

Tricia Walker - 8-2-23

Wed, Nov 08, 2023 2:40PM • 14:54

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

people, trash, share, westminster, care, experienced, pick, camp, trisha, drugs, cities, junkies, carbon dioxide poisoning, cafe, dry, anymore, cold, tricia, realize, water

Marrty Dormish 00:02

So I'm here today on, let's see what is today, Wednesday, August 2, 2023. This is Marrty Dormish at the Refuge Cafe. We are open here for another 15 minutes or so. And I'm here with my friend Tricia. And she has generously agreed to sit down with me and to share part of her story. And so Tricia, thank you for doing this interview with me.

Tricia Walker 00:34

You're welcome.

Marrty Dormish 00:38

So let's just start by you providing some, whatever biographical information you would like to share. If you don't want to share your full name, that's fine. But if you want to share things like your first name, where you're from, how long you've been in the area, anything else you'd like for people to know.

Tricia Walker 00:54

Okay. My name is Tricia Marlene Walker. I was born in Leadville, Colorado. I've been here all my life. I've always liked Broomfield because it is close to Westminster. That's where I was pretty much raised up and grew up around. So I stayed around those areas.

Marrty Dormish 01:10

And do you mind sharing how old you are?

Tricia Walker 01:11

I'm 46.

Marrty Dormish 01:12

46.

Tricia Walker 1:13

Been living on the street since 2017.

Marrty Dormish 01:18

Okay, so that would be six years.

Tricia Walker 1:20

Yep

Marty Dormish 01:21

Okay.

Tricia Walker 1:22

Too long.

Marty Dormish 01:25

And so you said you were born in Leadville, did you say?

Tricia 01:25

Yup, Leadville, Colorado

Marty Dormish

Born in Leadville.

Tricia 01:28

My dad worked in Climax [Climax Mine in Leadville?]

Marty Dormish

Grew up in Westminster?

Tricia Walker

Yup

Marty Dormish 01:32

Where'd you go to high school?

Tricia Walker

Went to Ranum.

Marty Dormish

You went to Ranum High School? Okay, was it the Raiders?

Tricia Walker

Yeah, Ranum Raiders.

Marty Dormish

We played them in baseball in high school. Okay, so you already alluded to being outside for six years. Would you mind sharing the circumstances that kind of led up to that? So people kind of know where you're...

Tricia Walker

My best friend was murdered in 2016, and that's when my husband showed up out of nowhere and dragged me down kind of the wrong road and I let him do it and here I am.

Marrty Dormish

Hmm, sorry about your friend.

Tricia Walker

Got me addicted to the drugs and you know, I got out of them and I'm over it, you know, so trying to get my life back together like I did before.

Marrty Dormish 02:19

What before that before you ended up outside? What? What did you do to make a living?

Tricia Walker

I worked at McDonald's. Full time. I was a workaholic.

Marrty Dormish

Okay. What was your typical week like, how many hours did you work?

Tricia Walker

40 plus hours

Tricia Walker 02:35

Yeah, I had dozens of jobs, my first one was at 14 and was Waterworld.

Marrty Dormish 02:40

Okay. Nice. My son just went there today

Tricia Walker 02:43

Ok it is a good place to start.

Marrty Dormish 02:46

Okay, so things kind of went in not good direction.

Tricia Walker 02:49

Yep and since then it's been intense, so...

Marrty Dormish 02:58

So, what can you tell us about your experience of being outside that you think is important for people to know about?

Tricia Walker 03:02

They don't understand how rough it is out here. You know, it's cold, it's wet. It's raining, you know, it's miserable.

Tricia Walker 03:12

So I stayed under bridges, you know, for a long time because it was something dry and I can make the walls up and have at least some warmth, you know? So it's not, it's not easy. It's hot water every day. You have to do something every day. You can't lay around.

Tricia Walker 03:29

I always tell people it's sink or swim.

