[00:00:04]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** You are listening to Tell Me Your Story where we connect to HLS staff on a personal level. Hello, everyone. This is Edgar Kley Filho from Office of Equal Opportunity. My pronouns are he, him, his, and today, we are talking to Andre Almeida from Custodial Services, who will tell us about his life, how long he is in this position at HLS, and the work he does. Thank you for joining us, Andre. Please tell me your story.

[00:00:42]

**Andre Almeida:** Good morning, Edgar. Thank you for having me. My name is Andre Almeida. I started here at Harvard in 2014. I didn't start at the Law School. I started the Radcliff, right across from Cambridge Common. There was very nice people that welcoming me to Harvard at the time. They were really taught me everything about Harvard. It's really encouraging to know that people that are here and when we started in a new place, they actually support us as well. I've been in Harvard for ten years then.

[00:01:27]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Ten years now.

[00:01:28]

**Andre Almeida:** Ten years now. I started as custodian a few months after I became crew chief, and then a few years after debating a long time, I became a supervisor, and just in the past month, I'm starting as Operations Manager.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Congratulations. That's fantastic.

[00:01:52]

**Andre Almeida:** Yeah, thank you very much. It's really time flies I cannot even tell that has been ten years, and I can remember like yesterday when I started, I remember all the people that I work with. Wonderful colleagues, wonderful students that been in this place, and then every year, some people leave, and then you almost feel like when they graduate, you almost feel like you going to be missing a family member because you got used to see all the students, not all of them, but many of them, they attend classes, especially in WCC, every day and then after, May after commencement, you stop seeing these faces and new faces come in.

[00:02:47]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** It's always a cycle.

[00:02:49]

**Andre Almeida:** It's always a cycle.

[00:02:51]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** A group every year, a new group come in for orientation. Then also a new group that goes out in May for commencement.

[00:03:01]

**Andre Almeida:** After the graduation.

[00:03:02]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** You adjust to the new ones and start getting to know them. Then when you blink, three years pass by.

[00:03:09]

**Andre Almeida:** Really fast.

[00:03:10]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Then they're all right. I need to go back. I have more questions about Custodian and your trajectory here from Radcliff all the way to HLS. But I want to know all the way to the back. When you were a kid, we usually ask everyone, and I know a little bit about you already. That's why it's easier where they are from, if they are from New England area, if they are from a different country. Can you tell us more about that, where are you from?

[00:03:44]

**Andre Almeida:** Sure. I'm originally from Brazil.

[00:03:47]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Brazil.

[00:03:48]

**Andre Almeida:** It's a small town. It's about like 100,000 people that live there now.

[00:03:56]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Can you say the name of the town?

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**Andre Almeida:** It's in the state. It's not very famous estate. It's next to Rio. It's Minas Gerais

[00:04:05]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** I think here would be a very famous.

[00:04:07]

**Andre Almeida:** I know some people know in Massachusetts. The town it's a town that offers some for more for tourists. It's called Araxa.

[00:04:26]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Araxa. My God. This is my dream town to go to visit.

[00:04:30]

**Andre Almeida:** There is a lot of people that visit there, but it's a very nice town you grew up.

[00:04:36]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Oh, wow.

[00:04:37]

**Andre Almeida:** I remember the streets where we go on the streets and then walk to the school, we play on the streets. I had friends, summer camp. It's still to this day, actually, if I have to choose one city to go back and then raise Family.

[00:04:55]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Really?

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**Andre Almeida:** That's one of the top ones on my list because I'm sure everybody living in that city will have a very happy childhood.

[00:05:10]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Well, for people don't know Brazil in general, but even from Brazilian folks who don't know the reason that I'm so excited about when you said Araxa. Araxa for me it's because Dona Beija. She is such an important character in Brazilian history and I know that became a character in soap operas and novels. But I found out that was a real person and there was very strong influence as well in the entire region there in terms of power of miniatures in the time of Royal Family when the Royal family was in Brazil.

[00:05:53]

**Andre Almeida:** There was monarch in Brazil. She was she was responsible for that city. Actually, to become a city. Of course, like you mentioned, there was a soap opera made after her life. We're talking about the 1,800. Women wouldn't vote. Women were supposed just to stay at home, take care of the kids, and then cook and then take care of their husbands. She was Dona Beija. She was ahead of her time in that city. She was involved in politics. Back then, the cities and states weren't very defined. She was involved in formation of the country itself, if you think about it, she was responsible for a formation of a state in Brazil, a formation of a city. Then her legend lives to this day. People go to this city. They know her history. There is other things she do in the city as well.

