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Interview with Nicholas A. Batenburg

Marika West

Nicholas A. Batenburg

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Researcher's name: Marika West

Event: Interview with Nicholas A. Batenburg

Place: Howard Hilton

23379 Coshocton Road, Howard, OH 43208

Co-Workers present: None

MW: Marika West

NB: Nicholas A. Batenburg

MW: Okay, so where are you from?

NB: I am from Studenville, Ohio. I'm from Wheeling, West Virginia. I'm 30 years old. And that's about all I got, thus far.

MW: What brought you here tonight?

NB: The fact that I'm in the Labor's Union, and I'm at the training facility located a mile and a half up the road.

MW: Okay, and how long have you been in town?

NB: Off and on, over the past six months I've been here about five times now.

MW: Okay, and do you usually come here?

NB: Yes, I like this bar of all places. The fact that it's a little bitty bar with little bitty people with little bitty minds. [Awkward laughter] I told you you'd like this interview.

MW: So what actually brings you back, though?

NB: The fact that I'm forced to go to the middle of Ohio to learn about something I, up until just now five times ago knew nothing about.

MW: [Mumbles]

NB: Education. The further development of my mind.

MW: So what are you doing with the labor union?

NB: I am here at their training facility to learn how to use, to use grid-saw. Grid. How to lay out things. How to find elevations and leveling from know events such as based at sea level to already known things in town to where ever a building is being built. To layout.

MW: Um. [Can hear Biggie's "Just a Friend" in background] Have you sang tonight?

NB: [Singing] You say he's just a friend. [Speaking] Yes, yes I have. I sang Otis Redding, "Dock of the Bay" actually.

MW: Nice. Do you feel pretty welcomed into the bar?

NB: Yes. This one especially. I really like this bar.

MW: Why this one more than others?

NB: I found. In my jobs and doing different things I've done. I've traveled all across America from Montana to California to the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida. Every country-every state I've pretty much been in. And at the little shit dive bars, I've found that there are more people like me. Not that I'm a little shit dive person, It's the fact that it's the melting pot. It's the ideology of what our country is founded on. And therefor the mix of people is here. Like really. What ethnicity are you?

MW: I'm-

NB: You're Native American, part, right?

MW: Nope.

NB: I am so wrong then, wow. What are you?

MW: I'm half Chinese and half white.

NB: No you're not. I beg to differ. What half is what?

MW: Does it matter?

NB: Mm, genetically yes, actually it does, but aside from that.

MW: Well, um. So you said-do you tend to go to bars when you travel?

NB: Not at all, I hardly drink.

MW: Okay, why'd you come to this one?

NB: Well, um, I can't sleep on a bed that is actually 4 inches shorter than my height. So the only way I've found to actually to actually sleep on the bed that the training center has provided is for me to drink myself to bed. I know that sounds like a very fucked up answer, I'm being very truthful.

Random bar patron: I'll have to agree with you, I'll have to concur.

NB: You concur? Good to hear, good to hear.

MW: Okay. I mean, that's probably pretty good.

NB: No common. Ask me some real questions. You want-you want-

MW: Okay, what would you wanna answer? What would you wanna tell me?

NB: Ask me what I've done in the world? Ask me how I ended up here? Like, what have I done? What

do you do as a person that puts you in this predicament?

MW: I mean, I think th-

NB: What are your views on the economy? What are your views on social unrest in Bosnia-Herzegovina? These are important para-litical questions that you should ask anybody.

MW: I mean, I think that's all interesting. It just doesn't pertain to my project a lot.

NB: Yes it does! Your project is to get the entire scope of people that go to little shit bars.

MW: Well, yeah, more about what goes on... but like do you think-

NB: Okay, let's answer your question about what goes on here. I enjoy billiards. It is the last game that we have as men that is actually an honorable game. Most of the dive bars have a pool table. So therefore billiards is a good game. Though it is the most racist game in the world. The whole idea is for the white guy to knock the black guy off the face of the planet earth. I still like the game. Doesn't matter who I'm playing. White, black, green, purple, alien, pink. I like-

[Friend comes to tell me it's my turn to sing]

MW: My turn?

Friend: You're up?

MW: Okay, I gotta go sing.

NB: [To friend] I'm in the middle of an interview. What are you-[Notices his sweatshirt] How do you go to University of Chicago, man? Are you from Chicago?

MW: I'm gonna go sing.