant again, and at that point I was considered high risk, so I couldn't be on the floor. I reached out to Mark Gilbert again and I did some financial analysis for him at Bally Technologies. And then I had seen, I was having some personal issues and I had seen that there was a cage manager position open here at [inaudible 00:42:20], at my home property. And I thought you know what? I want to go back home. I'm ready to go back home. My boys are getting older. It's important to me that they learn their culture, they learn our language, they learn our tradition. And my parents are very traditional. They're very traditional people, and I didn't feel like I was disrespecting them at any point by not being here, but knew that it would break their hearts if I didn't teach my boys our culture.

So I decided to come back home, and applied for the job and got an interview; pretty tough interview, pretty tough crowd. But at the end of the day, they chose me and I just kind of ran with it. I was in the cage for about three years; made a lot of changes. And so far, it's so good.

Tino Magnatta: And how did the whole position that you're in now, the GM-CEO mentee? How did that come about?

Adrianna Jiron: I have a really good working relationship with our CEO, Harold Baggis, and he decided to take on a mentee, if you will. And he opened a position for a CEO mentee, and it was pretty much the same process. I still had to apply. It was only open to travel members, so this is a travel member position. So it was opened throughout the community; it was open online for travel members only, and I applied just like everybody else, and got an interview, and that was probably one of the hardest interviews I have ever done in my life.

Tino Magnatta: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Adrianna Jiron: There were a lot of really good, tough questions, and at the end of the day I did something right because I ...

Tino Magnatta: You sure did.

Adrianna Jiron: I was fortunate enough to be, yeah, given this position, and I've been doing this since the beginning of January. So that's basically what happened with that.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, congratulations.

Adrianna Jiron: Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: They made a good choice. Hang on one sec. There's someone that wants to talk to you. Let me check if they're around. Just hang on a sec. It's a little bit of a surprise, but she was [inaudible 00:44:55]

Adrianna Jiron: Uh oh.

Tino Magnatta: You didn't know I was going to surprise you, right?

Adrianna Jiron: (laughs)

Tino Magnatta: If I can get them on the phone. Hang on, because it's one of these things that I'll have to see if I can get them. Hang on one sec, okay? So Adrianna, I have someone on the phone you might know. I'm going to let you talk to him and see if you remember his voice.

Conrad: Hello, Adrianna. How are you?

Adrianna Jiron: I'm good. How are you?

Conrad: Good. We haven't talked in a long time.

Adrianna Jiron: Uh oh.

Conrad: Just because I haven't been in New Mexico.

Adrianna Jiron: You haven't been in New Mexico?

Tino Magnatta: He was your first boss.

Adrianna Jiron: Conrad?

Conrad: Yep.

Adrianna Jiron: Oh my goodness, that's awesome.

Conrad: How are you, [inaudible 00:45:55]?

Adrianna Jiron: I'm doing great.

Conrad: Fantastic, fantastic.

Adrianna Jiron: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, she's the GM-CEO mentee under Harold Baggis.

Conrad: I know, I saw that. [inaudible 00:46:09]

Tino Magnatta: She's being lined up.

Conrad: [inaudible 00:46:13] If you remember, I kind of started [inaudible 00:46:16]. It was, who was it? It was Jeff, and Edwin, and wow, what's her name, the three of them.

Adrianna Jiron: Francine.

Conrad: Francine. Yeah, way back when.

Adrianna Jiron: Yeah. Uh huh, yeah.

Conrad: Congratulations. I'm so proud of what you been able to accomplish.

Adrianna Jiron: Thank you.

Conrad: That's great.

Adrianna Jiron: Thank you. It's so good to hear from you. I'm so excited. In fact, I was just telling Tino earlier, I was like, "Oh, I thought that Conrad was on the show," and I had actually listened to your story. And then I thought, and I told him, I was like, "He was like my very, very first boss ever in this business." Seems like a whole lifetime ago.