[00:07:04]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Thermal waters. Is Thermal waters?

[00:07:09]

**Andre Almeida:** Thermal waters. The city is actually suppose in a location there is an extinct volcano. We don't have geisers like the Yellowstone of course but there's Thermal waters that people back then, and then now with all the hotels resorts. They look for those Thermal waters for your health. Like they have mud baths and pools with thermal water. There is some water that comes with sulfate acid. Sometimes, it's really tough, taste terrible. But supposedly is very good for you. You can drink the water. It's good for your digestion, it's good for your hair. That's why people go to that city. A lot of people go there, but there is still this feeling of a small town when you know your friends, back then, it's still today, you go to the house, you hang out. In Brazilian culture, things are more relaxed. So if I go to a house today, you're going to be happy, and then you receive me, and then we will cook, we eat, we drink.

[00:08:26]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** You want a coffee? A fresh coffee [inaudible 00:08:28].

[00:08:28]

**Andre Almeida:** That's one thing about this estate as well. I remember this time to this that if you go to someone's house, if they offer you food, you have to eat it. You cannot refuse. Everything is delicious and then if you refuse the food, it's almost like an offence you've been rude. I remember living here in the US and then going back there and visiting family, and I'll probably see like five or six of my cousins, my aunts, and every house I went to people offer food.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Yes.

[00:09:14]

**Andre Almeida:** By the end of the day, I probably had a full meal every two hours.

[00:09:21]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** You should schedule one person, one family per day, otherwise, you are trouble.

[00:09:26]

**Andre Almeida:** Of course, coming back, I will probably have to go in a diet because the food is so good.

[00:09:33]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** I tell everybody, I know that Brazil is very diverse in terms of food. In different region and different states, they have their own typical food that they eat every day. But I think, in my opinion, is where you find the best food in Brazil in general.

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**Andre Almeida:** That is true.

[00:09:53]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** People here in the US that are used to certain Brazilian food here. One of the famous things is cheese bread.

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**Andre Almeida:** We just had it yesterday for like a coffee doughnuts. There you go. That we order for our department. I was like, I can't just give my people coffee and doughnuts. I'm going to order this cheese bread from a Brazilian bakery. People arrived, they grab the donuts, bake with cream cheese, regular coffee until the cheese bread was here. Then it was gone in two minutes. But it's very diverse.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Every event that I can bring some Brazilian food and I ordered the cheese bread is a huge success. People really enjoy it. Yes, Minas is famous for food.

[00:10:36]

**Andre Almeida:** It's a state well known for the food. The region that I came from, there is a lot of cheese. People make cheese, and then you just [which is the best cheese in Brazil].

[00:10:47]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** It is the best in Brazil.

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**Andre Almeida:** It is the best. Recently, these type of cheeses, they won the best prizes best cheese in the world in many competitions. They say that people that live in that region, they really want to make you feel welcome to their place, to the state. Also, they're vary, I wouldn't say agreeable, but they vary conscious of not making people angry or anything like that.

[00:11:27]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Not confrontational.

[00:11:28]

**Andre Almeida:** They're not confrontational. They tell you, Oh, I'm sorry, I cannot go to your house today and they will explain like 100 motive why they can't.

[00:11:39]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** So many reasons.

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**Andre Almeida:** They feel a little bit better not going to your house or not making you hurt because of that. They're very nice in the very nice state you live.

[00:11:51]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Coffee there was a big hit too. Mines was well known for one of the coffee plantations.

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**Andre Almeida:** This is the one of the best. Then there is one of the versions that actually make more coffee in the world. I believe if I'm not wrong, I think the state itself make probably 15 to 20% of the coffee in the world, actually. Of course, it's a tradition to people enjoy that not just in here, as I talk to you, I have a mug of 20 ounces of coffee. Over there it's more like they drink coffee in Italy. It's smaller kind of very strong.

[00:12:30]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** People think that's expresso, yeah. It's a lighter than expresso that you can drink in is not so strong. We have a flask all day long on top of the table. But when someone comes to your house, you have to make a fresh coffee. Brew a fresh one.

[00:12:49]

**Andre Almeida:** That's how you tell them to stay a little bit more in your house. You have to tell them, wait a little bit more. You're going to pour more coffee.

[00:12:56]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Exactly. We're going to have a little bit of coffee talk and then eats a little snacks as well. I have very good memories of the state and my childhood as well.

[00:13:09]

**Andre Almeida:** Going to school there was easy going. You would say how until what age we stay there? In Araxa. I did until, I think middle school there.

