

Date	July 27, 2021
Time	5:15pm
Interviewer	Edward Y. Millar
Interviewee	Jipp and Rick Ortiz
Location	Ed's Garage
Audio log Prepared by:	Edward Y. Millar
Collection Number	AFC 2020/013 <i>The Ransomville Speedway: Dirt Track Workers in Western New York</i>

**Archie Green Fellowship Ransomville Speedway Interviews,
American Folklife Center, Library of Congress**

Audio Log – Interview Part 2 of 2

[0:00] *(start of interview)*

[0:45] **Origin of Pedro Motors and Relationship with the Ransomville Speedway**
 Discussion of relationship between Pedro Motors, the Ransomville Speedway, and the Ransomville Slowpokes: the original track was founded in part by Ed Ortiz (Pedro's son) behind then Pedro Motors
 Formal meetings of the Slowpokes happened mostly at the Porter Hotel, but meetings and hanging out at Pedro Motors as well – and working on the cars there
 Pedro Motors built in 1946, originally Pedro was selling used cars out of the garage behind the family house (few doors down)
 Pedro Motors built on what was called 'The Strawberry Patch', and later also built one in the Falls and one in Lockport – used cars were Kaiser Willys
 Pedro Motors was a used car dealership and garage too, kind of a general repair place, collision, overhaul, anything needed doing
 Pedro was more of a businessman, not a mechanic – Jipp said his grandfather (Rick's dad) was a 'suit and tie guy'

[6:20] **Early Memory of Pedro Motors & Ed's Garage**
 Relating to race track it was a hangout place, but Rick shares he started helping out at the garage cleaning cars and also some other stuff
 Ed Ortiz (Jipp's dad) basically grew up in the garage and learned just absorbing from the guy's in the shop – including from guys like Cubby, and Al Bonkowski (sp?)

Jipp shares a joke and story of his dad's reputation in repairing and fixing things as a mechanic – that he could basically fix anything or cobble stuff together and somehow get you home if your car broke down

Jipp contrasts that he feels his dad (Ed) was a brilliant mechanic but not great businessman, and his grandfather was the opposite: a great businessman but not a great mechanic

After Pedro passed away in 1958, is when it changed over the next few years to Ed's Garage: Jipp sharing that his dad didn't really focus on / want the business side of it re: selling used cars, just wanted to focus on fixing cars

Rick & Ed going into selling snowmobiles too, which was doing well until the gas crunch of the 1970s (and Rick leaving for Rochester), and it became very tough time for the Ortiz family

[13:00]

Ed's Garage continued

Rick stopped working primarily at Ed's Garage in 1967 as was having trouble making ends meet in terms of what he wanted to do, went over to Allstate as an automobile adjuster

Ed continued to work the snowmobiling and Ed's Garage

Ed's Garage continues to be kind of a congregating spot for folks in the community still, Jipp not remembering there being any changes on the shop side re:

Jipp shares how with his dad racing and owning Ed's Garage, he didn't really sleep or balance anything – just worked a million hours: either on the race cars or at the garage

Rick shares his memory that he was usually the one driving to the races at that time, and Ed would be asleep in the passenger seat: Jipp sharing amazement at amount of travel put on those cars then to race and then be able to come back always and work that full day

Rick shares another memory of how that 'balancing' worked, just working all day, racing and coming back late after driving for so long, then coming back and needing to put cows in the pasture back before bed

[17:15]

Changes in Ed's Garage & Jipp's Skills

Jipp and Rick discuss the lack of equipment changes at Ed's Garage

Rick shares memory of another time of economic struggle, but with his father (Pedro) re: Pedro Motors selling used cars in a difficult market

Jipp learning all of his skills in fabrication and everything through mechanics at Ed's Garage – never went to trade school

Jipp shares a contrast in some other mechanics replacing things, where his dad always emphasized fixing things somehow first

Talking about how lack of equipment upgrades or changes reflected the not strong business sense of his dad: i.e. spending extra money to be more efficient

[20:50]

Ed's Garage Business Practices in Early Day

Rick recalling that Ed's "hi heart was too big for being a good businessman" – that sometimes he'd only charge 10% of a job to someone if worried they couldn't pay

Rick sharing a memory of fabricating an entire exhaust system on a car, taking almost 6-8 hours, and Ed only charged her \$20

Jipp sharing a frustration that he always had with his dad over that same problem, of undercharging and shortchanging themselves, which would lead to economic hardship on themselves and their families

