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Interview with G. Earl Endsley

Marika West

Earl Endsley

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Researcher's name: Marika West

Event: Interview with G. Earl Endsley (“Former bar owner,” does not release use of name)

Place: Howard Hilton

23379 Coshocton Road, Howard, OH 43208

Co-Workers present: None

MW: Marika West

EE: Earl Endsley

MW: Hi, my name is Marika West. I'm here interviewing Earl Endsley. He's the former owner of the Howard Hilton. Today is February 27th, 2012, and we're sitting at the Howard Hilton right now. Um, so, how long did you own--?

EE: We owned the bar for 30 years. From 78 through 2008.

MW: What was the bar's name?

EE: Derek Inn.

MW: And it was in this location?

EE: Yes, yes.

MW: So, how did you get in to owning the bar? How did you purchase it?

EE: Oh, it's kinda hard to say. I was in a couple other businesses and I was in here on evening. We got talking about the bar. They said it was for sale. We made a deal. I traded a semi, some money. And, we bought the bar. And my wife pretty much run it from then until the day we closed it.

MW: What attracted you to bar-keeping?

EE: I really don't know if anything did. Just something seemed like a good business to get into at the time.

MW: So you said you were here, so saw when this building was built and the first bar was put into it.

EE: It just had one small bar and a couple of pool tables in it. And I believe it was built around 1950. The people that owned it had a previous bar across the road, and it burnt down. And they come over here and built this one. And there were, I think, three other owners here until we purchased. And I think it's been owned twice since we sold it.

MW: Has the character of the bar changed much between owners?

EE: Yes, quite a bit. Quite a bit. The past owner. He was just here a very short time. He couldn't make a go of it. These people bought it. They're doing real well at it. Nice little bar for anyone to come to. They traded [can't hear response] You can bring your wife and children in, don't have to worry about it. Other than that I think it's doing real well.

MW: How-Is it different from when you owned it?

EE: Yes. Quite a bit different. When we owned it I was also in the oil business. And there was a lot of drilling going on there. And most of our customers were oil people. And people from the labor training center down the road a couple miles. But the community has changed a lot since then. Beyond that, I don't believe it's changed all that much.

MW: How would you characterize the community that is here now, then. That's different from when you were running it.

EE: Well, Apple Valley is coming in around the time we owned it. And it's grown greatly since then. And you get a lot of customers from out of there. And they're from all over the state. Some of them out of state. When we owned it, it was pretty much community people around here close. And people who worked in the oil. But today, it's pretty much local people and people out of the valley.

MW: Why do you keep coming back?

[Before he can answer a friend of Earl's comes in and says hi. Music starts on the jukebox]

EE: Dale here, he's one of the few of us old-timers still around... It's always been a nice place for the community to get together, BS a little bit.

MW: Actually, do you think we could go outside because of the music.

[First recording ends. Start second]

MW: Okay. So, why do you keep coming back again?

EE: It's just a meeting place for friends. It's kinda like home after being here 30 years. I don't come as often as I used to. Maybe once or twice a week. When we owned it, it was seven days a week. After a little bit away you start missing missing it and you wanna come back.

MW: So, it's essentially been the same then, you know, throughout the years, even though the people have changed slightly.

EE: Yes. Yes. Most of the old friends that I had are gone. The one we just talked to in there, he's about, him and a couple other ones are about the only ones left. People... a lot of them I don't know today.

MW: Do all your friends still come here, though?

EE: Oh yeah.

MW: More than any other place in town?

EE: Yeah. Like, well here, a lot of them go over to Hidden Hills Golf Course. Which is another bar down the road about a mile away. A real nice place to go to. Pretty much beyond that its kinda the same old place.

MW: Do you get to meet younger people though?

EE: Yeah, oh yeah. Well so many of them start drinking in the bar you know a lot of them. But, a lot of them are not all that young anymore either.

MW: So, you said that, bars are really important to communities when I talked to you earlier.

EE: Yes they are.

MW: Well, can you talk about that a little bit more?

EE: Yeah, if the economies is good around here, all the people kinda communicate at the bar. And if the bar does well, they hire help. Just like this bar since it's took over and doing well again. I think they employ, I don't know, seven eight, or nine people here which helps out quite a bit... And then there, used to be there was a lot of business down in the bars. When I was drilling oil wells, a hand shake in the bar it was never a thought that-You pretty much knew the people. You shook hands in the bar, you drill an 80 or 100 thousand dollar well. No problems. And then, that's where everybody met. The people that cemented the wells, the people that hydro-fracked the wells. All your supply houses that were from far out of town, 50 to 100 miles. They would bring their friends. Come to you bar every night which was bringing a lot of outside business in. Helping the community. You got a lot of farmers come in, they bring their friends. I, I think that bars do a lot for the community. I guess that's about all I can say about that.

[Chuckles]

MW: Um, I was talking to one bar owner, and he was talking about it almost as, a social service because running a bar is hard. But then you get to interact with people and provide almost a service to the community through running the bar. Do you feel like your experience reflects on that? Do you feel like it's true for you?

EE: Oh very defiantly, very defiantly.

[A friend exiting the bar says hi to Earl. Employee moves a sign around, cusses]

EE: You'll have to get rid of that language. But that goes along with a bar, I guess.

MW: So we were talking about running a bar as a sort of social service to the community.

EE: It takes a certain kind of person to run a bar. You gotta put up with a lot of crap. You meet a lot of real nice people. It's not an easy life at seven days a week. And pretty much runs from 8, 9 in the morning until midnight, one, two o clock in the morning. It is, it's a tough job. It's a tough job. Some people you don't get much respect out of at times. Especially when it's closing time. Somebody gets about half lived and they wanna stay another hour or two. They don't understand you can't do that or you'll loose your license.

MW: So why did you stay in it for 30 years then?

EE: Oh, I guess for the money and just seeing and meeting the people every day. Beyond that, I don't guess I have any real big reason. Not much more to tell you about it, unless you've got questions.

MW: Yeah, well, so you know the nature of the project, right? How these public spaces sort of function in the community. Do you have any-is there a question that I'm missing, like is there a question, story you'd like to tell me? Or a question you think would be important?

EE: There's, there's a lot of people that are afraid to go in bars. With some bars I agree. But this is a community bar. I believe anybody is welcome and shouldn't be afraid to stop in, cause it's a very friendly place. Come get a good lunch, kinda BS your friends a little bit and help kill a little time. They've got a lot of functions that old and young can get involved in. I don't mean real young. They can come play pool, come play euchre. This place here, it's got some type of a function every night. Along with great food.

MW: Is this one of your favorite places in Howard?

EE: Yeah, there is no other place to go other than the gold course, which is closer to my house than this. I pretty much visit the community bars around here once in a while. Cause we were all friends. Within about a four mile radius we got four bars. I'll stop in and see people there every once in a while.

MW: You're more likely to meet at a bar than at a restaurant or?

EE: For me I do. Yes. Yeah. Either a bar or a gold course, but most golf courses got bars too, so. That's what most of the guys do around here in the summer time: play golf or fish. It's a good place to go have a cool one in the afternoon.

MW: I think that's pretty good then.

EE: Yeah, that's about enough.