[00:13:21]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Middle school?

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**Andre Almeida:** Yes. Was going scholas back then, of course, we didn't have cell phones. We did have Internet, I believe. Not as spread as today, but I believe right in the middle of the 90s, Brazil had Internet.

[00:13:42]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Like you already described a little bit, but it's a safe town. You could go out and play in the neighborhood with your friends and have fun as a kid in the neighborhood and exploring the area.

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**Andre Almeida:** Yes. Back then, we would sometimes leave. When there was no school, we probably leave home in the morning, just sometimes come back before before dinnertime. That's how how fun it was. Everybody was out playing soccer, playing volleyball, just hanging hanging out in the friend's house. We walk everywhere. These kids were really free. We really did everything. It really changed a little bit, starting in the 90s. I remember when people were looking more just to play video games. Then from there to computers, it really changed.

[00:14:43]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Start going indoors more instead of outdoors. It still is a big deal. I understand certain places, for example, in big towns like Sao Paulo or even here in New York, you can see that there is not much space and even security.

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**Andre Almeida:** I'll be concerned if my kids were out if I live in Rio or Sao Paulo. But I wouldn't be as concerned if it was. That's what it sometimes people have stereotypes about Brazil. Brazil is actually well known because of Sao Paulo and Rio, and then big towns. Then some of these big cities just like, you know, the places, they are not as safe. Yeah. There's drugs, there is crime. But in the other cities, I'm talking about middle sized to small cities like 400,000 people of the population and below. It's still like you can have a very connected, very comfortable life they have shopping malls, they have good schools, they have hospitals, and it's still very nice to live too. You let your kids go to school. They don't need buses to pick them up. They come back home. They go out to play, they go to other people, their friends to play video games. It's very actually, it's a very nice laid back, but good lifestyle. Yeah. I think it's more family center.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** You have everything that you need there in a small proportion.

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**Andre Almeida:** Things look easier that way because you kind of have time to think about your food.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Exactly. It's so relaxing.

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**Andre Almeida:** They cook. It is relaxing. It's really a break from the city. The good thing that I think Brazilian people especially in these not so big towns. They're still very connected to each other. I can tell because it's not as famous as application that they have here in US called WhatsApp. It's from Facebook. People use a lot in Brazil. I had to silence mine actually because people, they create family groups and then they write this long message for your birthday, and I was like, I don't have the energy anymore. I don't have the time, but they say wonderful things they say Happy birthday, though God bless you. I wish you all the best in this New Year. Then there's one more. It's almost a book for happy birthday.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** They don't put a little music as well to play.

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**Andre Almeida:** I had to disable. There's cards that comes through those messages as well because it was just like clotting my phone.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** That need to say a lot. It's funny because I learned here that a simple happy birthday is enough. You don't need to write a long message about wishing what you want. But it's interesting culturally. The same thing that you said about in your estate, in your town. For example, when someone because they don't want to be confrontation, they don't want to say no to an invitation, and they go and say, find 1,000 reasons to justify why they cannot go sometimes. It's the same about saying happy birthday, right, or wishing something. They have to put like a pages of sentences there writing, explaining everything else.

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**Andre Almeida:** I feel it's still a wonderful thing that people are connected not only to their families, but to their friends as well. That's one thing that I really miss sometimes it just how really heartfelt people are when they wish happy birthday or anything.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Even the regular, for example, I still because of these groups that you have there, family and friends that I left there, I create a list serve on WhatsApp, and I send good morning, but just good morning every morning to all of them. It's just that feeling that, I want to keep the connection. I want to let them know that I'm distant. I'm thousands of miles far from them.

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**Andre Almeida:** At least thinking of them.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** But I still remember thinking of them. I send every day before I come to work, I open my WhatsApp and just send a message through the entire group, go through everyone.

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**Andre Almeida:** Everyone sees it.

[00:19:31]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Yeah. They know that I'm thinking of them. I think that's part of you're right, is something that we have there. This warmth from the Brazilian culture, it can be overwhelming for someone that's not used to.

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**Andre Almeida:** True.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** But it is necessary when you think about how much you go through at work and sometimes in life, personal problems that you have, when you have someone that you know that is there for you or just thinking about them.

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**Andre Almeida:** You can just call and then tell them the problems that we listen to, through friends. I think it's wonderful that they still have this even not only with the family, but with everybody else with friends there.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Doesn't change. I think that's the thing. I usually tell my American friends that you know a Brazilian person when we meet them for the first time and they can tell their entire life in one conversations. They have no issues telling her personal. Here, people are a little more reserved. That they close in and they don't say much. They wait to have that kind of interaction with you to be able to say, The Brazilians don't care. They are going to tell you everything right.

