

So, here's the short version. I'll work on a longer more detailed version later when I have the time (which I will apparently have a lot of):

In 2006, when the economy was tanking, I lost my house. It was a 3 bed, 2.5 bath place in a very nice Denver neighborhood. Walking distance to public transportation, parks and easy access from just about everywhere. The economy was tanking, no one was hiring and the \$20 or so grand I had in savings was being eaten up paying my mortgage and other associated bills.

I soon found myself with the bank wanting my house and only lint in my pockets.

I stayed with a friend for a couple of weeks while I figured out my plan going forward. The going theory was I'd tuck my tail between my legs, leave Denver and head for my mom's house in Florida which only filled me with dread. My mom and I don't particularly get along and the last thing I wanted was to be seen on #FloridaMan.

Wonderously, just a few weeks after the bank took my house I was offered a contract-job making enough money to keep my house, but at the time people losing their houses wasn't yet an epidemic and there were very little resources out there for me.

A friend of a friend had a condo she wasn't using. These were the days before AirBnB and ridiculous rent prices in Denver and I talked her into letting me live there for \$500. Of course, she used the condo for storage, so I was literally paying for a bedroom, living room and kitchen. The garage was filled, the second bedroom was filled to the brim with junk and the woman even left furniture and dishes everywhere. That is, the living room had couches, the dining room had a table and chairs and the kitchen had dishes, cooking pans, etc.

I was living there maybe a couple of days when I noticed a motorcycle parked in front of one of the other units. I went over, knocked on the door and struck up a conversation. The girl who lived there owned the bike and we quickly became friends because we had a lot in common. We started watching TV together, hanging out together, going to movies, bars, etc. We became friends.

A year later the woman I was renting from said her son was moving back to Denver and she wanted him to have the condo. She gave me 10 days to get out. In December. It was cold, icy and I had nowhere to go on such short notice. The girl I'd met said, "I have the extra bedroom and we hang out all the time anyway. Why don't you just move in with me?"

That was much easier so I said sure and Rufus and I moved my stuff in over there.

We never signed a lease; we never talked about money; we never formalized anything. I did the dishes, walked the dogs, went to the store, bought (much, but not all) of the food. I also made it a point of bending over backwards for her. She wanted something and I made it happen. She'd often say something like, "I want to clean this house this weekend, can you be around?" I'd

cancel my plans and make sure I was around. "I want to do [something] this weekend, can I use your truck, your trailer, your [whatever]?" Sure. "Can you take me to the airport?" Sure. "Can you take my car to the mechanic?" Sure. "Can you ..."

It went on like that for years. Sure, she did things for me as well. She often, but not always, cooked. She's a really good cook. She helped me when I was stranded and gave me rides when I needed them. You know, like friends. She took me to Moab, UT for the first time ever and I took her to her first dinner theater.

This went on for the next 8 years. Holidays together, helping her grandma or mom with stuff, being her support when she needed it and listening to her complain about how everyone else was dumb. Yes, most of her stories are "my boss", "my coworkers", "my peers" "are stupid. They should just do it my way because my way is best." I went with her when her grandfather was dying, she went with me when my aunt died. She helped out a lot with Rufus and even helped me cover the cost of euthanasia for which I will forever be grateful.

I'd share news stories, dragged her to my first ever HIRL, took her to her first comic book shop and often we'd just talk about ideas, current events, religions or politics. If I was even remotely attracted to her, she would have made the perfect girlfriend.

Two years ago this November she was at a bar where she met a guy trying to give away a cat. He'd inherited the cat from his brother and thought it was too much effort to take care of. He worked four 10s after all and drank the other 72 hours. Yes, he was/is an alcoholic, which I didn't know at the time.

All I know is she came home, told me about meeting the guy and said he had a cat he was trying to get rid of. She also told me if it weren't for my influence she never would have talked to a stranger at a bar like that, but since I'll chat with anyone, she'd learned how to meet people outside of her social circles.

A few days later she brings the cat home.

Then she admits to dating this guy. She's all starry-eyed in the new relationship and obviously enamored. The problem was, this was the first man she'd been out with in years. I figured it was infatuation and it would blow over.

A month later she tells me they're talking about moving in together. I remember thinking it was a little early for that kind of talk, but he wanted to and she was still in the early stages of being smitten. She said she already told him about me and any moves she made meant I could come and he had to accept that I was part of the package. She also said, and I remember the conversation clearly, that while he was nice and sweet to her, he wasn't that bright and she really wanted me to continue living with her so she could still have in-depth conversations. I said, sure.

She said he agreed to let me continue living with her/them.

They broke up. I don't know the details, but she came home one night, said it was over and she'd broken up with him. He called her relentlessly, even driving over to the condo complex to cruise the parking lot looking for her car. She finally took one of his calls and told him to go home. I remember telling her this was some high school behavior, not the behavior of a 43 year old man.

During the break up he said he wanted his cat back. I remember sitting on the couch with her while she's telling me this, telling me she's bonded with the cat and that it wasn't right for him to ask for it back like that. I agreed. It was weird that he'd even bring it up, almost like the cat, and subsequently any gifts, were only gifts as long as they were together.

