

Happy Birthday Flash!!

I was going to wait until the 2nd Anniversary of this auspicious event to occur on September 1st, before publicly airing this video...but I thought Flash's birthday to be a better day to describe how our friendship came to be, and how it has evolved over these last three years. First, I cannot tell the story of Flash, without first telling the story of Jax (pictured below).



Since the Summer of 2016, I have had the pleasure of viewing these magnificent creatures from a distance. Well, that all changed in the Spring of 2017, as that was when my buddy, Jax, an older mule deer buck, was struck by a car. On that sunny spring day, a man came racing down our road, asking if we had seen a buck with half of his rack missing, explaining how he had hit him accidentally with his car...at that time, we had not. Later that afternoon, I saw Jax on our property, way in the back, and knew that he was the buck the man had hit.

A couple of days later, as I was sitting on the stairs of the back deck, feeding my birds and squirrels some apples, I had some unexpected company. As I sat there, Jax walked right by me, and at first, I did not think he noticed me...until he turned around and walked right up next to me. I sat there, kind of stunned for a moment, but then quickly assessed his injuries. He had been hit while still in velvet, so when it knocked his antler off...it took the top layer of skin with it, although he still had his eye. He also did not present himself as being in pain or wounded, outside of the obvious, or I would have contacted CPW myself to alleviate his suffering.

I did however, contact a veterinarian I knew, one who had worked with ruminants in another state, and had explained the situation. For those unaware, I was a vet tech in Louisiana and Texas for over 7 years, prior to my getting into the investigative field in the 90s. (CPW was made aware of all of this while at our home back in February of this year. I also learned many things from them that day as well). As time went on, Jax continued to heal very nicely, evident in that photo shown above. He thrived for well over a year and a half after being struck by that car. So, for now, this is where I shall leave the story of Jax.

Shortly after meeting Jax, my boy Flash made his first close-up appearance; but unlike Jax, Flash was just a young spike. Truthfully, with how familiar he has always been with me, it was as if...he did not initially realize that he was a deer. He made it to me all banged up, cut up, and in need of assistance. It was as if the word was out... "She will help us!" And again...that I did. That is actually how Flash got his name. When we first met, a quarter of his right antler was missing...and he was super quick...hence, Quarter Flash...or Flash for short. Again, this was in the Spring of 2017...3 years ago now. So, from that time forward, whenever these guys were in town, they made sure to come by to visit their Boo-Boo.

Although deer live in herds, they also congregate in smaller family units within the herd as well. These family units are generational in nature and consist of moms, dads, siblings, cousins, etc., similar to their human counterparts. They all hang out together at different times of the year (older males are gone from the family unit during the rut), and then they all come back together with new babies every Spring. So, when I state Flash and Fam...I mean just that...and not the entire herd. My gang breaks away from the herd when in town to come visit me. If a deer is not a part of this particular family unit within the herd, it has no interest in me on any level...nor I in it.

So, Yes, Mule Deer can definitely distinguish between all of us mere humans. Meaning, although my family of deer enjoy interacting with me...they have no interest in interacting with other humans outside of me.

Some things to note about the video posted above: **1)** I am nowhere around Flash when he walks into our home for the very first time. Meaning, I did not “lure” him into our home... “egregiously” or otherwise. Flash did not ask, nor did he wait for permission. He just walked in. **2)** The reason this video is only 10 seconds long, and not the normal minute + video I usually created, is because my focus was on getting him out safely and not in recording the event. I could not allow my nervousness to come through in my voice while talking to him (although my nervous laughter was there). Thankfully, I was able to get him turned around and out of our home without incident.

Flash, being the rebel that he is, never cared much about house rules! While that was his first time entering our home unsolicited, on September 1st, 2018, it most certainly was not his last. Simply put...Now that he understood that he could do it...He did do it.

For those of you viewing this information for the first time, please understand, as far as Flash is concerned, I am a part of his family; and that he is just coming inside to visit me... just as we had visited numerous times before...only outdoors. When Flash is on our property, he is “Lori-centric”. What I mean by that is...if I am inside...that is where he wants to be...if I am outside, again, that is where he wants to be. So, Yes, I did **train** him to come downstairs, where there is carpet to grip and not hardwood floors for him to slip.