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**Andre Almeida:** When you meet them for the first time, they really looking to know you better. One thing that I like you. If you meet a group of Brazilians, if they're not at work, they won't talk about work. They refuse to talk about work. They're going to talk about everything else, like the last holiday, what they're cooking, what happened this morning, soccer teams. [LAUGHTER] It's really more laid back and relaxing when you're meeting someone there. Then like, you out of work and then people asking you, what do you do? What projects are working with. Sometimes I feel like job interview and I meet someone, and I was like, Oh, my God, should I disclose my salary? [LAUGHTER] Are they trying to hire them?

[00:21:46]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Yes, some of them would ask. Some of them didn't dare to ask certain things. Okay, no, I prefer not to say or not to talk about that.

[00:21:53]

**Andre Almeida:** Not that the US doesn't have that as well. It does have it, but it's just different cultures.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** I think it's a little bit more formal. I don't know if formal is the way.

[00:22:02]

**Andre Almeida:** It is a little bit, but I feel it's different cultures. Like here in New England, people can be formal, but they're very open minded. Once they know you, they're very welcoming as well. Then you just have to understand I really miss, how Brazilian people act. But I travel and I see different cultures that just to understand that each place, they have their own way to act.

[00:22:34]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Yes.

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**Andre Almeida:** Over here in Brazil, you probably go on an elevator, and then people say, good morning. But here in the US is also after you, let's say, break the ice. People get to know you. Then, I think, at least in New England, people are very welcoming as well.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Very concerned, too, with your well being and everything. When I traveled to the West Coast, when I went to San Diego, and at that time, I used to go for long walks on the beach and sometimes running. Everyone was there, Hi. Good morning. Then that's a little bit different.

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**Andre Almeida:** We're going to stop blaming on the weather, I guess. [LAUGHTER]

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Well, maybe I don't know.

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**Andre Almeida:** It seems like people are happier in the summer.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Exactly.

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**Andre Almeida:** People are out. People are jogging, people are surfing.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** That makes perfect sense, Sun drive. Because I think one of the things for Brazil is always sunny. Some places extremely hot. Some places like where my mom lives extremely hot. Like in Phoenix.

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**Andre Almeida:** It is, yeah.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Minas has a variety of climate, too, right?

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**Andre Almeida:** It's not as defined as in the US, but we do have mostly, at least in my state, the cold season is rainy and then off course, we don't get snow, but it's just a little bit colder in the morning. Then you can go out wearing a sweater. Then the night as well. Then during the day, you could go out wearing just shirt. There is no problem. Of course, in the summer is also hot and then it's not so humid over there.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Exactly Minas.

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**Andre Almeida:** It's summer, but it's a little bit more dry. You go outside then you have the fresh breeze and then it doesn't feel as hot, actually.

[00:24:30]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Minas Gerais is very hilly. There's hills everywhere. It's a beautiful landscape there true.

[00:24:38]

**Andre Almeida:** It is a high altitude, then they have a lot of hills. It's very beautiful. The landscape is very beautiful. You travel, you drive. Just to put in context, sometimes Brazil is huge as the US. Sometimes you drive a whole day, and you wouldn't leave one state. [LAUGHTER]

[00:25:03]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Exactly. Minas is one of the big ones.

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**Andre Almeida:** One of the big ones in the southeast of Brazil.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** One thing that I want to clarify when you say Minas Gerais means general mines. It's because the state is also known. I think there is no other like that in Brazil for the precious stones, emeralds, and all sorts.

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**Andre Almeida:** For the mining?

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Yeah, the mining. Gold was big in the 1800s.

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**Andre Almeida:** In the 1800s, it's actually part of the tourism industry in the state. We still have old colonial cities over there, which they preserved most of the old towns. Then almost you walk back in time when you visit those churches. Minas Gerais is actually, like I said, is a mining state when the Portuguese colonized Brazil. They actually went to the coast and then they started exploring the landscape as they got further west, they found precious tons and they found gold, a lot of gold. We're talking about tons and tons of gold. It did help Portugal rebuild from the big earthquake that they had in the 17th century, I believe. But you can tell if you go to some of the churches there, there is gold around the ceiling.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Decorations all based on gold.

[00:26:37]

**Andre Almeida:** Gold ceilings, gold others. It's based on baroque style. Many of the churches. They're really beautiful. Even if in a big state like this one, there's like five or six different regions that we travel. People that live in the North, they completely different even they always speak the same language, but the accent might be different from people that live in the North of the state.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Because of the influence of the states nearby as well.

