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Folklife Archives Project 780 – Legend-Trippin at the Old Richardsville Road Bridge

Interview with Ellyn Kerchenski

Interviewee: Ellyn Kerchenski

Interviewer: Abby Zibart

Date: 11-20-13

Location: Cravens Library, WKU

Abby: Today I'll be interviewing Ellyn Kerchenski about her experience at the Richardsville Road bridge. What have you heard about the bridge?

Ellyn: Well, I've heard that, um, like, the legend, I guess, started that a small child was playing on the bridge and a large vehicle maybe like a truck or tractor or something came through the bridge, did not see her and ran her over, basically, and she fell off the bridge and into the river below. Or, something of that nature. She died on that bridge for all intents and purposes. Um, and that, um, if you go there at night and you park your car in the middle of the bridge and put your car in neutral that she will push your car off the bridge, like, not off into the river, but back onto steady ground.

Abby: Do you believe in ghosts, and you think that this belief might have affected your experience any?

Ellyn: I, I very much believe in ghosts, and the paranormal of today's world. Like, it's hard for me to imagine that somebody's spirit dies along with their body, and depending on certain situations, um, spirits might be a little bit more inclined to stay because they feel like their life might not have been finished or it went out quicker than what they intended for it to do. Um, as far as it relating to the, uh, Richardsville Road little girl, uh, I feel as though any child who dies

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unexpectedly will somehow remain tied to the area or situation in which their life was taken from them. So, I think, I think me believing in ghosts did affect my experience at the bridge because, I mean, I was expecting the, I mean, I wasn't... I went in knowing that the car could possibly be pushed, as opposed to, ya know, not ever having heard anything or being completely, uh, ya know, whatever about it, I guess.

Abby: Did you go by yourself?

Ellyn: No, I was with three other people, and I was not driving the car. I was in the backseat, actually.

Abby: So, why did you choose to go?

Ellyn: We went because we were just bored and this was, this was on a many, um, many, or it was, it was a stop on a "let's go visit creepy places in Bowling Green" night, and we, we visited, um, a couple abandoned houses, got all freaked out and stuff, and then my friend Cody was like "Let's go to the Richardsville bridge!" And, uh, so we went there, and as we were driving, um, they filled me in on the story, like I've heard it before, but I mean, in pieces, and, ya know, and... So, it was pretty interesting when we got there.

Abby: Um, so when you got to the bridge, what process did you go through, like, was there any particular things that you did?

Ellyn: Well, we first... What we did first was, um, we actually didn't immediately, like, get on the bridge, like, we kind of went over to the side. And, I was freaking out cause while I talked this big talk about wanting to go to these paranormal places like Waverly Hills in Louisville and,

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um, there's a place up in Northern Kentucky that's pretty, uh, demonic. Uh, I'd probably in all actuality, like, cry if I ever went to one of those places. (She giggled at herself) So, anyways, I was freaking out, and Cody and Erin and Austin... not Austin... Cody, Erin, and Jordan were, um, they were just kind of, like, exploring the area around the bridge, like, the woodsy part of it, and going down to the river bank and stuff. And, I'm like "Guys, come on, we got to come back, ya know, like, we got to get out of here, or, like, let's just get this over with so we can go back home!" And, we got back in the car, like, after everybody was, like, back in the car, like, I don't know, I got this really weird feeling like I was. I don't know what it was. I was like "Get me out of here!" Like, "I don't want to be here anymore!" And, um, so Jordan, he at the time he drove a silver, um, Pontiac Sante... or not Pontiac, it was a Pontiac SUV. I don't remember the name of said SUV, but, um, he drove it out to about half-way across the bridge and put it in neutral. And, we sat there for at least ten seconds. And, when you're waiting ten seconds feels like an eternity. So, we're sitting there just waiting. And then, all of a sudden, like, you just felt the car move, like, that when we got pushed forward, and it wasn't like a jolting, but it was like... and it wasn't a slow, steady, kind of like if you were sitting there for a while and you were going downhill, ya know, you'd start to roll a little bit... it was like we started moving and it was really weird, and we all got freaked out, and Jordan threw the car in drive and, like, sped off, and was, like, throwing explicatives out the window, like, "Oh, my God!" and we were all like, "Did that just happened!? Ahh!" And, it was really weird, and we're like "Oh, my gosh! Totally pushed your car. She totally pushed your freaking car. Oh my God." We were just... ah... it was weird

Abby: When did you go? Like, what was the season, the year, were you in high school, were, like, you already said that you went at night, so...