A couple of days later they were back together and talking about moving in together. She still assured me I was safe and had a place to live.

Over the next few months she told me more about him:

He was twice divorced. He had three (I think) children, two of which won't speak to him. Both his ex-wives cheated on him.

And while she's telling me this, she's also telling me how he's not comfortable with her having a male roommate. "Do you guys talk?" he would ask. "Do you hang out?" "Do you guys spend time together?" He'd also try and turn it around on her, "Maybe I'll get a female roommate." "Maybe I'll have my friend Rhonda [that's not her name] move in with me. How would you like that?"

Then they broke up. Again, I'm not certain of the details, but she said it was over. And again she said he wanted the cat back.

A couple of days later they were back together.

By this time I didn't think it was going anywhere. Twice broken up and she told me both times were because of his drinking. You see, they would go out (to a bar), get drunk and then he would always want to go a bar near his house. He was a regular there and wanted his beer. She's a heavier than average drinker and she was telling me he drank too much.

Then they went to the NHRA races at Bandimere Speedway here in Denver. It was a favorite event of his - one he looked forward to every year. She drove and decided to stay sober so he could 'enjoy himself'.

The next morning she told me it was over. Again. This time it was really over. She was done.

Apparently, by early afternoon he was so drunk he'd alienated everyone in their group. Most of them left but he kept saying he wanted to stay so she stayed. His brother left, telling her he was her problem. She said he just kept drinking, even when he was stumbling around and trying to walk off with the wrong people. A lot of people, she said, were so turned off by his behavior they left the event themselves, just so they didn't have to be around him.

Finally, at 10PM, she got him to leave. She put him in her Jeep and started driving to his house. He, however, wasn't ready to pass out or calm down. He accused her of having affairs, of cheating on him, of sleeping with random men and, apparently, said something along the lines of "If I can't have you I'd rather you were dead" and tried to grab her steering wheel and steer her into a pole or off the road. She told me he was hallucinating that she was simultaneously driving while having sex with multiple partners while he was forced to watch.

She was so scared she called a friend of hers, someone who she's known for 15 years, who lived on that side of town, had him meet her and stay with her in case her boyfriend became violent. Her boyfriend finally passed out and she took him home, helped him inside and then came back to the condo. She told me the next morning it was over. Done. He'd crossed a line. Later she took me to his house where she dropped off Gatorade and aspirin to him.

He had to call in sick on Monday (two days later) because he was still hung over.

He called her, drove by, banged on the door and even stalked her to the same bar where they met because she was on a pool league that played there every week.

Weeks passed and I thought she was serious about the break up, then he tried to commit suicide. Then he went to AA. A few days after he began Alcoholics Anonymous they got back together. A month after that they bought the house and a few weeks after that we all moved in together. That was Oct 15 of last year.

I cautioned against getting back together with him so quickly, advised her to give it time, see if he stays sober. But, they spent a few Saturdays looking at houses and she liked this one. Three acres, roughly 4,000 sq ft and a basement apartment for me. She said she was adamant about that when they were looking.

But, somewhere in there it turned from, "I told him you could stay with me for as long as you want" to "he said he'd try it for a year." I remember the conversation well: I told her that means I'll be gone in a year and she assured me it didn't. "He just needs time to get used to it," she said.

So, it went from him asking her if she and I talk and hung out to him telling her he didn't like it when she and I talked and hung out. We weren't here a few days before I said I was going to the store and she came along. Later when he found out we went to the store together he threw a fit. He also tried some dominance things, starting with day one where he demanded I move

my truck one spot over so he could park where I was. Her response when I said that was a stupid power play was, "Well, it is his house and you need to be nice to him because I can't afford to live here on my own." The thing was, there were four other spots closer to the house. He just wanted to make me move because he was trying to exert his claimed alpha-maleness.

Over the next few months I tried bonding with him. I tried discussing similar interests, tried sharing my food and ice cream, tried helping him when he needed assistance, etc. I showed him how to use things in the kitchen, how to work the DVR and how to watch Netflix through the cable service and not the Roku. I helped him understand when she was acting weird or being difficult. While I think we're getting along he's, apparently, telling her he hates me.

When they were taking down a fence, I went out there and pulled the posts because he couldn't figure out how to. When one of her cars broke down I fixed it when he couldn't figure out how. When they hired some kids off Craigslist to do some yard work and move some furniture, it was I who went out there and helped. I helped him install a new stove and oven and carry a second-hand freezer to the basement so she could have more food storage. I took out the garbage, shoveled the snow, walked both Rufus and her dog, Charlie, did the dishes and more. All the while he never once said "thanks." She did, but he didn't.

My basement bedroom is directly beneath the tiled dining room. He would stomp around at night and in the morning, move furniture and just making noise for the sake of making noise. She told me she asked him to keep it down once and he said he didn't care. He would also watch TV so loudly that I could not only hear it in the basement, but in my bedroom with both the basement and my bedroom doors shut.

So, her conversations with me went from, "He asks about our relationship" to "He says he hates it when you and I talk."