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**Andre Almeida:** It is very real.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** In the south of Minas, you would have Sao Paulo.

[00:27:14]

**Andre Almeida:** Sao Paulo which is the richest state in Brazil. Even different regions, I can tell by the soccer teams that people actually support. In my region, we are very close to Sao Paulo and we are far from the capital. Driving, we are far from the capital. All the kids back then, they were supporting soccer teams from Sao Paulo state. Interesting. My family is the same. I have three brothers. My father was the only one that supported them from my state. All the brothers they support either Sao Paulo or Rio. Then even traveling, you can tell that sometimes the climate change. Traveling one side to the stage to the other. One side might be a little bit hotter. The other side might be a little bit cooler. Of course, things are changing these days because of climate change. But it's very diverse culturally. Some people in the North, they have different food than people in the South of the state. I can tell because I don't know if you ever met people from Minas.

[00:28:33]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** I have met quite a few.

[00:28:34]

**Andre Almeida:** Some people tell you that they ate something that people in the South, never heard of.

[00:28:40]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Never heard of.

[00:28:40]

**Andre Almeida:** South of the State. No, even Sao Paulo.

[00:28:42]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** One of the things that I was introduced from someone in my town when I lived in Brazil, she was from it's a small town near Uberaba. Julinha is her name. Amazing crochet person.

[00:28:57]

**Andre Almeida:** Oh, she does crochet.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** But when I say crochet, it's not the regular crochet that we see. They are known for that tiny needle and yarn kind of a crochet that's so delicate. She brought some me, for my mom. It's just incredible work. It's fascinating to see how can they do that?

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**Andre Almeida:** It's a most in art form actually.

[00:29:20]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Because the yarns are so thin, cotton thin, and they are able to do such amazing pieces for a table.

[00:29:27]

**Andre Almeida:** I will never be able to do that.

[00:29:29]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** No, me neither. I love crochet, but not for that level. They are in a different. But cooking, she introduced me to canjiquinha

[00:29:37]

**Andre Almeida:** Oh, okay, yes.

[00:29:38]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Like smoked pork, ribs and stuff. Incredible. I had never had before, and I was in my god. She used to say, Edgar, you have to come to my house and try this. I went once and I was just fascinated how delicious it was and [inaudible 00:29:58].

[00:29:59]

**Andre Almeida:** A lot of social life revolves around food as well. Brazilians are well known for their barbecue. They really love the barbecue and sometimes people would walk on Saturday morning. But Saturday afternoon, not everything, but a lot of things are closed. In some cities, of course, shopping malls and supermarkets are open. But they have a model that noontime, it's time to eat and time to have a good time. Don't talk about work.

[00:30:38]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Exactly. Then you have barbecue, have music. You have friends coming in and sometimes more people that you didn't respect that show up.

[00:30:46]

**Andre Almeida:** Just like people here watch football on the weekend, people watch soccer. They're really crazy about their teams.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Whether it's Saturday or Sunday, they would have something showing on TV and it's always a lot of fun and family members that come or friends that show up or somewhere else just watch up somewhere else. Hey, we're here. We want to come.

[00:31:06]

**Andre Almeida:** Come to this.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Exactly.

[00:31:09]

**Andre Almeida:** You can bring people, but they don't mind if you know the place and if you bring more people, they really don't mind.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** But it's funny, if you're come, can you stop by and grab some ice or more beer or some lemons.

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**Andre Almeida:** They might ask you to bring some stuff that is missing?

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Let me ask you this. Until what age we stayed in Brazil and how far in school you went there?

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**Andre Almeida:** I probably stay until my 17th. When I was 17-years-old, and actually finished high school, I remember it's not elementary school. I finished high school there. I did a study here in the US as well. When I started at Harvard, one of the first things that I actually took opportunity to sign up was the Extension School.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** You did Extension School? Nice.

[00:32:07]

**Andre Almeida:** I did. I probably have a lot of credits there as well. I did go a lot of certificates. I didn't go a degree because, in the middle of when I was studying, unfortunately, both parents got sick. I stopped a little bit, but every once in a while I still take some classes. Because Harvard has such a good reputation, people manage Microsoft or all the technology companies, they'll come to this class just to get a degree from Harvard.

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**Edgar Kley Filho:** Because it is good for their resume.

[00:32:47]

**Andre Almeida:** It is good. They would have already a degree. They just add one more from which says Harvard on the degree.

