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Interview with Chad Long

Marika West

Chad Long

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Accession number: PS-MS-TR-WEST-022212
Researcher's name: Marika West
Event: Interview with Chad Long
Place: Honey Buckets
103 West Vine Street, Mount Vernon, OH 43050
Co-Workers present: None

MW: Marika West
CL: Chad Long

MW: My name is Marika West. I'm conducting an interview with Chad Long at Honey Buckets. And the address here?

CL: It's 103 West Vine Street.

MW: Okay, on February 22, 2012. So, you guys have owned the place for just a year or two now?

CL: Yeah, since April. About April 18th.

MW: Okay. And, what was here before? Just a bar?

CL: It used to be a private club. And then they turned it into a place called the King of Clubs. And then they put a kitchen in it, so it was a kitchen slash bar kind of deal.

MW: Yeah, I remember seeing that before. So, let's see, do most people in here know each other?

CL: I would say about 90 percent do. A lot of its from the place I ran before. I ran it for 9 years. A lot of them come from over there, which already know each other. And then they, blended in with these other people that were here before. The ones that wanted to stay. So, yeah, it's pretty cool. A pretty cool deal.

MW: Why do you think people come here?

CL: It's relaxing. You get treated really well. Cheap prices, clean bar. It's mostly, 100 percent of it is treating people right, and then they come back. It's common sense.

MW: I thought it was interesting when we talked before about how you guys don't post things on the internet. You just mentioned that you sort of, keep attracting a local crowd. Can you talk a little more about that?

CL: We do, I do a lot on Facebook. I've got about 17 hundred friends on Facebook, and that's where I do most of my advertising at. I just that, you know, you go into Google, you know, the internet and all that kind of stuff. I just feel that you're wasting money to do it that way. It's more of a neighborhood, a kind of, a small town bar. If you do too much advertising, you're going to bring in people, stuff that you do not want in here.

MW: Why do you wanna keep it just a small town place?

CL: The fact that we talked about just a couple minutes ago. Everybody gets along in here. As soon as you start getting people in here that don't necessarily get along with everybody. The people that come in here to begin with don't like to come in here. I've seen a lot of bars around this town that got to big and then they lost their normal patrons that pay the bills. They completely lost them. It's just too much drama and stuff going on. We really keep track of drama, fights, and stuff like that to make sure everybody is still having a good time.

MW: I'm also interested in people coming in here early in the morning. Coming off their Roles Royce shift or third shift, generally. Is there any other bar that opens as early as you guys?

CL: There is. There is another bar called Legends. That started opening up when we closed down the other bar. We were the only bar in town for like 10 years that did the early morning happy hour and we were really successful at it. So then when we made the move over here, Legends decided that they were going to try and take my customers that I had over there. Which they failed, and they came with me over here. But that's the only ones that are open that early.

MW: And you get really consistent, or the same sort of people coming in every day?

CL: Yeah, yeah I do. We got people from Jalwin coming in. Mowser, Burrows. A group of five or six or seven depending on, they're coming in. Usually, like, one group coming in on Tuesday, another group coming on Wednesday, and they kind of got their own schedule going on. And then, on Fridays, I see the stress of the week and everybody kind of comes in on Friday. SO it's a really cool atmosphere Friday nights, or Friday mornings.

MW: So the project that I'm doing is talking about community spaces. Sort of where people hang out, what they do, and the value that these places add to Knox County life here, as a whole. Do you have any perception of bars as being a really central place in terms of social activity, or do you see how that relates? It's kind of a vague question.

CL: Yeah, I understand what you're saying. I feel that people get bundled up all the time. We don't have the best weather around here. So they get bundled up, and they stay at home. For them to come out and socialize a little bit is huge for them as a person. Come out and laugh. And they're gonna come in here and have a good time. Laugh and joke around, and I think that is really, really important for people to do. I just think people get way too serious caught up in life. And they need an outlet. And if you have children and stuff, and a job you don't get that outlet. So I think it's real important to come in here and have a good time.

MW: So you see it as a sort of social escape?

CL: Oh yeah, definitely, definitely. And since everybody knows each other in here, they come in and it's just instantly. They come in and they're just comfortable and have a good time. It gives them an opportunity to get rid of the work stress, go home, and do their thing at the house. And not bring it home with them. They can just have that kind of medium in there. It's really important to people.

MW: Do you see mostly men coming in here? Or do people come in as couples?

CL: Oh, definitely, definitely. We've really worked at making this place a clean place. If you go around town you don't see that as much as you do here. Women come and they feel like it's clean for a bar. I mean, it's not perfectly clean, obviously, but compared to other bars in town, it's a nice place to come. It's not the greatest place in the world, I did what I could with what I had. As long as you control what goes on around and they feel comfortable, yeah, they will come in. I have groups of girls come in all the time. We have the bands out here on Friday nights and tons of women come in and have a good time cause they know it's a place where it's monitored.

MW: So what kinds of music do you usually have in here?

CL: We have everything from heavy rock n roll, regular rock n roll, southern rock. We have a bluegrass this weekend. I've had americana rag-time blues from the 1920s and 30s. Twice in the last two months, they've come in here, a group called Front Porch Revival, which is really good. They come in here and play. In the winter time I have mostly acoustic sets. In the summer time I open up the stage out there and we have outside concerts out there rock n roll and stuff. I've had country in here before also, but that's really, we don't really go too far into the other ones. Cause, you gotta stay true to what you have in Knox County. We're not Columbus, we're Knox County, so.

MW: So you try to pull local talent?

CL: I try to find local talent. My number one priority is keeping local talent employed. And then I will reach out into Columbus, Mansfield areas. It seems like if you get a couple bands from Columbus, usually, if you treat them right, make them feel welcome, they will help you out finding other bands to help you. And I've been very fortunate to have that happen to me, a lot.

MW: I don't want to take up too much of your time, but what do you think, if you were me and trying to ask these sort of questions, what question am I missing? Do you know what you would add?

CL: It's really hard to maintain a tavern or bar right now. The way that things are going. Taxes are so high. You got all of your licensing. Now I have music licensing which I gotta pay for now. It's really expensive. Crazy expensive. So it's really hard to try and do something like this. You gotta be really motivated to do it, to keep up with it. I see a lot of bars the owners only last 4 or 5 years, they burn themselves out, it's a struggle sometimes to do it. The satisfaction of, when you get people in here and they have a great time, and the next day they're like, they come up and they're like, I had a really good time in there and I told this and this and this person. And you start seeing them bringing friends in, and it's really neat. Another one that I really enjoy about this job is getting to know some of the older people that come in here. Usually they've

lost their wife or husband or whatever. And they're just kinda rolling around on their own. And for me to be able to conversant with them, help them out, little things that they don't have someone to do, it's really gratifying to me. Anytime that I can have a fundraiser and use this place as a driving force to make money for the colt football league or hospice or anything like that. That brings me just great gratitude to be able to do stuff like that. That makes me feel really good. That you took a place that a lot of people feel a bar is like dark side, you know. That's what I try not to be. We try to keep it clean, try to keep it bright. And do good things for people, so people can change their perception of what a bar is in this town. I just really enjoy touching people. And that's the main thing that I dig into this. I'm a very social person and I just love affecting people in positive manners. And it just gives me an opportunity and a lot of people to do it with, and I think that's really keeps me going at it.

MW: Great, that's actually really helpful. Thanks.

CL: Cool.