Tino Magnatta: What a great boss to have.

Conrad: [inaudible 00:47:05]

Adrianna Jiron: And what an awesome surprise.

Conrad: Yeah? I saw him around there and [inaudible 00:47:11] I was traveling a little bit [inaudible 00:47:14] make sure that [inaudible 00:47:14] on your car and everything. And I honestly, I just want to say how proud I am of the [inaudible 00:47:20] you've accomplished. Yeah, it's been a long time and lot of lifetimes ago, but it couldn't happen to a nicer person. Sound good.

Adrianna Jiron: Thank you.

Conrad: I got to see Harold for the first time through Tino at [inaudible 00:47:33] this year. [inaudible 00:47:34] down there because I'd never met him before.

Adrianna Jiron: Yeah, yeah. He's a really good guy. I'm really lucky.

Conrad: Good. [inaudible 00:47:47], so if you ever have anything you need or whatever, [inaudible 00:47:52] please give me a call anytime.

Adrianna Jiron: Awesome. Thank you so, so much. I appreciate it.

Tino Magnatta: [inaudible 00:48:00] \$300 million expansion, a hotel. Conrad's blowing it up, up there. He's doing it good.

Adrianna Jiron: Wow, good for you. Congratulations. That's awesome.

Conrad: Oh, thank you. I've been up there now a little over five years, and the property's a great property, and we've had great performance. And now [inaudible 00:48:23] to take it to the next step of having a 20,000 foot [inaudible 00:48:25], 400 room hotel and everything that goes along with that; and high end restaurants and really changing the whole face of it. So what you guys are going through some of that already since way back when.

Adrianna Jiron: Yeah.

Conrad: We're trying to catch up with you still.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah.

Adrianna Jiron: Awesome. So happy to hear from you.

Tino Magnatta: Great, Conrad. Thank you so much for ... go ahead.

Conrad: You've got it. So what's your timeframe? Is there a timeframe with this, is when Harold is going to retire, or what's going to happen?

Adrianna Jiron: That, I'm really not sure of. I'm just kind of three to five years is kind of like my goal.

Conrad: Sure, good.

Tino Magnatta: And what year are you into now?

Adrianna Jiron: And I still obviously have a lot to learn.

Tino Magnatta: What year are you into?

Adrianna Jiron: I'm only seven months in. I'm only seven months in.

Tino Magnatta: Okay, yeah, just a little while.

Conrad: Well, one thing to consider, Tino and also is that we have a tribal business leader program up here, similar type of thing, executive development of tribal members [inaudible 00:49:28] director or a manager. And matter of fact, we just elevated a tribal member to the [inaudible 00:49:34] position [inaudible 00:49:35].

Adrianna Jiron: oh, wow.

Conrad: But we're also doing exchanging. So we have done a, taken one of our tribal members [inaudible 00:49:46] and actually [inaudible 00:49:49] down in Tucson from ... And then they send up two people to our property to kind of see how we teach things, and we're actually going to have kind of like a webinar and put that out [inaudible 00:50:04] to talk more about that, and really have other tribes do the same thing. [inaudible 00:50:11] these other tribes and even non-tribal entities and do executive, kind of exchange, almost like an exchange student, think of it that way, where you get to see another property and see how they do certain things or whatever. Because [inaudible 00:50:27] since my days in [inaudible 00:50:28], it doesn't matter how you get someplace else; let's bring the best of all those places and make it right for [inaudible 00:50:35]. This is what that whole process is about.

Tino Magnatta: It's great.

Adrianna Jiron: Oh, that's great. That's amazing.

Conrad: Yeah, [inaudible 00:50:44] down the road and everything else, it might be something to look at where we can take one of our executive tribal business leaders and have them [inaudible 00:50:53], then you come up here and see how we do things.

Adrianna Jiron: You know, it's something to consider. [crosstalk 00:51:00]

Conrad: Good. Well hey, congratulations again. Tino, thanks for catching up with me.