[00:32:57]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** It should, the brand is very strong.

[00:32:58]

**Andre Almeida:** It is very strong.

[00:33:00]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** How old were you when you came to US?

[00:33:03]

**Andre Almeida:** Probably was 18.

[00:33:04]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Eighteen.

[00:33:05]

**Andre Almeida:** Seventeen, 18.

[00:33:06]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Your parents came with you, or you came alone?

[00:33:09]

**Andre Almeida:** My parents were here. They live here for a while, and then they went back to Brazil. I study over here. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:33:19]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** They came, stayed for a few years, and then moved back.

[00:33:21]

**Andre Almeida:** They moved back.

[00:33:22]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Oh, wow.

[00:33:26]

**Andre Almeida:** They really retire, actually, and then they retire in Brazil, which was probably better for them to retire over there.

[00:33:34]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Well, they went back to Araxa.

[00:33:36]

**Andre Almeida:** They went back to Araxa.

[00:33:37]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** I think it is if it is a region that they are used to and means a lot to them.

[00:33:42]

**Andre Almeida:** It is more difficult when you're older you live where you grew up most of your life and then come to a different place that everything is new. You probably as much as I do changing from where you live, especially when you go international it's almost like being born again. You already walk, of course, but you have to learn how to talk and you have to learn the language.

[00:34:10]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Adapt to everything new.

[00:34:11]

**Andre Almeida:** Everything is new. I remember the first time I went to a Dunkin' Donuts. I was like, I don't know none of this food. We don't have bagels in Brazil. They have all kinds of breads. But if you don't have bagels, I was like, What am I supposed to do with this bagel? I thought it was a donut, actually. I just had, like, a no cream cheese, bagel, and I was like, why they just don't put something in this? I didn't know they had cream cheese and all this stuff. But they were here with me, and after a while, they went back because they just want to retire there and also have a more low pace of life.

[00:34:51]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** It is the way that you described, and knowing that in Minas Gerais, it is a fantastic place to live. Then when you think here, cultural is completely different. The winter here is harsh for most of people who don't get used to.

[00:35:08]

**Andre Almeida:** Even for people that have lived here for a long time.

[00:35:10]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Exactly.

[00:35:10]

**Andre Almeida:** I think the older you get, the more difficult it is to deal with the snow.

[00:35:15]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** How dark gets in the winter.

[00:35:16]

**Andre Almeida:** You have to be prepared to have 4:30 P.M. as nighttime. [LAUGHTER]

[00:35:24]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Exactly. Did you work anywhere else before you came to work at Harvard or not here in the US?

[00:35:30]

**Andre Almeida:** I work mostly for hospitality companies. I worked for franchise. They had many Dunkin' Donuts actually before I did. I worked a little bit in healthcare, too, which is actually I was Operations Supervisor as well in healthcare.

[00:35:48]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Oh, nice.

[00:35:49]

**Andre Almeida:** That was a really good learning. From there, I moved to Harvard. Of course, it wasn't easy to get in. I think I applied three times.

[00:35:59]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Oh, you did?

[00:36:00]

**Andre Almeida:** Yeah. Funny, I applied three times, but on the third time, I was like, I'm not doing anything this summer. Let me just go on the website. I'll just send an application. Didn't expect much about it.

[00:36:13]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Then it happened.

[00:36:14]

**Andre Almeida:** Then they call me. They have an interview, and then they said, we'd like to have you in, we're hiring you. One month after, not one month after, even weeks after they call again from other department and I was like, we would like to have you here. I'm here already. Things in life you [OVERLAPPING] can't control. You really have to go with the flow. I come here already. I can't go to work for you, now you don't have to do the paperwork. But it's really different when we started. Such a big place, such a wonderful place with a lot of wonderful people. I think it was 2015 or '17 they were one of the first events that I worked on was the French economist that wrote a book called Capital on the 21st Century. Then the event was in Austin Hall. He was right there, and I was like, Oh, the other day, I was reading this guy's book, and now he's here face to face. How valuable actually to be here Harvard, a lot of people should realize as well how can really change your life meeting other people, having different experiences and working with different backgrounds as well. I started working with events.

[00:37:47]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** You started in 2014 in Radcliffe.

[00:37:50]

**Andre Almeida:** In Radcliffe.

[00:37:51]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** That was general custodial work right?

[00:37:53]

**Andre Almeida:** That was general, yeah. But like I said, the first weeks after I started, they already called from the Law School. At that time I was doing part time over there, and I could come here, work a few hours as well. That's what I did for more than a whole year.

