

Lori Williams - 8-24-23 - first

Wed, Nov 22, 2023 . 11:23 AM

Interviewer:

So I'm here with my friend, Lori Williams and she's agreed to share part of her story with us. And so, Lori, thank you for being willing to do that.

Lori:

I'm glad ha, I'm glad to be here.

Interviewer:

Why don't you just go ahead and start about some background so people have some context for your life and how you ended up in the area and(inaudible) go from there.

Lori:

Well I'm from California. I decided to move out here in November of 2016. I came out here because, well me and my youngest, me and my youngest son came out here because my, I had two other sons out here and we all wanted to be together. So me and my youngest son decided to move to Colorado back then. Ended up in Broomfield because I liked the area. I did, I have had several apartments in the area and I liked the people. I liked the people out here so I decided to move here. Do I go into the homeless thing?

Interviewer:

Sure yeah, so when you, you moved out here and then you were in a couple apartments you said . . .

Lori:

Mmm-hmm.

Interviewer:

. . . so what was it that, that just dis, that displaced you or, or you know . . .

Lori:

I had . . .

Interviewer:

. . . led you to being in your vehicle?

Lori:

I had a situation where, in my apartment they were doing a maintenance inspection. And they didn't tell me that they were gonna do the maintenance inspection. I earlier had been grooming my dog and I had her in a grooming position and I forgot to take her down because I rushed off, well my son was in a car accident that day. And then I rushed off and went to work. They came in, they saw her in a grooming position, and my dog was a teacup, she wasn't a normal sized dog, she was a teacup Yorkie. So they came in and thought I was tying my dog up and she was being malnourished.

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. . . without my consent, they didn't try to contact me, they didn't try to call me, get in touch with me, anything. They took my dog from my, my house. I came home from work, and my dog was gone. So I thought that somebody had broke in my house. I started looking around to see what was missing. Nothing was missing other than my dog. So I waited for, I was panicking, and I waited for the apartment complex office to open the next morning. I asked them if they had any knowledge of, you know, my dog. And, you know, they told me that I had, they didn't know anything, I had to contact the Broomfield police.

Interviewer:

Mmm, so they knew that much.

Lori:

Yeah. So I went to the Broomfield Police, and they, I told them the situation and they called the animal . . .

Interviewer:

Control.

Lori:

Yes, they did.

Interviewer:

They didn't.

Lori:

Yes, they did. So they . . .

Interviewer:

No way.

Lori:

. . . they said they had, they said they had knowledge of what had happened to my dog and someone, the supervisor would be contacting me to, you know, talk to me about what she knew. She was taking, they said they were working on something. He's still going. [Referring to something else] She said that, oh, they said they would call me. They were taking too long to call me, so I called them back. And she said they were working on something, they would call me right back and then they would come by. So they didn't call me, they came by and they said they were charging me with animal cruelty. They gave me a paper stating that, you know, they told me my dog's in bad shape, she's gotta be in a, in care for 30 days and I'm thinking okay, what's wrong with my dog? I'm already owing some money (Inaudible). They want money from me. So they said well, 'cuz I, I, I gave her quality food, her bag of food cost me 70, a little over 70 dollars for food. I gave her bottled water 'cuz she didn't like tap water. I gave her a probiotic, which I don't even take a probiotic. Yeah. She had, you know, nice sweaters; one of her sweaters was like 45 dollars. You know, I took care of my dog and I love my dog. But I know how the system works, so I knew they were trying to get money. They told me for me to get my dog back, that it will be \$2000, \$2,065.55. I said, well what is this for? They said, well your dog is malnourished. No, my dog's not malnourished, she's not nourished. She's a teacup dog. She's never been over four pounds. So, and I had medical records of that. So they said, well she's also dehydrated. Dehydrated I could see because sometimes I know she doesn't drink enough water. And I talked to the vet about it 'cuz I had her since she was eight weeks old, and she was, at that time she was 11 years old. So I had her for a long time. When they get older they don't always drink, or eat sometimes, as much as they should. So the vet told me I could give her the clear Pedialyte to keep her hydrated. And I would do that when I knew she wasn't drinking enough water. I mean, I've been to the doctor, you know, and they told me I was dehydrated and I had been drinking water all day. I guess it just wasn't enough for my body.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Lori:

So . . .