Tino Magnatta: No problem. Thank you so much, Conrad.

Adrianna Jiron: Thanks, Conrad. It's good to hear from you. Take care.

Conrad: Good to hear from you. Congratulations again.

Tino Magnatta: Take care.

Conrad: Bye bye.

Tino Magnatta: Thanks.

Adrianna Jiron: Thanks.

Tino Magnatta: Great stuff. That was a surprise.

Adrianna Jiron: What a surprise. That was awesome.

Tino Magnatta: I thought you'd like that. Hang on one sec. I'm getting another call. This is Tino Magnatta. Do you have a question for Adrianna?

Caller 1: Hello. How are you this evening?

Tino Magnatta: Good, good, good. Do you have a question for Adrianna?

Caller 1: Yes. Adrianna, I'm very, I'd have to say inspired by your talking of your upbringing. And one of the nice things is, we don't know what we don't know for a long period of time it seems. And when we're young and living in the moment, it's wonderful. Have your children, have your children, have you brought them up with the same type of I guess earnest commitment, passion for family that you have?

Adrianna Jiron: Yes. I'm trying to instill that in my children, and I'm hoping that they're catching on. That was one of the main reasons for us returning back from Vegas, was my son was I believe 10 or 11 at the time, my oldest son, and I wanted him ... He didn't know our language. He didn't really know a lot about our culture, our values, what family meant. He didn't really know a whole lot about the Native side of us, and I wanted him to start learning more and more and more about who we are as a people, who we are as a culture, and what ... to be that person to make a difference; to be that person to want to make a difference for not just for himself, but for his people as well.

That's really important to me because I feel like there aren't enough leaders in this business that are Native American, and here we are with our own casinos and whatnot. But a lot of the times, there's just not that education piece that comes with wanting to run this type of business. So I'm trying to instill that in my boys, and I hope they're getting it. All I can do is hope and pray that I'm being the best parent I can be, and just kind of hoping that they learn.

Caller 1: Excellent, excellent. One other quick question. You continue to get the great education, and is it something you felt, or is it something that just came in front of you and you went, "I think I'll do that?"

Adrianna Jiron: The education piece was something that I had always had my mind set on, and primarily it was because I'm a Native American woman. What I've learned and what I had seen in the past was there aren't a lot of women in leadership as it is, and it's unfortunate, and a lot of it is because of the education piece. But I thought, well, if I turn that, and I use my brain, and I get educated, and I get this experience, I can be a Native American woman trying to be out there making a difference.

And I'm still learning. I'm learning every day. I have an awesome mentor in Harold. He's great. He's teaching me about the things that he deals with on a daily day basis; the things that a CEO does on a daily day basis. So it's kind of, it's inspiring. And the education piece, to me, in my mind, it's really, it's important but it was something that I've always wanted to do for myself since I was a really young, I was a really young person.

Caller 1: Well, you're very inspiring, and I'm sure you have other people who want to ask questions. Thank you for being on the air tonight. This is wonderful.

Adrianna Jiron: Thank you. It's so good to hear from you. Take care.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you, thank you so much. Hello, this is Tino Magnatta. Do you have a question for Adrianna?

JB: Hey, Tino. This is JB calling in from New York. How are you tonight?

Tino Magnatta: Hey, good, good.

JB: So yeah, I definitely have a question. You had spoken a lot about your journey up the ladder in the gaming industry, and I'm curious to hear what are some of the lessons that you learned along the way that you still kind of apply and look to today?

Adrianna Jiron: Wow, that's a great question. It wasn't easy, but I still in my mind, I always go back to my education. It's about me; it's about everybody else, my surroundings. How can I make a difference? What can I do to be part of the solution instead of part of the problem? And those are just some of the questions that I ask myself on a daily basis. What else? What more? What more? What more? And that's just kind of what I guess I put myself through on a daily basis because I have a goal, and my goal is to one day run my casino. I think I'm doing a decent job in starting to get there. It's going to take me awhile being that I haven't held a position like this ever, but I also have a very good support system. I have a husband who is very supportive. My children are good kids. They teach me, and so it's a lot of different things. I hope I answered your question. I'm sorry.