Tricia Walker 03:32

You get up and do it or you're not gonna have it. You don't get up and get your food, you don't get up and get water and who's going to take care of you, I'm not, you know.

Tricia Walker 03:41

I've gotten frostbite on my hands from being over the years just being outside, you know, in the cold so being the winter, the blizzard cold, I have been up all night, you know, keeping the fire going, just to stay warm.

Tricia Walker 03:52

I experienced, you know, almost died because of carbon monoxide poisoning in my tent. I didn't realize it but you know, I had it sealed off too much and turned on. Yep, I was starting to fall asleep. I didn't realize it was going on. So...yeah

Tricia Walker 04:08

It wasn't pretty.

Marty Dormish 04:13

Well, what happened? Did you wake up in time? Or?

Tricia Walker 04:16

Oh, yeah. It's not enough. Like before, it was like what's going on? And like, I turned because I had my little stove on and like, oh shoot, I ripped my tent open. That's scary. So I realized what was going on, you know, I'm very aware of, you know, carbon monoxide poisoning, you know, so...

Marty Dormish 04:31

Yeah.

Marty Dormish 04:33

So that's a little bit of a snapshot, I guess we could say of like, your personal experience. What's it like, relating to other people who are outside? What's that community like or what's what are those dynamics like....

Tricia Walker 04:47

Sometimes it's hard to be here long. People, you know, you try to work together. You know, we don't live close to each other, but we live close enough where we have a distance from each other, but it's still hard to live with people because they don't respect you sometimes, you know, and people want to just come up and get your water anytime they want. And they want to borrow this, they want this, you know, it's like, you know, I tell people it's sink or swim.

Tricia Walker 05:08

I dumped my whole water bottle on somebody sleeping because they came while I was gone and got my water and that's not okay. You know, you're tired of hauling everything in and just because you've worked so hard, you know. So I just rather be on my own and away from everybody, so I don't have to worry about that.

Tricia Walker 05:25

So, yeah, because I get tired trying to help everybody else you know, nobody wants to help you when you need it either. So....

Marrty Dormish 05:31

What are some examples of times that you've helped other people? Like, what have you helped them with?

Tricia Walker 05:36

I'll give you one, I have a shopping cart full of food and give it away. I've got people that come up to my camp, they get clothes, they get socks, I feed them, they have something to put in their bags to go home with or to get on a road with, you know, take with them to eat, you know, dry socks or whatever it is. And they're on their way. And sometimes they stay a couple days and sometimes they're gone the next day. Depends on, you know, how they feel.

Tricia Walker 05:58

I don't make anybody leave or stay you know, they do want they want, just don't drive me crazy.

Marrty Dormish 06:04

That's a pretty low bar.

Tricia Walker 06:06

Yeah. Yeah. Okay, so that's really crazy. But you know, some people push it, so....

Marrty Dormish 06:04

What are the hardest things about being in the midst of your situation, would you say?

Tricia Walker 06:18

Being a girl and being by myself.

Tricia Walker 06:20

Yeah, like people trying to take advantage of that.

Marrty Dormish 06:22

Yeah.

Tricia Walker 06:23

And then people will want to, you know, say that you're mean or, you know, just being a bitch. Well, it's not being a bitch, I just have to be the way I am. Because, you know, it's not even kidding. People just walk all over you. You know....

Tricia 06:35

And you have predators. Yeah. I mean, there's all kinds of stuff going on right now that, you know, that a lot of people don't know. And, you know, we don't talk about it because it's scary.

Marrty Dormish 06:44

So, are there some of those things that you can share?

Tricia Walker 06:48

Right now, there's women being abducted, they're being stabbed up and taken, raped, killed, whatever, they're sold and drugged up.

Marrty Dormish 06:57

Like in the metro area, or...

Tricia Walker 07:01

Yep, we found bodies, we found pieces of bodies on the Greenbelt, which is the bike path between here and Golden and Arvada, which runs all the way through, you know.

Marrty Dormish 07:11

So in the course of your time experiencing homelessness, it sounds like you've had to move from area to area. Can you tell us why that is that you had to move and what that's been like?

