

# Mitch Lavelett

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It was I don't know whether they were hiring a lot of day laborers from that. And maintenance people were not people that were there all the time. Oh, yeah. It's crazy. It's a nightmare. It was really bad. Then when you try to follow the janitors around, they're going outside, you're not supposed to smoke anywhere, marijuana's on any of the property. And they just let them go out in the parking lots and spin instead of a half hour break or 15 minute break, they'd be out there for an hour. And nobody was really running them. So we'd have to follow them around. One of our guys got a little uppity with a flashlight taser. He didn't hit anybody with it. But he was happened making it sound like he was going to and they reported him and they were going to, they were going to throw everybody out. And finally a bunch of us, we just all quit done. We said, you know if you people can't protect your property any better than we tried to do? And what good is it? Why are we here? So after a while, we don't know they hired us some private security outfit, I guess.

01:12

Dave: So well, let's, uh, let's start this. So first of all, thank you for chatting with me for a little bit, Mitch, wondering if you could start just by introducing yourself, share your name, and maybe just a little bit about yourself. That'd be great.

01:26

Okay, Michelle Lavelett, I have left. I've been a volunteer at the Veterans museum for geez, probably close to 12 years by now. At least I generated a 10 year pin a while back. So it all started because I had a pair of white skis. It just so happened at that time, there was a 10th Mountain Division display going on. And so I give them a call and determined that, well, maybe they can use them. Maybe they can't. So I don't know, they were in the display for a while, the display went away. So I took my skis back home. And now we've got a really nice 10th Mountain Division display going on. But later on, I donated the skis to a guy's group. So anyway, that started the whole thing. And and I used to hang around in the library a lot because you can listen to all the veterans speak. And sometimes they have pretty good stories. Sometimes they don't. But it's a cool, calm place to sit around. And now that we're downstairs from where we were upstairs, it's twice as big. And so somehow along the way, I've inherited the library coordinator position. And I'm in my niche here because I just love books. And so somehow I think maybe I'm going to absorb some of the information and all these books without reading them, but it doesn't always work that way.

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Dave: That's wonderful. So tell me Mitch, how did you end up in Broomfield?

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Mitch: Well, I had worked for the City of Boulder for years. And was with Boulder police 911 communications and and we lived in various places. I started out in Boulder and we moved to Lafayette and then we started then we moved to Westminster a little while and we moved in Broomfield. And so just one thing led to another, and Broomfield itself is, is more likely a permanent home now. So, a lot of it has to do with what's available and when you're ready to move, (sure). So kind of like it's convenient for a lot of things. Unfortunately, it tries to be a little too much like Boulder sometimes. But anyway, it is what it is.

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Dave: So tell me a little bit more about the that. How'd you come upon upon that pair of skis just a little bit more?

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Mitch: Oh, you know what I lived in Boulder at the time, I was sharing a little house duplex with a guy and he was moving out and it had a carport garage or something. And I was just scouting around out there. And I saw these skis. I knew they had some value, but I didn't really understand what they were at the time. They didn't have bindings on them. They had the attachments, but not the overall bindings. So I said, man, I know these are worth something to somebody, because I knew they had something to do with probably the 10th Mountain Division. But, so I grabbed onto them. Nobody could claim them. So I did. And I just hung onto them forever. I had them in my own house for quite a while until I wanted to find somebody that was knowledgeable enough about them. I thought I might donate them to the Colorado History Museum, but it didn't work out that way. So they're in a better place now. But that was just kind of fun, because I knew they were worth it. Yeah, so I did it. But that was that. Dave :Very cool.

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Dave: So tell me a little bit more about that. You know, you mentioned, you'd like the library, kind of you get to hear stories, you can listen to people's stories that way. There are a lot of programs going on here at the Veterans Museum. What, what else maybe keeps you coming back to this place?

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Mitch: The coffee? No, no. And the doughnuts. Yeah, no.

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Dave: So they all say, right. Mitch: Yeah right.