[00:38:10]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Both are custodial, but one in Radcliffe.

[00:38:12]

**Andre Almeida:** One over here in Law School especially with the events.

[00:38:15]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Interesting.

[00:38:16]

**Andre Almeida:** It was.

[00:38:18]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Then after you were there for a while, you moved to Law School for?

[00:38:22]

**Andre Almeida:** They offered a crew chief position.

[00:38:25]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** To be here.

[00:38:26]

**Andre Almeida:** To be here. It's really, like I said, sometimes you just wait for something to happen in life and then, years and you try and then it doesn't happen. Like I said, I applied three times. In less than one year, like I said, I was home during one summer I was, Oh, not doing anything this Saturday going to apply.

[00:38:51]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Yeah.

[00:38:52]

**Andre Almeida:** I got the job. I got hired. I got a part time position, then I was doing more hours at the Law School and within one year, they even promote me to another position.

[00:39:06]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Yeah.

[00:39:08]

**Andre Almeida:** Like I said, I applied three times. But in less than one year, I was in and already being promoted. Sometimes I guess the message is you just have to be resilient. Don't let the first door that closes define what you want in life. Just keep trying. If that's really what you want, if you want to come to work at Harvard, it's really what you want, just keep trying. If you ask me as a kid, what would I be in 20 years ago, 25 years ago, if I was going to be here, be interviewed by you. I'll never think of that. I'll probably think about something else. But you really have to make the best of each situation and then just keep going forward in life.

[00:39:55]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** It's interesting you're saying that because that's exactly what I feel about my own life here. Starting landscape, cutting grass. I never project myself to be. Then coming here to take care of Law School. Then because I had to go to facilities every day, get to know people there, talk about my life, all my experience and everything else. When the opportunity appeared there, then you say, I'll try this, but should I? Because I am a landscape person versus going to.[OVERLAPPING] For some reason, we forget we were administrative people where we came from. In the moment you are a landscaper. It feels like, will they accept me or not, that situation. But there was always someone special with a vision. Like for me, it was Becky Andreasson at that time that used to be the manager.

[00:40:55]

**Andre Almeida:** I remember her.

[00:40:56]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Yes. Becky was the one who took a look at my resume and said, Yeah, he can apply and go through the process like anybody else and I owe that to her because some other person would probably say, why are you a landscape person here? Then your own interests and motivation to keep learning and trying to make an effort to fit in.

[00:41:21]

**Andre Almeida:** I guess we have to be open minded. Some day you're just sitting in front of a computer the other day, you might be doing a different job, but it doesn't mean that you ever lost what you learned, once you learn it. Unless it's a computer program the people don't use it anymore. Some skills you have them for life. You're very good in communication. It serves you a lot in understanding people, talking to people. Then other person might be good in other area as well. They might not be so good in communicating or linking with other people, but they might be good in computer or numbers. I think it's really important that if you learn something and if you keep your mind open that what we do today might not be what are we're doing tomorrow or the day after. It's really what defines you is actually what you think of yourself if you put work into it. If you want to improve really for as long as it might take, you can change your situation. Maybe sounds a little bit like coaching, but I really believe that if a lot of times 50% at least of how successful we're going to be in life, it's actually with you. Going off of opportunities, learning new skills, learning new things, putting yourself out there, is really important.

[00:43:13]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Doing your own part. Doing your own part to learn and progress and develop as well, because sometimes people expect that things come to them more than they put an effort.

[00:43:25]

**Andre Almeida:** Sometimes we have an idea that things in life are going to be in a straight line. I'm going to graduate college. I'm going to have a degree, and then the jobs just to come to me. I work in a very successful job for the rest of my life. Unfortunately, that's not how things work in life. You might have a good resume, but you really have to keep improving yourself as a person. Because what's on a piece of paper is not really defines you. It's funny, in my classes with the Extension School there was this manager that he mentioned that this guy was brilliant. He was working. He graduated from Harvard, and then really he was working with us, but his best skills, I think was computer or some computer programming or this stuff. Then he really struggled. He was brilliant. But anyways, he ended up having to change career. He stopped working in that company, and I think he went to work in marketing or something else. He wasn't like, I got a degree in computer science, and we're going to be here working with computers for the rest of my life. Things are not really a straight line. Sometimes you have to divert from your path, to go back on your path again. Of course, there's different situations and backgrounds. But there is opportunity.

[00:45:03]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** If you want to do the work.

[00:45:05]

**Andre Almeida:** True.

[00:45:05]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Exactly. Andre. Are you happy with the work that you do?

