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**Heading To Highwood, Real Life Picker Gives Analysis of  
Popular Antiques TV Shows**

HIGHWOOD, IL, June 21, 2010—Real life picker Frederick Klass Jr. is heading to the inaugural Highwood Street Market June 26 and 27, bringing the fruits of his labor and sharing a bit about the reality of “picking.” It’s a reality he says is painted in an unfavorable light on television.

“I’ve seen *American Pickers* and I know how you guys operate,” is a comment Klass, owner of Highwood Street Market Festival Dealer Industrial Evolution, says he’s encountered more than once since *American Pickers* began showing on the History Channel. “These guys remind me of the warthog and weasel on Lion King who run around giggling foolishly like they are tricking people. It’s giving the industry a bad reputation.”

The show, Klass says, defines a picker and then makes it real, in effect providing only a slight glimpse of reality.

“At the level of knowledge that these guys operate, they would be confined to their state and perhaps a couple of hundred mile radius at the most. In actuality two guys can’t afford to drive around in a \$70,000 truck buying \$6 oil cans and finding good things that they don’t know the value of,” Klass says “Their profit margin is ridiculously low and their expenses are excessive.”

Klass also has some ethical issues with the show. As he sees it, the cardinal sin is teaming up against a homeowner or estate trustee. “You’re outnumbering them,” he explains “there’s an unwritten rule in the industry against talking and distracting and working as a team against a potential seller.” That’s only the beginning of where the show exits the boundaries of reality, however.

“There’s a certain thing called negligent homicide as well—when you’re going into someone else’s house and offering them money for something, and you don’t know what you are doing and you benefit from it. You can only carry that to the bank so many times before your reputation is going supersede you.”

Moreover, Klass says the knowledge base of the show’s pickers isn’t broad enough or deep enough. They rely on experts reached by phone. While Klass says that does happen in real-world picking, when calls are made in the real-world, they often end in a transaction.

“When I call someone for an appraisal, that’s a favor. I have to be ready to return that favor and do so by offering it to the appraiser,” Klass says. “If you call me for an appraisal and don’t give me a chance to buy it, please don’t call me again.”

While the real work of a picker does sometimes involve large profits—Klass says he recently purchased a carved bakelite pin for \$5, a pin he sold to a dealer for \$400— it also involves substantial expenses. Moreover, as this example demonstrates, more than half of his sales are wholesale. Klass, whose specialty is industrial furniture, says he wouldn’t bring the pin to a show where he might fetch twice that amount because it’s not his specialty and a buyer wouldn’t be as trusting of a dealer carrying one pin.

Klass says more realistic depictions on television are found in *Pawn Stars*, also on the History Channel, and PBS’s *The Antiques Road Show*. In regards to *Pawn Stars* he says “those guys are a little bit nice compared to the pawn brokers I have known,” and as for the *Antiques Road Show*, Klass complimented the honest nature, but added it sometimes gives the impression most antiques are very valuable. The average value of items brought to one show was estimated to be at only about \$14, he says.

Where's a good place to pick? We asked Klass. Most pickers he says visit shops and malls as well as private homes. Retail markets like Randolph Street Market and Highwood Street Market, he says, are also a good bet.

"I find deals everywhere I go. My goal at a show is to pick my booth rent in profit," Klass says. "If I can sell it while I am at the show then I am really happy."

*The views expressed in this story are those of Frederick Klass Jr. and not necessarily the show promoters or their employees.*

### **About Highwood Street Market Festival**

Located in the town of Highwood, Illinois, the inaugural Highwood Street Market will be held June 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Hours are 12 noon to dusk on Saturday and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets are available for \$8 in advance at <http://www.randolphstreetmarket.com/highwoodstreetmarket/> of \$10 at the door.



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