03:49

Interviewer:

So did that lead to you being evicted from your apartment, or . . .

03:53

Lori:

Yes. They told me they needed the money, the \$2,055, 65 dollars and 55 cents. They told me that she needed, they needed that in 10 days. Yeah. So, well she's in bad shape, that's her care for 30 days. Otherwise, they said if I didn't pay the money, that I would lose ownership of her and she would be euthanized. So I didn't have the money. And then I was wondering how can somebody just take my dog that fast and take pos, you know, ownership of her and do what they want in 10 days. And I've had her for 11 years.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Lori:

So she ended up, I ended up hiring an attorney, and because the allegations weren't true, and the, the whole case was, the lawyer, I found a lawyer to take the case. They, he proved in court that it was all, it was untrue.

Interviewer:

Mmm-hmm.

Lori:

That's not what I wanted to say, but it was untrue. And the case was dismissed.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Lori”

So I don't have anything on my record.

Interviewer:

That's good.

Lori”

I don't have, you know, so my record is clean. I've never been to jail. I've never, you know, none of that. So . . .

05:19

Interviewer:

So how do you get from that spot to ending up (inaudible)?

Lori:

05:23

Okay, after I hired the attorney, then I get a notice on my door, this is before I even went to court, I get a notice on my door saying I have to move in three days. They didn't. Normally when they put something on my door, they'll turn it around or fold it or something. They put this face forward for everybody to see. that we're charging you with animal cruelty. And they're saying that I didn't have the dog on the lease. My dog, because of the way I worked and I had two jobs, well when they took her I had just, I didn't have two jobs. I had one.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Lori”

Normally I have two jobs. I kind of wish I did, 'cuz I coulda got my dog back. But I didn't have two jobs at that time. So I didn't have the money to get her. And I did, I couldn't, they told me in three days, they would, they told me, I'm getting upset, they told me in three days that I would have to move, or an eviction process would start. So that's how this started occurring. They put

an explanation of everything that happened on the letter face forward. So my neighbors saw it. They took my mat in front of my door, they, I was on the third floor, they threw it down to the second floor and I started having problems with the neighbors. They purposely did that though. So I was thinking, I went to work that night, and I was thinking about it at work. And I came in, home that morning, and I was upset and I was hollering yeah, you don't know what happened, so the neighbors could hear me, you don't know what happened. You know the people that were called themselves, helping me, they, they killed my dog and I was still distraught about my, you know, losing my dog. So after they heard that, the neighbors left me alone. But I, I couldn't move in three days with somebody just putting a note on my door and then just being out in three days, that was impossible. So I stayed, you know, till I, you know, could get a storage and all of that, and, and I moved out, which was like a week and a half later, maybe two weeks at the most.

Interviewer:

Did you have a place to go?

Lori:

No. I didn't have a place to go . . .

Interviewer:

So you moved your stuff into storage . . .

Lori:

And I started sleeping in my car.

Interviewer:

Okay. And when was that?

Lori:

That was, this happened like close to end of eight, maybe a week and a half, before April was out. So I moved the first week in May.

Interviewer:

Of this year?

Lori:

Yes. So I've been homeless ever since and I've been sleeping in my car. I am working. I do have a job, I always had a job.

08:26

Interviewer:

What, what industry are you in?

08:28

Lori:

I worked at Walmart. Normally, I do warehouse. Normally. But I ended up at Walmart, and they've been very supportive. They know my situation. They've been very supportive. You know, they've been helping me out doing everything, you know, working with me, you know, in every way they possibly can. So I really appreciate that.

Interviewer:

That's good.

Lori:

Yeah.

08:58

Interviewer:

And are you in the process of trying to get another, second job, to supplement your income?

09:04

Lori:

Well, I was doing until, I have a, I have some medical issues and I have a pinched nerve, getting ready to take an MRI for it, which is stopping me from actually working right now.

Interviewer:

Okay.

Lori:

I went to work last night and I was trying to help a customer and I started walking fast and something popped in my calf. And, I mean it eventually, you know, the flare up, it went down. The flare up, it went down but I, I can't work right now.

