

PREPARED FOR :  
Tipless Virtual Screenings

2023

# TIPLESS

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

  
FLOW IN THE DARK  
PRODUCTIONS





## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Thank you for joining us for our virtual screening of *Tipless!* I am excited to share this film, which I hope will be a part of an important conversation facing American restaurants.

*Tipless* was birthed out of my experience working in the hospitality industry. For over a decade, I worked in food service as I tried to pay my way through college and make independent films. I have worked in a variety of restaurants ranging from fast food to casual fine dining and having worked in both tipped and tip-free environments, I saw first-hand the effects tipping made within a restaurant system. It inspired me to create a film that explored the impacts more in depth and celebrate those trying to pave the way to a better model of restaurant business ownership.

The tip-free restaurant movement in America is driven by a desire to fix disparities built into the modern restaurant model and this project explores whether it could be the future for sustainability in restaurants. There has been a lot of conversation in our country about how to best help the most disadvantaged in our societies and I believe this is vitally important. Minimum wage has been one of the most prominent ways politicians have attempted to help the lowest income workers and has gained a lot of support from the public.

Tipless showcases some of the ways minimum wage laws have changed the dynamic in some of the most progressive cities and shed light on how the legislations we vote on are practically affecting our communities. Doing this, we hope to give the public a better idea of what small businesses are experiencing in the face of minimum wage reform.

The film isn't meant to push any specific agenda, rather honestly explore whether our efforts to give support to those who are most disadvantaged in our societies are working in practice and spark a conversation on how we can better support the lowest paid workers and create sustainability in the restaurant industry. Our team hopes that we can do this by sharing these restaurants' stories and looking at the way minimum wage changes have helped encourage the tipless restaurant movement.

There is a lot that the public doesn't know about the way restaurants and small business legislations operate and I believe this film can bring to light some of the intricacies of the way those systems are structured. But ultimately, I hope it sparks a better conversation about how we approach business legislation and restaurant ownership while also considering how we can support low-income workers in making more money.

*-Cassidy van der Kamp*



# OPPINIONS FROM REDDIT (2023):

"We went to a cocktail bar a couple weeks ago that had the Toast checkboxes on the receipt (where it just has you check a box and sign for 20%, 25%, 30% etc). All good, checked the box for 20%, easy enough...Until I looked at the itemized receipt and noticed they have an automatic 20% living wage service charge. And so basically I paid 40% tip because I was too embarrassed to say wtf."

"I'm a former server and I always tip, but I do think the tip prompt is out of line at places that aren't sit down restaurants, where the person you are tipping doesn't provide a service other than ringing up your purchase. Like Arizmendi, where you bag your items and take them to the counter to pay. I always put a buck in the jar, but last time I paid with a card and the minimum tip prompt was 20% which was \$2.75. That's a lot for just ringing up a bag of bread. Obviously, you can change the prompt or just not tip, but it does make you feel like this is what is expected."

"Bars/restaurants where you 1) order at the counter 2) pick up your food from a service window and 3) have to bus your own table (while having to follow the directions on where to put glasses/plates/compost/hopes and dreams) AND then to have the default ipad tip at 30% is beyond absurd."

"Ghost kitchens are the worst. They have zero front service and the online ordering sneaks in tips on par with sit down restaurants."

"I honestly feel like tipping should be illegal at this point. Like, ban restaurants from taking tips and customers from paying them. And raise the minimum wage to offset the blow to employees."

# POINTS OF INTEREST

- Are there many tip-free restaurants in my local community? Why do you think that is?
- What type of business in my area includes tipping as payment? (i.e. restaurants, cafés, salons, ect.) Why are these payments included?
- What are the local requirements for tip workers in my area? How is it affecting the small business communities? How is it affecting the workers?
- Do you believe there is problems with front and back of house price disparities? Why or why not? If yes, what are the possible solutions?
- How are communities faring that have been the forerunners to minimum wage legislative changes? (i.e. California, New York, Flagstaff, ect.) Are there long-term positives? Are there long-term negatives?
- What are the trade-off's to operating a tip-free restaurant? What are the trade-off's to operating as a tipped restaurant?
- Should bias in tipping be considered in making decisions about allowing tips? Does 'tipless' solution help alleviate any potential bias?
- If a restaurant was 'tipless' would that by nature mean the cost of the meals were higher than the average price points for its category? In other words, the consumer bears the burden. Are consumers willing to bear that burden?
- What would price increases look like in a tip-free restaurant? If an average price of a meal was \$100.00 for a party of 4, plus general standard of 15% tip, that would mean \$115.00. Should that restaurant go 'tipless' would that mean the meal would essentially be \$115.00?
- If a server gets a nice tip, is it fair that other workers that may not have the opportunity to "serve" do not share in this (Dishwashers, Busboys, Hosts)? If a restaurant has servers, it's not "fast food" and consumers should expect to pay a premium for the dining experience, but that includes quality of food, hospitality, and server competence, so shouldn't tips be up to the customer AND shared with all the players supporting the work, food, and presentation?

# ACTION STEPS



## HOW CAN I DO THAT? —○

If you feel passionate to further the cause, there are opportunities to expand the awareness of the issues raised in the film.

Please consider:

- Sharing the film via emails and/or social
- Hosting a screening of your own.
- Researching wage bills or local measures to cast a more informed vote.
- Talk with local businesses during and after elections to understand how legislation is affecting your community.
- Share your thoughts with those you trust (Might even be the best place to start)

## WHAT CAN I DO? —○

The best thing to do is start making space for honest conversations with those in your community. So many impacted by these issues are afraid to speak out about the realities of this issue, and if there isn't the space to share these concerns in community in a healthy way, we believe the problems will only increase. A great place to start is by actively seeking out those who are most impacted. Speak with those most affected by the issues and be willing to hear the opinions from all sides. Each decision a business or employee makes will come with trade-off's but do your best to listen and observe the ripple effects of those decisions, with sustainability in mind.



## CONTACT INFO

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