[00:45:10]

**Andre Almeida:** I am happy with the work that I do. I'm very happy to work with the people that I work with.

[00:45:15]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** It's a beautiful group of people.

[00:45:16]

**Andre Almeida:** It is a beautiful group. It's very informal. I'm very happy to work with all the other departments here.

[00:45:25]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** The diverse department as well. People from different departments. [OVERLAPPING]

[00:45:29]

**Andre Almeida:** They're very nice. I never had any department that was difficult. They're always very polite and, I know, sometimes we're all on the stress. But I think the Law School is a great place to work. Harvard is a great place to work. There is a lot of opportunities for you to learn. The benefits are incredible. I was just complaining that I have too much time off.

[00:46:03]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** That you cannot take.

[00:46:04]

**Andre Almeida:** I cannot take, I'm maxed out. I took two weeks vacation already this year, and I'm maxed out in my vacation time, I have to take one day so I can keep accruing. I was like, What am I going to do with this time off? I already travel, I already rested.

[00:46:21]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** I don't need to go anywhere else.

[00:46:22]

**Andre Almeida:** I think I'm on vacation. I'm just going to come back and work actually, because I'm bored. But thinking back then and sometimes that I'll tell people as well. We are here in this moment and we are here at Harvard, and they might not remember us in, like, 20 years, just like we don't remember people 20 years back or people that work in the '50s. Maybe the professors, people that have their names. But I don't know who was a manager in the '70s or in the '80s. We are here in this time and we are working with a wonderful group of people. I always tell people that work with me, sometimes we spend a lot of time at work, it's more even than we spend at home, so let's make our experiences here more enjoyable, be nice to everybody. Sometimes people not have a good day. But if we work, if you try to go the extra mile, just to make people comfortable, be nice [OVERLAPPING] to each other. Really happy to be here at Harvard. I don't know if I always will be here, but I'm really happy to be here now.

[00:47:45]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** I'm glad that you are and I'm so happy. First because you also have to come and talk to me. I really wanted to do this for a long time. Second, for your promotion, because I know how hard you work. I have seen you around work. Sometimes I used to see, I think at night, or work in the night you as well.

[00:48:07]

**Andre Almeida:** I work at night, I work morning shift.

[00:48:08]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Depends on what is necessary.

[00:48:09]

**Andre Almeida:** Yeah

[00:48:10]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** So I know how dedicated you are for your work. When I heard that you got this promotion, I was really happy because you deserve it.

[00:48:19]

**Andre Almeida:** Thank you.

[00:48:19]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** You are really a wonderful person to work with. There was never a moment that I reached out to you and ask for a favor that you didn't respond right away. You are always there for the entire community and for the students as well, and for the fantastic custodial crew that we have too. I want to congratulate you again for your promotion, well deserved, and to thank you for participating in this project that we created here to show people from different backgrounds from different parts of this Law School, so other folks working here have a chance to learn because sometimes they don't have time to get to know you because of different perspectives or condition where they work for. Andre I'm so happy that you are from Araxa because I want to go there to visit this town. It's my life dream, and I have to go one of these days.

[00:49:15]

**Andre Almeida:** I can have you stay in my parents' house over there.

[00:49:19]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** I would like to go there and visit them for sure.

[00:49:21]

**Andre Almeida:** You're going to come back very relaxed.

[00:49:23]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** I almost went this year, but there was a curve ball and we went to Northeast. Now I'm going December to visit my family, and we are going first to Fortaleza and then back to my mom's house. But I'm going to try to make an effort because if you are going to Belo Horizonte, go to do the historic part.

[00:49:42]

**Andre Almeida:** Oh, the historic cities?

[00:49:44]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Yeah, cities, but one in my trajectory would be Araxa. The last one before driving to my mom's town because I really want to do. I have a fascination for Dona Beija for Araxa in general for Minas in general, I think it is an amazing historic city that you have so much to see there. But anyways, so thank you again.

[00:50:05]

**Andre Almeida:** Thank you for having me.

[00:50:06]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Very much

[00:50:07]

**Andre Almeida:** Then thank you for having this program, as well.

[00:50:10]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** Thank you.

[00:50:10]

**Andre Almeida:** I look into all the interviews, and I would never know that some people have such a rich background or have so many histories if I didn't have these interviews. Really from the bottom of my heart, thank you for doing this work that you do as well.

[00:50:26]

**Edgar Kley Filho:** No, thank you. Thank you very much. For everybody out there listening, I'll see you around. Bye-bye. [MUSIC]