Tricia Walker 07:22

Because the cities do not want us to come to their area. Why don't they want us there? Because you got the junkies that can't pick up their needles, and they can't pick up the trash, and they can't take care of the things that we need to take care of, because they're lazy and they just don't want to do it. They'd rather leave their junk on the ground than pick it up. When you know, I'm thinking about my kids or grandkids or they have a dog or they have something, you can't go down to the park, you can't take your kids there anymore. Because it's all about why you got to point (?) laying there, it's open. God knows what, it's got Pepsi (Hep C?) or AIDS or God knows what, you know, that's ridiculous. I get mad. And I let people know, you know, I'm the one that walks around that you're doing something stupid. I mean, what you're doing is stupid. You got to have choices, either you're gonna put that away, go

somewhere else, or I'm gonna take it, I'm gonna smash it. I'll smash and I don't care. Don't bother me. You know?

Marty Dormish 08:06

So knowing that that's a common reason given for why people aren't allowed to camp in different cities.

Tricia Walker 08:13

The biggest reason, I mean, look downtown, I mean, you go around the corner, just like, are you kidding me? I mean, come on, guys. You know, it's not hard to pick things up. It's just, they're too high or too drunk, too whatever, whatever it is. No, they don't care.

Tricia Walker 08:25

They're junkies, you can't help them. And there's no point of helping them, you know.

Marty Dormish 08:28

What would you say is the percentage if you had to kind of generalize, the percentage of people who kind of practice homelessness in that way?

Tricia Walker 08:38

A lot of them. A lot of them don't want help, they want to live in the streets, they want to live like junkies, you know? They don't care, you know.

Marty Dormish 08:45

Is that true up here as well?

Tricia Walker 08:50

Sometimes, some of the people, yeah.. That's why me and my husband aren't together, you know, because I chose not to live that lifestyle anymore. And I was just done with it, it's just old, I can't do it.

Marty Dormish 09:01

What would you say are some of the common experiences you have with agencies? You've talked about other people experiencing homelessness? What about like, how do you connect with city employees or nonprofits like us?

Tricia Walker 09:16

Really well. I noticed that you know, when I'm in different areas, like here or in Westminster, or in Arvada, you know, businesses know who I am, you know, they may not know my name, they may not know who really I am, but they see me around and they know when I'm there and I'm around, I'll pick up the trash. I'll pick up things you know, I seen those camps, I've gotten trespassing tickets for picking up people's camps you know, and you know, (cars?) running out me for it, but I'm still gonna do it because it could take them a month to get over here to do it, you know, type stuff you know, and sure I'm doing it anyway. Give me a ticket, go for it, you know, but people know when I'm around. You know, they know that I try to keep it clean. You know, try things, pick things up even though I don't care if it's not mine or not. you know, but I'll yell at people you know, because people see me.

Tricia Walker 10:00

People see me coming across that dog park. And they do. Oh, God, there's Squirrel. And they start picking things up, because they knew, I'm on that first, I don't care who they are and now I'll get in their face, pick it up, you know, stop leaving trash. You can't go sit in the park anymore. Because why? Because the cops say they're thinking we're sitting there doing drugs now. Thanks guys, appreciate that, you know that we can't sit and have a picnic together as friends or have barbecue over there. Because why, the cops think we're doing drugs? Or doing (blue?), or trashing it?

Marty Dormish 10:29

So you refer to yourself as Squirrel. Can you share with us how you got that name?

Tricia Walker 10:34

Because I'm all over the place. Yeah, I could be here today. I could be down at Kipling tomorrow, I could be in an hour, two hours in, like, Westminster, so you never know.

Marty Dormish 10:45

And that's all from walking, pretty much.

Tricia Walker 10:47

Yep, pretty much, walking around.

Marty Dormish 10:51

And the other day you had two carts, hand carts, that you pulled. I won't say where, but you pulled for what, would you say two miles?