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Mitch: I don't know. It's just, you know, when you like history, and not so much politics here, but just hearing some of the stories. And then with the CNCS (Coffee and Conversation) that go on every other Saturday, it really brings in a lot of people, you meet a lot of interesting people, and all the veterans especially have a story of some kind. And so that brings it back to the historical aspect of it. So and

that's, to me, that's, that's just everything right now. I mean, I can look around in this room and see all these books. And I used to imagine all the stories in there, let alone what you know, what you hear from the people individually, but just what's written in all these books.

06:06

Dave: So one of the things you mentioned kind of about the differences between Boulder and Broomfield, so as to give in Westminster various different places, you know, what do you see just looking at some of the changes in this area over time? What have you seen, that's different now than it used to be or the trajectory for the communities that sort of thing?

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Mitch: Well, you know, it's, when I think we've, when I first moved to Boulder, I think the population was 65,000. And I think Broomfield is even more than that now. But and Broomfield was just a little bedroom community and people went way somewhere else to work. And Boulder wasn't all that big. You mean, you could ride around town on a bicycle and go from one end of town to the other in half an hour. And in those days, you know, when I was in like the eighth grade, or whatever, it was easy to roll around. And the population, to me is, probably the worst part about it all. And now you don't know where the population is where it's from, I mean, it's not a good time. Because of this same thing with the immigration and all that. So I don't know. Back then we didn't have to worry about it. You could go to school with a rifle rack in your truck, and nobody thought anything about it. But today they would throw you out on your ear somewhere. Wasn't, not that I ever did that. But, you know, my first car in high school was a '57 push button transmission Plymouth. And it was loaned to other people all the time, too. So it was just a different time. You know, we, I played basketball and baseball in high school, so we could share the car with carpool. And so it was just one of those kinds of things. It was a lot easier to get around in those days. Kids these days, it's hard to tell where they're thinking. I don't know.

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Dave: Yeah, no, it's very different. Now, were you born in Colorado, or did you move Colorado?

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Mitch: I'm a Colorado Native, In fact,

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Dave: all right, very good. Very good.

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Mitch: Colorado Springs.

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Dave: Okay. What what was maybe your parents background or what were they doing?

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Mitch: My dad was in World War Two. He was in the Navy. He was a minesweepers when they call them sub chasers, something like that. So he did that. And I never really talked to him probably enough.

I'm more interested in knowing about it now that he's gone then back in the day when I should have found out more about it. Yeah. But my mom was a longtime employee of Mountain Bell tel n tel (Telephone and Telegraph) Dave: okay. And so she grew up and started right out of high school basically as a telephone operator and then made them long distance operator. But you know, go into school and I became more into athletics than anything. And so all of the high school guys when I was in grade school and junior high, the high school guys were our idols. And some of them went on to play college ball. One particular guy played basketball at CU and I still remember him today. I can see everything he did in high school because he was a star baseball player, football player and a basketball player. That's what those guys were. Yeah, I wasn't necessarily but it's still caused me to like sports. Dave: No Sure. Yeah.

Mitch: That's one thing about Broomfield they have a great athletic department all these high school Yes, like amazing how many times they win things here. Dave: Yeah. Mitch: Okay.

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Dave: Yeah, yeah, real strong. So sounds like you ended up in Boulder. How'd you get from Colorado Springs to Boulder?

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Mitch: My dad got a job at Rocky Flats.

Dave: Oh, okay.

Mitch: So it caused us to have to moved right after the day after Christmas in the middle of my eighth grade. Oh my goodness. Not a good time. But it was we did it, you know. And I got to be where I call Boulder home. Really? I mean, Boulder is more of a home than Colorado Springs ever was. Yeah. But I guess it's a good place to call home. But it just went from there. And then I started working for the City of Boulder later on after college and then there I am.

Dave: Did you go to see you then?

Mitch: No, I actually went to CSU because I wanted to get away from home.

Dave: There you go.

Mitch: I couldn't stand living in Boulder.

Dave: Yeah.

Mitch: Who wanted to stay at home with your parents and go to school?

Dave: Yeah, terrible.

Mitch: After high school was it time to get away?