Due to their migratory patterns, it took me about a year, but he and I finally had a meeting of the minds. He eventually learned to announce his presence upstairs, yet not attempt to enter our home from upstairs. Instead, he learned to wait for me to acknowledge him, then he walked downstairs, from outside, to meet me downstairs. If you are reading this... You have probably seen the video of Flash entering our home from downstairs on Christmas day of 2019...the video that started this whole thing. If not, scroll down my page...and you will.

Some folks have told half-truths and down-right lies about me...on TV, online, in print, and within communities...humans who have never met me or do not know me well...all in an attempt to “shame me” into feeling guilty about my friendship with Flash. I even heard it through the grapevine...that one of those lovelies had even called me a “jerk” in their reporting of my story. Hahaha, Well, I most certainly can be. Most folks can be...given the right set of circumstances. Just ask any human who chose to publicly malign my character or my intent where Flash and Fam were concerned. Those folks were doing nothing but **projecting their own evil mindsets and thought processes upon my kinship with Flash.**

I am not asking people to understand my connection with Flash, as I understand that most probably cannot do so. So, it is what it is, and it will be, what it will be. However, and I cannot stress this enough...

Flash is my friend and I will defend and protect him whenever he is on any property controlled by me or mine, from anyone who would attempt to cause him harm, in or out of hunting season...as he has done for me with non-human foes over these last few years. Speaking of friends...I want to send a Shout-Out to all of you, in and out of the state of Colorado, who kept it real and stayed true to our friendship during that surreal time. Especially those of you who did not understand my friendship with Flash, but y'all knew me, and knew that I would not cause him harm. Your support has truly meant the world to me and I shall never forget it.

I have often been asked by folks over the years...about how I have been able to get so close to Flash. That one is easy. He has ALLOWED it. Just like when he brought up his new girl, Miss Lola, to meet me...so she would know who I was and remember my scent.

Flash made sure that if she ended up here by me, without him, that she would know me by my scent and know that she was safe with me up here on our property. It was his way of saying "She's one of us...She's here to help." Again, it is because he sees me as part of his tribe...his herd...his family. I would say that he views me as his human mom...and you best believe that boy knows me by sight, scent, sound, and Spirit!

Another source of contention for me regarding my relationship with Flash and Fam, is about how folks have made ignorant, false claims regarding what I had fed them. That list is simple and short: Apples, Carrots, Bananas, WHOLE GRAIN/ ROLLED OATS CEREAL and WHOLE GRAIN WHEAT BREAD!! **I have NEVER fed Flash and Fam corn** nor anything else that causes, promotes or spreads CWD in our Mule Deer population.

I am putting this information out there for those souls who are genuinely interested in the **truth** about my friendship with Flash, and how it came to be. These wild, beautiful, magnificent creatures are so much more intelligent and caring than most humans will ever know or could ever fathom.

So, it is primarily for that reason, in addition to a few others (in honor of Jax, specifically), that we will incorporate a conservation easement onto the property that we purchase for **Hope Haven Foundation**. We are in need of at least 20 acres, with at least half of it being usable land for building a schoolhouse, a dormitory, a greenhouse, stables, and cabins; with the other half being utilized as a conservation easement or safe haven, for Flash and Fam to have access to when they are in this region.

My friendship with Flash is something that has added another dimension of empathy to my existence, and I shall treasure our friendship for the remainder of my days. So, until one can state that they have saved me from being bitten by a snake, or that they have chased mountain lions, bobcats and coyotes off of our property...for the purpose of protecting me...as Flash has done...Don't ever question my loyalty to that boy...nor my motives regarding him!

Lastly, if you find yourself walking, rolling, or strolling down our road...and you come across a tall blonde walking and talking with a Mule Deer buck...that's just Flash and me out on a walk-a-bout...and know that we are both doing great! #TeamFlash! 😊

Lori



Happy Birthday, Flash! Your Boo-Boo Loves You! 😊