

My Story: Part 2

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

"I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice."

- Abraham Lincoln

Arriving back in the UK was not the greatest joy in my life. I had left behind a serious girlfriend that I had equally serious concerns about. But life has to go on. At least I was going to return to the US to see her again.

Back home, a lady who was interested in taking up residency in my flat, was hoping that we could finally secure her tenancy. Not so easy. To cut a long story short, everything went wrong. Laws about the transfer or take-up of tenancies were not working for us.

I had over 3 painful weeks in the UK trying to resolve this situation with my friends. By the end of this time, I was back in the US. While there, my friend decided enough was enough and she vacated the premises.

I was obliged to let her spend some time there while she was out of work. She had nowhere else to go. I thought common sense would have prevailed and she could have taken tenancy of my place. After all, I had a partner to return to in the US and would likely not need my flat too much longer.

But everything came apart at the seams. So much so, and feeling that terrible depression that almost killed me before my previous trip to the US, I had to escape again. I just could not cope with life in the UK.

So, with new funds and money saved, I set off again to the US. I landed again at Seattle and my time spent in immigration at the airport was just as lengthy, but more friendly this time around. Without difficulty, I was back for another 90 days on the Visa Waiver Programme.

I stayed one night in a motel near Seattle airport and made my way South the next day. It was good to be back and I was looking forward to re-establishing my peace of mind.

When I got to Eugene, I returned to CarolLee's house. My room was still available and CarolLee knew she could trust me implicitly. However, my new-found partner seemed concerned I had returned so quickly. It soon transpired she had another man friend and that she preferred to be with him.

Obviously, I felt very let down. But I was in the US and feeling more optimistic about the future. After a short time, I made several trips to the Market of Choice whose hospitality I enjoyed so much before. There was also an employee there who was a friend of 'S'. She and her husband remain my friends to this day. It was good to be back.

The Indonesian lady who struck on me before reminded me of her friend, whom she said was lonely and was finding it difficult to make friends in Eugene. So, I eventually agreed to speak to her on this Indonesian lady's cell phone and arrange to meet her. To be honest, I had a vague idea of who her friend was as there are four MoCs in Eugene and I had visited all of them at some point in time. The lady I was to meet worked at the South Willamette store.

Coming from Indonesia, my new lady friend was very 'circumspect'. She was somewhat distrustful of Westerners and our initial friendship was very casual. But I always respected her position and attitude and felt she was worth pursuing. Our initial meetings were very short and very casual. Eventually, we spent more and more time together. I always made sure she was walked home safely, even if I had to take a two-hour detour to ensure this.

I think this impressed her, that I always made sure she got home safely and never tried to take advantage of her. Eventually, she loosened up and we began to feel more seriously about each other.

I did everything I humanely could to show this lady I respected her and cared for her. So, it was no surprise that one night, she accepted my gift of an engagement ring.

But 'external forces' were causing us heartbreak. Once it was known that this lady was going to marry me, her company appeared to be trying to drive us apart. My (now) fiancé ('Ling-Ling') was going to be sent to a town on the Oregon-California border a long way from Eugene. Public transport was not good and I would not be able to see 'Ling-Ling' except on very rare occasions. I also only had about 5 or 6 weeks left on my stay and we were in danger of being forced apart.

A great deal of tears were shed and it did threaten our relationship. But 'Ling-Ling' was totally dependent upon her employer, and like all the others she worked with, they all feared the wrath of their employer.

The day came when I was told by one of our mutual Indonesian friends that her supervisor was going to collect her and take her away from me. I had no choice. She lived on the opposite side of the city and I could not get there in time to prevent this. So, very reluctantly, I called the cops. I also called the company and told them if their supervisor turned up at the apartment where 'Ling-Ling' was living, he would be arrested. A message was relayed to him and he turned around his car and drove back to Portland (where he operated from).

'Ling-Ling' was saved. Trouble was, she was no longer working either. In retaliation, her employer took away her job. But they did offer to reinstate her at a later time - but in a different city. This again caused problems because I had nobody to rent from in this area. I was not allowed to stop in one of the company's apartments.

This again caused heartbreak. I desperately pleaded with 'Ling-Ling' to marry me straight away and I would try to find some way of looking after her. But my options were not good. Under the rules of the Visa Waiver Programme, I could not work in any capacity in the US.

Eventually, 'Ling-Ling' agreed to get married, only to change her mind at the last moment and go to Portland. She still loved me as desperately as I loved her. But she had to obey her employer, who by now thought they may have succeeded in driving us apart.

Before the end of my second trip, 'Ling-Ling' returned to Eugene for a week's holiday and we got married. Just before being forced to return to the UK in observance of my 90-day limit, we spent a few days together in Portland.

Going back to the UK was terrible. I had to leave behind my new wife. Any heartbreak that had gone before was nothing compared to the sadness of being driven apart - for God knows how long. We drew virtually everyone's attention in the Amtrak railway station in Union Square. Tears flowed freely and I was desperate not to leave. But I had to.

The plan was that I would try again to make a life for us in the UK. But nothing was forthcoming. Five weeks was enough for me to realise I had an uphill battle to build anything for us in the UK. It was also after just four weeks that my wife was asking me to return to be with her.

By the end of that fifth week, I was flying back to Seattle. I had given up my residency in the UK and was intending to try and find a way to remain legally with my wife in the US.