Tricia Walker 10:59

Pretty much.

Marty Dormish 11:01

And that was uphill and downhill and they were loaded down with your stuff.

Tricia Walker 11:06

And I'm actually not supposed to be doing that. I'm supposed to be going to the doctor and getting X-rays done on my shoulder and, you know, looking at going to a surgeon to do an MRI on my shoulder because my shoulder is really messed up and it hurts. So, I just don't show it a lot, so...

Marty Dormish 11:25

Hmm...so, what are a couple of things that you're hoping for yourself?

Tricia Walker 11:32

Having my SSI

Marrty Dormish 11:34
Getting SSI, and then...

Tricia Walker 11:36
getting housing,,,,

Marrty Dormish 11:37
Permanent housing

Tricia Walker 11:43
Something so I can get off the street, I'm done.

Marrty Dormish 11:40
Have you been able to do some applications for housing through Almost Home?

Tricia Walker 11:46
Yeah, but I get lost, I give up, I got other things...

Marrty Dormish 11:54
Well, I don't know anyone that comes to the cafe who's stronger or more determined than you.

Tricia Walker 12:03
I have to be

Marrty Dormish 12:06
Yeah. What are some things that you would like people who are just kind of in the general community to know about you and people who are in similar situations?

Tricia Walker 12:20
I guess, you know, be patient with us, you know, we're not all that bad, you know. I always get tired being analyzed as, 'Oh, you people are...', you know, I'm, you know, I'm one of those drug addicts, or one of those people, I'm just gonna trash places, you know, because I'm not, you know. And like, we get, we get pointed to, because people with what they've done to their businesses or whatnot, or, you know, whatever they've experienced, you know, that I'm always the bad person, too, you know. So, they've trashed places down here, like the Ark, it's gotta be rolling back there. They've trashed it. I don't know how many times they picked up. I went over the next morning, and I picked things up and I apologized to the owners that were back there looking at the stuff that was scattered everywhere. And I said, I'm so sorry, this happened behind your business. And you know, I said, I didn't do it, but I want to pick it up and make it look right, you know. And I think that made him realize that, you know, that not all of us are like that, you know,

Marrty Dormish 13:13
Yeah...

Tricia Walker 13:14

But I felt bad because now I looked at that. That was my mess. You know, I did that. But I didn't. It just looks bad. Because I like to look there too, but they continue to do it, they're gonna lock them, they're gonna have more security, they're gonna lock more things up. That's why they lock a lot of them around here.

Tricia Walker 13:29

Pick up the trash, you know?

Marry Dormish 13:32

What is it that motivates you to want to pick up after others? What is it about you?

Tricia Walker 13:36

I'm tired of people telling me that, you know, I'm that way, you know? And if people are wondering, I'm not.

Marry Dormish 13:48

Yeah. Ok. Is there anything else you would like to share that it doesn't necessarily have to do with your current situation? Anything else that you want people to know, going into the Broomfield archives about, Tricia?

Marry Dormish 14:01

What are your favorite things? What are your favorite hobbies?

Tricia Walker 14:05

I don't know anymore because I don't have anything more. I get up every day and I have to get going. And I have to make money for my cigarettes and other things I'm gonna need, you know. I gotta get water, I have you know, right now I have to camp or nothing, you know.

Marry Dormish 14:21

Yeah...Ok. But, here's to hoping that soon you'll be able to pick up some pastimes and hobbies that you enjoy.

Tricia Walker 14:31

I'll tell you one thing, I am done camping. Don't ask me to go camping ever again. I'm telling you, I'm gonna tell you to go to hell.

Marry Dormish 14:37

Yep, that's it.

Tricia Walker 14:38

Because I'm not getting another tent.

Marry Dormish 14:39

Very understandable.

Tricia Walker 14:40

You know, I don't care if it's supposed to be comfortable. I am not, not anymore.

Marty Dormish 14:47

Well, thank you for your time today.

Tricia Walker 14:49

You're welcome.