Last spring she'd signed up as a rep for one of those multi-level marketing products where you get your friends and friends of friends to buy from you. She booked a spot at a local farmer's market and set up shop one Saturday to get the word out and make some sales. I swung by to see how it was going and he got up and walked away, presumably until I left. All I wanted to do was see how my friend's thing was going and he acted like I was somehow intruding to the point where he had to leave.

One day he came down to my room and accused me of trying to sleep with her. I said I wasn't. He didn't believe me. I'm like, dude, if I wanted to sleep with her I had 9 years of availability. Why would I wait until now?

At first, when we all moved in together, she cooked enough food for everyone and I'd sit down at the table at eat. He had a problem that, according to her. "Is he going to eat with us every night?" he would ask. So, I stopped and started taking my meals alone. I also started spending

more time away from the house, usually not coming home until after 9PM just to stay away. I figured, *out of sight, out of mind*.

One day she asked me what sounded good for dinner. I said I saw a recipe for meatloaf cooked in green/red peppers that were individual sized. She said she didn't have any peppers and I said I did. So, she cooked those little meatloafs [meatloaves?]. He threw a fit yelling he was tired of feeding me. I told him I bought half the food, that usually when she cooks she's cooking with my stuff, too. He just didn't know it.

She had to start buying her own stuff instead of us just sharing because he was upset. Two sets of milk, eggs, vegetables, sugar, tea, etc.

Over the course of the year it went from "Do you guys hang out?" to "I don't like it when you guys hangout" to "I don't want you guys hanging out." It also went from "you can live with me for as long as you want" to "he said he'd try it" to "he says you have to be out at the year mark."

We used to go to the store together, movies, lunches and more and now she was terrified to be seen speaking with me. Just as recently as last Thursday she and I were talking and he came home. She abruptly shut down, stopped looking at me and wouldn't say another word, like she knew she'd been caught and didn't want to make it worse. Our text and Hangouts messages are visibly one-sided (usually me sharing something with her) and she's very rarely engaging with me when I try to chat with her, someone I've spoken to almost every day for the past decade.

On Labor Day of this year I was *served* with "move out" papers. I was to be out by October 2. Colorado has homesteading laws, squatters rights and very clear rules about when and how someone can be evicted. The law, I thought was on my side. I tried to ask for more time. I'd just started a new job, the money should be coming in and I just needed a few months to save up First/Last and look for a place to live. She said she'd ask him. She came back and said he said "no."

I pointed out to her how she was talking: *he* wants me gone; *he* made the decision to evict; *he* will determine how mine and her agreement would play out. There were no "I's" or "We's" involved. It was always "He."

And that trend played out multiple times over the next month. "He", "he", "he". She actually seemed physically upset at one point, falling into depression to which he bought her flowers and told her it would be okay once I'm gone.

So, today was the court date. I'd done my research, had Colorado statutes ready to go, proof of residency, even his own writing where he said he "agreed to a year." You see, at the time of eviction notice, a year had not passed yet. They were a few weeks shy. And, in Colorado, if you live somewhere for a year they must give you 90 days notice, not a few weeks. Plus, the

paperwork must be properly served with a process server. I checked and had the Colorado statute ready to go.

The judge didn't care about any of it. He kept calling them "nice people" and said our verbal agreement had no standing because in Colorado verbal agreements don't matter in regards to living conditions. He also said I had no rights to continue living here because I didn't have anything in writing even though they already admitted to at least a year. He didn't care that the paperwork was not properly served, although the state of Colorado does. And he didn't care that in Colorado, once evicted, they have to give you at least 72 hours to get your stuff out. He gave me 48. I'm gone 12 hours a day for work (drive time plus work time). It's dark when I leave the house and dark when I return. That's not enough time. He did encourage them to be lenient and give me until Sunday, but he wasn't willing to make it an order.

In the end I congratulated the judge for turning another veteran out on the street. That's the first time he actually seemed interested in me as a human being and not as a leech on my friend and her boyfriend. Then he told me to call the VA. They have programs.

So, here I am. I was sort of expecting this outcome, but thought I'd at least get the 90 days. I'd already mapped out where I could shower and where the laundromats were; how I can spend my days and where might be safe places to park and sleep in my truck. At least until I can find a place to live. The judge assured me there are shelters, but didn't seem to care otherwise.

I can no longer buy food, because I don't have a fridge; order things through the mail because I don't have an address or even renew my driver's license or vehicle registrations because ... yeah, I don't have an address. Nowhere to chill on a Saturday afternoon or fall asleep on the couch for a few hours on a Sunday.

I have friends in Denver, of course, but they have families. I have an uncle who lives here, but his house is small and I'm fairly certain his son still lives with them. A guy at work has a basement apartment to rent, but he wants  $\frac{2}{3}$  of my current paycheck to rent it and I'm not sure how loud it will be there as it's him, his wife and "a couple of other people."

A friend, an old Army buddy, said he'd help me move the remainder of my things out, but I don't have that many hours after work to get it done. Luckily, I've already moved most of my stuff into storage. The only stuff I have left here are clothes, toiletries, my computer/camera and other incidentals. Oh, and my motorcycle.