JB: No definitely, and I know these things when you're speaking about life lessons, it also crosses over with work. It's a matrix of things that happen, right?

Adrianna Jiron: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

JB: But you know a question just kind of on the lines of your management style, and I'm just curious because you came up the ranks, I'm sure that that seasons your day to day style. But how involved are you in the day to day operations in each department? Is it kind of harder to not be involved all the time because you

came up through the ranks and have seen so many different sides of the gaming industry?

Adrianna Jiron: It was. In the beginning, it was a little bit hard for me to back off, experience with the cage because I was in the cage here for three years. So that was a little bit difficult for me to let go of because there were so many issues and problems with it when I got here, and I think I did a pretty decent job in cleaning it up.

And so for a while, it was hard for me to let go. I always wanted to know what was going on; I wanted to know who was doing what; I wanted to know this, this, this, and this. But the flip side was I had to learn how to find a balance to that, because I'm also trying to learn everything about everything else. I'm still trying to learn about hotel, what happens on that side; the maintenance part of it, how that works; the development and the plans that we have going on, and how they all come to fold what food and beverage is doing.

So like I said before, I have a really, really good mentor in Harold, and I'm beside him on a daily basis. I attend meetings with him; I'm in everything now. I still struggle daily to let go of the cage, but they have a pretty good manager in there right now and I have a lot of faith in him to keep it going. And he actually, along with the team down there, we implemented a lot of changes and we made a lot of changes to make it better, and I think it's still progressing.

JB: Yeah, great. Good stuff.

Adrianna Jiron: You asked if it was hard? It was hard, but I'm slowly learning how to wean myself away from everything and just kind of get into everything I need to be into instead of things that I want to be into because I can't let go.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, right. Great. Thanks so much, JB. Thanks for calling in.

JB: Thanks for having me on.

Adrianna Jiron: Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Well, Adrianna, we've run out of time. That was amazing. I loved the stories, and thank you so much for coming on the show, and I hope to have you back on again.

Adrianna Jiron: Thank you. It's been great. Thank you very much.

Tino Magnatta: I really, really appreciate it. And great [inaudible 01:00:31] on your future, and we'll be looking for when you make that big move. That'll be something. It'll really be something.

Adrianna Jiron: I'll keep you posted. Thank you so much. I appreciate it.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you so much. You have a great night. Okay, bye bye.

Adrianna Jiron: Thanks. You as well. Bye bye.

Tino Magnatta: Bye bye. That was great stories and really, really amazing stuff for a Native woman to go through, and to prevail and to be able to succeed through all that. She's really special, and I guess that's why she's the GM-CEO mentee, and she has those qualities.

So we're going to take a little break. We're coming back August 1st. We'll be at the Casino Marketing and Technology Conference in Las Vegas. I'll be having a panel there on Wednesday, which is the 24th. It's between 9:45 and 10:45 at Caesar's Palace, and I have some great people on the show. I have Brian [inaudible 01:01:45], who's the VP of Marketing at [inaudible 01:01:48] up in Maryland. And I have [inaudible 01:01:51] Jenner, who's the Director of Digital Marketing for Caesar's. And I have the guy I call the fixer, Mike Donovan, who keeps turning casinos around and turning them into gold. So yeah, I have a great panel. I hope you're able to make it. And then on August 1st, I have Shauna [inaudible 01:02:11]. She's the Director of Marketing for Spirit Mountain [inaudible 01:02:14], and she's a very, very interesting person. And that continues our Wonder Women of Gaming series.

Remember, everybody's got a story to tell. You just have to have time to listen. I'll talk to you soon. Have a good night, and we'll see you in a week; no, two weeks. Talk to you later. Bye.

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