Rick continuing to reflect on that too, that he always talked to his older brother (Ed) about that – that they had to start getting people to pay a fair price instead of always undercutting themselves

Rick talking about a memory of someone who never paid their bills, seeing their car at Batavia Downs, and Ed not wanting to pursue it farther: that Ed 'loved people to a fault'

Jipp learning to build from his Dad, and description of his dad's learning process and teaching side: and Jipp loving the fabrication side, and fixing things up

Jipp sharing the stress that his Dad was going through

[27:10]

Jipp Taking Over Ed's Garage

Jipp talks about working for farmer's and stuff at night too, but also working always at Ed's Garage around the shop, and moved out west

Jipp talks about how he came back when his dad turned the garage over to him and let him run it: and that his dad would work under him, although he also went to go work for the bus garage in the area with his good friend Paul Schultz

Jipp shares about when he came back the amount of cleaning he did at Ed's Garage, and his dad being a bit of a 'packrat': and a story about how his dad always tried to save everything, which he attributes to being when you go through tough times it is hard to throw things out

Jipp talks about the changes and improvements they did on Ed's Garage, and starting out with the used cars and collision, then just moving into collision (which continue to be known to this day) and now rust prevention and control

[32:50]

Racing Career – Jipp Ortiz

Jipp revisiting the story of how he raced for the first time, and getting that bug and thinking that his dad was so successful and known for it, and he liked to build things, so he built it and raced

Jipp shares that he feels with racing too, maybe subliminally that he spent the racing career just proving to his dad that he could 'do it' – as his dad wasn't an 'encourager'

Jipp reflects on how racing can be kind of a selfish sport, that even though he always tried to be there for every game and that – but that it was unfair on his

wife and family really, looking back at it: talking about how if you want to be good on something, someone has to make a sacrifice

Rick jumps in and shares too that he agrees racing can be difficult for a family, and that he feels too his home life and wife also sacrificed to some extent

Jipp shares about the pressure of being successful racing as his dad was so successful through a story of spinning out while leading a heat race

Rick shares a story about Jipp's dad/his brother Ed disciplining him snowing snowballs at cars

[38:35] **Ransomville Speedway & Ed's Garage – Current Relationship**

Jipp talking about being a racing fan being his 'circle of influence' – the racetrack people are his people, and growing up that was all he ever did

Rick reflects on how the racing community is very 'real' – there's no false fronts in general, you know what you get / how people are right away

Jipp sharing how whenever he goes to the track and brings people from church, that they're surprised at how tightknit the community is and how it seems like he does kind of know almost everyone there now

Jipp recalling how he started being a starter at Lancaster

[41:45] **Closing Thoughts – Ortiz Family Connection to Ransomville Speedway**

Rick talks about how it's such a community, that if someone ever needs help: and that Jipp's fabrication wasn't only functional, but also 'pretty', and that's what Jipp was known for

Jipp sharing his time building a lot of cars starting in the 1998/9

Jipp sharing his pride in having a 3rd Generation garage still going, and looking forward to seeing his grandfather and father – and looking to Justin Clark and supporting him, and hoping that his grandkids one day can continue to work at the garage and work under Justin

Jipp talking about how as he's gotten older, he's been thinking more about the past, and how working on the land outback behind the garage, knows that his grandfather worked that land, and his legacy on this specific plot of land: that the racing and success and that kind of stuff, that the trophies hang and can remember them, but they weren't 'his dad'. And wanting to be remembered for more than just racing – to keep the Ortiz name going

[46:00] **Bible Study & Christian Mission Connection to Ed's Garage & Pedro Motors**

Rick shares how aside from the garage side of things, the other main legacy of Pedro Motors and his/Ed's dad Pedro was Christian heritage

Since Pedro Motors was first founded in 1946, there's always been some kind of church service or bible study taking place there – so in 2021, almost 75 years of this focus on Christian mission at the garage

Rick talking about how Jipp's dad Ed lived that Christlike life in the sense of always putting other people before himself and his family

Jipp shares about how Pedro (his grandfather) was originally a Pastor from Puerto Rico, who then helped fundraise and build churches in Puerto Rico as well

Jipp shares that being born into the Ortiz family, it wasn't just about race cars and learning to drive, it was also that adherence to religion & the Christian faith
Rick sharing that in contrast with Jipp, he did rebel in his early life, but later on became closer to and paid more attention to Christianity

[52:25]

end of interview