Dave: Yeah, yeah.

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Dave: Very good. Very good. So tell me what you see kind of in the future. Like? I've asked a couple of folks this question like, what's the what's? Where do you see the Veterans Museum? 10 years from now, let's say, what what will it be doing?

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Mitch: I hope see them continue to grow. You know, they need the proper donors, and they need the proper amount of members. You got to have young, younger people coming in and you know, get some new blood going in the in the museum. Perhaps it can be a bigger building somewhere along the line. I know there was even talk about that five years ago last year for sure. Our annual meetings coming right up and it might be coming up again. But, you know, if we keep expanding, I mean, you get groups like what's going on right now next door. And if they want to come in and use us as a community center, that's, that's something maybe they could do. I think if somebody like Mike continues to be around here with the C and C's, we, we need bigger rooms already. And some of these events.

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Dave: Did I hear right? There was something like 80 people for the CNC?

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Mitch: Well, they said 67 The other day, but I think there was more to

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Another voice chimes in...seven a meeting room and 16. And here. Wow.

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Mitch: So that was probably one of the bigger crowds we've ever had for those. Yeah. You know, it's just an expansion process. I think maybe as the city expands, so other places like the museums. Yeah, I mean, we've got a couple of pretty good museums in town with the depot and this one, although this one I don't think gets as much credit as it deserves, compared because it's really, for some reason, separated from the way the depot is run. But if they can be not even competitive, but just kind of fit in together a lot that we might it might help. Yeah, but I think you know, definitely people will expand because this population expands. If we keep getting into wars, there'll be more veterans, right. So that's not necessarily a good thing. But it's also something. You know, one part is curious and mean, you get you got a lot of civilian population here, too. So yeah. We have volunteers that are civilians. I'm not a veteran either. So it's just but it's an interest in history of, of the military and the politics and things like that, that make it interesting here.

13:26

Dave: Bring people in absolutely good. Anything, anything I missed in the conversation, anything you wanted to mention?

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Mitch: No, other than I, I liked the idea that I have. I probably say this on Saturday, too. But I like the idea that I have free rein in here, kind of just make sure things get put where they need to be and keep track of the books. I mean, right now we have a well over 3000 books. Wow. We're approaching 3040 I think it is right now. Plus all those I mean, we have a new section with with fiction, historical fiction, we try to relate it to war and military. That right there as a bundle, but we don't really keep track of those. We have a whole ton of new DVDs that we've got a fairly new rack set up now. And we just got a donations like 50 New DVDs, war related things not too long ago. So the between DVDs and the research facilities in here are just amazing. I mean, you got stuff all the way from the Revolutionary War. Just the Civil War section alone, you could spend hours just doing research.

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Dave: It's good stuff.

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Mitch: So you know, I probably could be a little bit more efficiently used if there were enough people that did it for research. Yeah. You don't need to spend time at the public library all the time to do that. Especially for this kind of stuff. You could find anything you need in here..

14:59

Dave: Yeah, yeah I mean, if yeah, military, war, right and it's this is going to be far superior to other places.

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Another person chimes in: ...It is a nice place just to hang out. Older vets or anyone here, comfortable seating, interesting books to look at

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Dave: coffee down the hall

Mitch: when the library was upstairs in the room about half the size. And believe it or not most of these books fit in there to somehow - a lot of them a lot more since then. But when we did the docent tours, a lot of the old guys would sit around in that room and tell lies. And they would be older guys, you know, or the vets whatever coming in for just that's where the doughnuts were in the coffee and stuff. And when the guys would be doing the tours, one particular guy would say well, and this is where we keep the antiques.

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Dave; Antiques have a lot to say,

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Mitch: yeah, sometimes. So downstairs now is a little bit more out of the way. But when you consider the whole building is useful. Yeah, it makes it a lot nicer. For sure. People don't hang out in this room quite as much as they did up there. But we needed the space and is that better displays up there now. So yeah, that works.

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Dave: Very good. And thank you so much, much for your time today. Appreciate it.

Mitch: That's it.

Dave: Yeah.