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The Heroin Spoon

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Amanda Wangberg
Logan, Utah
November 19, 2018

“The Heroin Spoon” Occupational Folklore

Informant:

Amanda Wangberg is a coworker and good friend of mine. She is twenty-six and has spent the majority of her life in the Midwest, but has been in Cache Valley about five or six years now. She is a busser and server at Herm’s Inn, a local breakfast hub in Logan, Utah, and has been working there for almost two years.

Context:

“Herman’s Inn,” as it was initially called, made its debut in the early 20th century, with the exact year and dates unknown. Built and founded by Herman (“Herm”) and Elizabeth (“Lizzy”) Johnson along Canyon Road, Herm’s Inn was, at one point in time, quite literally one’s last chance to “gas up” before entering the mouth of Logan Canyon. Decades later, after over half a century of neglect, Herm’s was bought and restored by local businessman Jim Laub to revive the building and its glorious history. Reestablished in 2012, Herm’s Inn is now a popular breakfast and lunch destination for those who know how to find it. Despite its unassuming appearance and quiet location within a residential area, Herm’s holds a colorful history, including an underground whiskey operation during prohibition and notions of the building being haunted.

Herm’s Inn is now home to a collection of old stories and legends that still circulate around the Valley today, not to mention a series of newly developed jokes, traditions, and numinous experiences among current employees.



*Herm’s Inn in its original state. Exact date unknown.
(Source: www.hermsinn.com/history)*



*Herm’s Inn today.
(Source: www.hermsinn.com/history)*

I interviewed Amanda along with five other coworkers from Herm’s in the living room of my apartment. The setting of this group interview was very casual: we were all circled around my coffee table, drinking beer and wine as we often do on our evenings after work.

This account, though given in the midst of several other stories about Herm’s, was a stand-alone in that it was the only story that did not revolve around a ghost or a haunting, although it is still

incredibly relevant to Herm's, its history, and its culture. Furthermore, this story is interesting in that it reflects some of the stereotypes of restaurant culture, tying this small local spot to the realities of the food business at large.

The other pieces from this group interview can be found under the following names: "The White Figure," "The Children See Ghosts," "Tired of Talking to Ghosts," "The Pantry Door," and "Haunted Coffee Spoons."

Text:

Amanda: Did you guys hear about the heroin spoon?

Steve: Yeah I was there for that!

Amanda: So, one day I was polishing silverware, and then I like [shrugs] pick up this spoon, and I'm like, [slowly, emphasized:] What. The. Fuck. [laughter] and it was obviously like torched to shit.

Steve: It had been lighted.

Amanda: Oh yeah. And I like run downstairs, and I'm like Andrea [manager] I just found a heroin spoon [laughter] and she's just like, "Whatever!" and I just thought, "Well that was rather cavalier" and I was like "Okay, whatever." I go back upstairs, and then, later that day, I'm telling Kat [server] and Riley [chef] about it, and they're like, "Uhh...this is not okay" [laughter] and then so the next day, they're like, "Heather [owner] did you see the heroin spoon in your garbage?" [laughing to herself] and, um, and she picks it up and she's like, "what the fuck!" [laughter] "What is this doing in my garbage can!" And then she made Riley come down, like leave the line, and come downstairs, and tell her, how drugs work, and like, how does one cook heroin? And why?

Steve: [interjecting] Why do they need a spoon?

Amanda: And, uh, then she was like, maybe we should drug test everyone, and then it was like mmm? [Amanda makes a skeptical face]

Gette: Well you're not going to have any employees.

Steve: Okay that's where that came up, yeah, she came up and she was like, "If I drug test everybody, then I won't have employees" [laughter]

Gette: Exactly.

Amanda: Well I mean she doesn't have to drug test us like to fire us, she's just [pause] seein' what we're up to.

Steve: She doesn't have to drug test me, she just has to ask me, I'll tell her [laughter]

Gette: That's true I'll tell her.

Texture:

Amanda is more of a quiet and passive speaker, though her tone here was very expressive when telling this story. Her language use is not only reflective of her, but of the way most people speak in the restaurant business from my experience. The implications made from this story are that most employees at Herm's do drugs; though this cannot be explicitly confirmed, it can be assumed based on the responses of not only Amanda, but also Steve and Gette, who work at Herm's as well, that drug use is both common and conspicuous. The content shared was typical among this group (as we talk about work often) and everyone present seemed comfortable, as they were all drinking and laughing periodically.

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