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My First Job: Mila Bridger

BY GULFSHORE BUSINESS FEBRUARY 11, 2020



Mila Bridger

“I was still in high school when I worked at our family business in Poland, Orłowski Printing Co. My family had started out very small, with just a little Xerox machine and built it up to a printing company. Every summer, I would be recruited to work there, so all my vacations in high school were spent at the printing company in the front office doing tiny jobs. My uncle, who ran the company, would walk in with his clients who needed brochures, advertising leaflets or manuals. He would ask, ‘Can you bring us two coffees or two teas?’ and I would be petrified because I had no idea how to make coffee or

tea, probably up until 10 years ago. (I’m so bad with cooking!) Back in Poland, we are very into having tea and coffee, and I never knew how much to add. In my head, I’m like, ‘I’m going to make such a strong tea and they’re going to have a caffeine overdose!’ I would always try to avoid doing it. I’d ask older people to make the coffee because I was so ashamed to ask how to make it. I never had a complaint, but I saw a bunch of coffees and teas that were still in full glasses when the clients left.

That job definitely taught me little things, though, like having to show up on time, doing the best you can, and quality over quantity. But, I was really waiting for the weekend to just get out and take some photos. I had a little film camera and I would travel with it. All of my money was going toward extra film. [My family was kind of concerned that I would like (photography)] too much and were afraid I might want to pursue it as a career, which actually happened.]

There was a lot of paying-attention-to-details with prints [on the job]. Colors would always have to match, and that kind of steered me into looking at my own prints very carefully and choosing the right place to print them. Now, there are lots of places—let’s say those little drugstores—that will print your family photos, but they’ll have a red hue in it because nobody really cares. But, I remember [my family] was really anal about colors having to match, and the letters could not be shadowed, and the quality had to be good. That all put my eye into it too, and when I look at my work, it has to be the exact color and the print has to be perfect.”

—As told to Melanie Pagan

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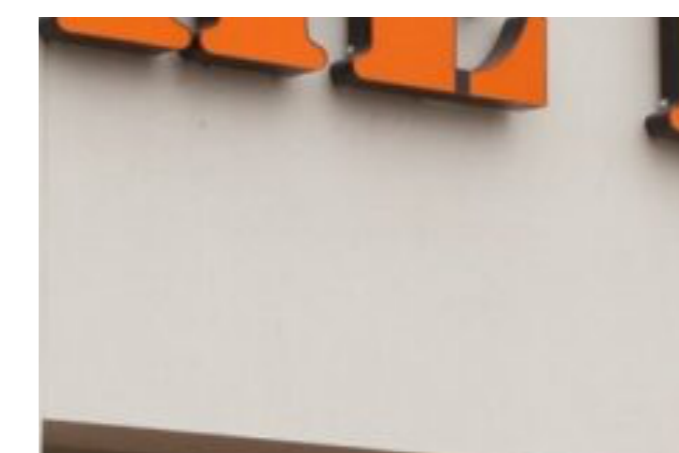
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