Interviewer:

Sorry to hear that.

Lori:

I'm in a situation where I can't work. I do, I am scheduled for an MRI on the 31st of August. I got, I took the first one that they had available so I can get back to work.

Interviewer:

Hopefully that will (inaudible) what's wrong . . .

Lori:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

. . . so you can get that taken care of.

Lori:

Yeah. But it's just, I mean I've always wanted to get a second job, 'cuz I feel like if I get a second job, it'll qualify me for a lot of these places. But then I also realized if they call for rental history, because of what happened, then that's gonna be an issue too.

10:21

Interviewer:

Did they officially evict you? Are you officially evicted?

10:25

Lori:

Okay, I just got a call, like a week ago, from their business office. And they told me that I owe them over \$4,000. I said, well, what is this for? They said, well you didn't give us notice that you were moving. I said, I don't have to give notice when you give me a, a, saying I have to move in three days, or an eviction process will start.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Lori:

So that lets me know that you didn't file for eviction . . .

Interviewer:

Right.

Lori: . . . which I was illegally terminated from the apartment. So I have to follow up with that now.

Interviewer:

Which takes a lot of time.

Lori:

Yeah, it does. It does. So you know . . .

11:09

Interviewer:

So in the midst of being in your situation where you're living in your vehicle and having to deal with these legal issues . . .

Lori:

Mmm-hmm.

Interviewer: So that's hard.

Lori:

It is.

Interviewer: So what are some things that people may not realize about being in a situation where you're living in your vehicle and it's like a daily reality. What are things, what's like a regular day look like for you?

11:29

Lori"

A regular day for me . . . well, it's very difficult trying to find somewhere to go when you know, you have police that, especially Broomfield police, you have police that, you know, they try to harass you, they try to follow you, and I'm not, you know, I have a nice car and I'm not, I don't keep my car like piled up with stuff. You know, people can get in my car and sit down. My trunk is full but yeah, because I don't, I don't. I just don't, I don't like the clutter. I try to keep, you know, a lot of stuff in my storage. And I bought a suitcase. I said, if I have clothes that don't fit in the suitcase, they have to go on my storage. I can't deal with all the clutter. But you have to deal with where are you gonna to sleep at night, where you gonna park, is it safe? You know, you don't want to be somewhere where there's a lot of people, you know, going back and forth cuz somebody might call the police on you. I've never had the police called on me. But you know, I have had them, because of other people that aren't discreet with their homelessness, they have the doors open, they're hanging out, they're, you know, I have to maybe not go there anymore because I'm like . . .

Interviewer:

You want to stay more hidden.

Lori:

Right. I want to stay, not that it's something to hide, it's just, I don't, I don't like, I don't like the clutter, I don't like the, you know, just having trash everywhere, I mean, I'm not like that. You know, I try to keep things clean and orderly. You know, I go to work, you know, and that's just how I am.

13:22

Interviewer:

How many hours a week you do you normally work? I know you're going through your, your nerve situation. But . . .

13:27

Lori:

Well, recently I was doing a lot of overtime and I had worked 123 hours in two weeks. Yeah. So, and I knew that, you know, I was doing that trying to help me get out of this homeless situation. And then I still have bills. I still have a car now. You know, I still have car insurance and I have to pay my tax, and gas is even more now because I have to run my car more for it, because it's so hot outside.

Interviewer:

Right.

Lori:

Yeah, so yeah, I've been spending quite a bit on gas. Yeah. But it's not easy. Everything, as far as homelessness and like cleaning up, you have to think about how you're gonna shower, you know, you know, your toiletry, you know, and I try to keep, you know, everything in my car to a minimum, you know, so it takes a lot more planning as far as, you know, just being in an apartment and jumping in the shower.

Interviewer:

Sure.

Lori:

Yeah, I did go get a gym membership to where I can take showers more regularly. Yeah, so that helps me a lot.

Interviewer:

Definitely.

Lori:

And then I can also exercise too. I like that too.

Interviewer:

That's important. It's stress relief . . .

Lori:

It is.

Interviewer:

. . . and being healthy.

Lori:

So that's been helping me a lot.

