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DATE April 10, 1995
TIME 10:00-11:00 PM
STATION WWOR-TV(IND) Channel Nine
LOCATION New York City
PROGRAM News 9 Tonight

Transcript

Brenda Blackmon, co-anchor:

No-smoking, it's now the law in most New York City restaurants. As Chris O'Donoghue reports, the new law has some people fuming.

Chris O'Donoghue reporting:

Unidentified Woman #1: Part of my meal after I finish eating is to have my cigarette.

O'Donoghue: Will you be able to survive that?

Woman: I'll have to. It's the law now.

O'Donoghue: Life may never be the same for diners who smoke in New York City. This was day one of the smoking ban that covers about eleven thousand city restaurants that seat thirty-five people or more.

Unidentified Woman #2: I'm quite upset.

O'Donoghue: While diners can pick and choose, restaurant owners cannot. Many are nervous about the impact.

Joan Borkowski (Billy's Tavern): We don't need to lose one customer. We don't need a law that's wrong to cause one restaurant to go out of business.

O'Donoghue: One owner is taking another tack to keep his place smoker-friendly.

Jimmy Duke (Drake's Drum Smokeasy): I've downscaled my restaurant from seating seventy-two people down to seating forty-four, which is exactly what the law will allow me to do.

O'Donoghue: The Old Homestead spent eighty-five thousand dollars to create a new smoking lounge and bar with the required six feet away from the main dining areas. They're

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hoping their diners will take smoking breaks between courses.

Marc Sherry (The Old Homestead): We've instructed our staff to go a little more patient with the customers, give them a chance if they want to go out to the lounge and have their smoke, have their cigar, let them do it, hold their orders back a little bit.

O'Donoghue: Some die-hard steak eaters may even be banding together to create a loophole to the law. Anyone can smoke in a private dining room. So here at the Homestead, they've already had many inquiries from groups, not just to make reservations for tables, but to make reservations for those private rooms.

The sixty Health Department inspectors can levy fines from two hundred to a thousand dollars for violation.

Dr. Margaret Hamburg (NYC Health Commissioner): We will be doing active inspections of restaurants, both on a routine basis and in response to complaints.

O'Donoghue: In New Jersey, the law calls only for nonsmoking sections in restaurants and exempts all bars. That's what makes smoke-free advocates vow the fight goes on.

Joe Cherloff(sic) (Smokefree Education Services): A restaurant under thirty-five seat we want to be smoke-free, the bar area we want to be smoke-free. And we will be advocating that for ever.

O'Donoghue: Chris O'Donoghue, News 9 Tonight.

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