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Ellyn: We were... It was my freshman year here at Western, which was about three years ago, and it was during the fall, because we were also trying to find Jackson's Orchard, but it just wasn't happening, and it was nine o'clock at night, um, and Richardsville Road is, like, on the way there, so another "Let's go here!" And, uh, yeah, it was fall. I'd say maybe October. I think it was close to Halloween. It was either a few days before or a few days after.

Abby: Um, did the person you heard the stories from... Was he someone you met, or they someone you met at college?

Ellyn: Yeah, I met Jordan, Cody, and Erin here at Western 'cause they were all music majors. Jordan played oboe, Cody played viola, and Erin played the flute. She's graduated. Jordan is now an English major, and Cody works at Target. So, they're not here very much anymore. I mean, I see Jordan occasionally, and I'll see Cody occasionally if I go to Target, but... Yeah, Erin is in Louisville now, but... And, she was a senior when, um, when I was a freshman.

Abby: Had you ever heard anything about the bridge before coming to college?

Ellyn: I think there might have been some talk of it at good 'ole Logan County. Like, Racheal and I might have, or she might have said something about it, or somebody told her about it and she told me or something. I want to say, like, I knew about it, but I didn't... I just knew it was a creepy bridge in Bowling Green. I didn't really know why it was a creepy bridge in Bowling Green.

Abby: Um, how, like, are you from the area? Do you live near the bridge?

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Ellyn: No, I live close to campus here now, but I, in high school, lived in Russellville. About thirty minutes away from here. So, I actually, like, had no idea that Bowling Green had an orchard until I came to college. Like, I had no idea what Jackson's Orchard was. So, yeah, I didn't know much about it until I came here.

Abby: Is there anything else that you would like to include about your experience?

Ellyn: Not really. Like, unless you want to, I mean, I don't... I don't know what else to say except that, like, I thought it was very real, like, I don't think... I don't think we were hyped up on, um, adrenaline, ya know, like expecting this ghost girl to move our car. I feel as though it was a very genuine experience, and that we weren't just making it up. And, to this day, I know I did not make it up in my head because that was a very odd thing. Like I said, we sat in the car for, like, I mean, ten seconds doesn't sound like a long time, but it was quite a long time. And, the car just started to move, and, I mean, we had been sitting there forever so it's, like, not that the bridge suddenly, ya know, tilted up so we would start moving down, ya know, like...

Abby: Um, have you told anyone else about the story? Have you circulated it at all?

Ellyn: Yeah, I've told, ya know, my other friends here, like Branigan, and, um, 'cause I keep telling him, I'm like, "We need to go to the bridge! We need to go to the bridge! I want to see if she'll push my car!" But, um, which reminds me, like, makes me think of a question that you asked me before, um, like, if I've known about it before I came to college, which is yes. I remember how I knew about it. Um, I remember my friend, Tiffany, was talking about how she and her dad went up there, and they put flour on the bumper of the car so they could, like, see if

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there were handprints on it. I don't know. I can't remember if she said there were or if the car even moved, but I remember that's how I discovered the, uh, story of the bridge.

Abby: With legend, there... A crucial element is a question of truth. So, your story consists of a child pushing the car. Do you... Like, what are your thoughts on that?

Ellyn: Like, it seems kind of absurd because, I mean, a child, I mean, I've always thought that, like, ya know, she was, like, anywhere from five to seven years old. And, ya know, kids aren't that strong really, but, um, I mean, even with the car in neutral it's even kind of hard for an adult to push a car. So, ya know, it's like, "How can a ghost child push a car?" Ya know? But, I don't know. There are things of the paranormal that, like, are very hard to explain, and, I mean, you hear about these stories of, ya know, alleged spirits, ya know, shutting down electricity in an entire house. Or, ya know, like knocking something over that, ya know, had no reason to fall over, ya know, things like that. So, I feel as though there's, like, some kind of energy that spirits can manipulate to accomplish these things.

Abby: Do you think that the setting might have influenced your experience at all?

Ellyn: Like, the area?

Abby: Yeah.

Ellyn: Um, maybe 'cause it was night time and it was dark... Made it a little bit more frightening, but... And, I'm not saying this was, like, cry at night sort of frightening, like, but, ya know, like, it was just kind of unexpected.

Abby: Well, I guess that will conclude our interview. Thank you very much.

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Ellyn: You're welcome.