15:01

Interviewer:

What has, what has been your overall experience of being in Broomfield? You said that you, when you moved to the area that you liked, liked being here.

Lori:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

What, what's your experience in Broomfield?

15:13

Lori:

I like Broomfield, I like the, I like the people, I like you know, shopping here, it's a pretty clean area, you know, the people are pretty decent. There's things to do. I like the places out here, compared to other places. I like the parks, the parks are really, really nice out here. It's just, to me it's more, it's a little more tranquil out here than Denver.

Interviewer:

Okay.

15:52

Interviewer:

Lori:

Yeah. So . . .

Interviewer:

What do you think people need to know about your situation and living in your car and, or what made it, what might be some things they misunderstand about people who are living in their vehicle?

16:08

Lori:

I don't think people that live in vehicles, or even, and I think about this too, even people that, you know, I have a vehicle, you know, some people don't have a vehicle. And we were just talking about that earlier. You know, some people don't have a vehicle - they're on the street. You know, they have to, they have to deal with the elements. They have to, you know, deal with people harassing them, you know, it's a whole different ball game. They have, they have more safety issues. You know, I have a car, you know, it's not a, it's not an apartment, but it's a roof.

16:49

Interviewer:

Do you have a safe place to park? Or do you move around?

16:53

Lori:

I move around. Yeah, I move around. I think it's safer to, to move around than be in one place 'cuz if some (inaudible) you know, wants to do harm, God forbid, then they can if you're in one place.

Interviewer:

Sure.

Lori:

Yeah. So, and then I think that, you know, if people see homeless people, it's not, 'cuz a lot of people look down on homeless people when, you know, it's just, you know and I tell people, you're, you're a situation, a situation away from being homeless. That's what happened to me, I had no idea that I would be like this, you know, you're one situation away from being homeless. You know, and (Inaudible) I was reading online, a lot of people are being evicted, you know, due to apartment owners who want, and they renovate and charge 2600 for a studio and long term tenants of 20, 30 years, they've been put out on the street and it's just a sad situation. But don't look down on people because they're homeless. You know, I'll, I'll, even when I had my

apartment, I fed homeless people that I see. And I don't go brag about it, I just do it. You know, a lot of people didn't know I do that. You know, but to me, you know, all life matters. You know, whether it's a plant, fish, whatever it is, and I've been like that since I was a little girl. Yeah, birds fall out of nests I, you know, feed 'em. Castrated cats, I take 'em to my dad's garage, and I feed 'em and give 'em water and you know, and they were okay, I let him go. So this is something that, and then I kind of feel like I've been put in a situation to help others to . . . I do. I feel like I don't know, 'cuz even after, you know, I get myself together, I'm still gonna come here, I'm still gonna help people, I'm still . . . even now, if I know somebody doesn't have food, I'm gonna buy you some food. You know, and that's just how I am. Yeah.

19:07

Interviewer:

So you, you talked about all life matters to you.

Lori:

Mmm-hmm.

Interviewer:

I think that's a neat kind of lesson. Is there some other lesson that you've learned whether personally or about the world that, as you've gone through all this, that has really been on your mind or heart?

19:22

Lori:

I just think we all need to care more about each other. I think, you know, people have gotten so, you know, it's so much greed for money, it's so much. you know, non caring, it's so much, I think people need to get back into caring for people. Yeah, we were a lot better off then. Yeah. You know, it's like if you're, if you're in a situation or if your family member or you know somebody close to you that you love, you know, unfortunately, God forbid, gets into an unfortunate situation, you don't want them treated bad.

Interviewer:

Yeah.

Lori:

Yeah. You know people need to start treating people the way they want to be treated, or their family, or somebody they love. Yeah,

20:16

Interviewer:

Well said.

Lori:

Yeah.

Interviewer:

Thank you, Lori. Is there anything else you want to add before we finish up our interview? It could be about anything, something we haven't covered.

20:25

Lori:

No matter what, no matter how hard things get, no matter what you're going through, do not give up. Never give up. Your situation is temporary. It's not permanent. It doesn't define you, you know, and things are gonna get better.

Interviewer:

Thank you, Lori.

Lori:

No problem.

End of interview.