

The most beautiful dog in Rossmoor.

By Jerry Hirsch

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Rossmoor is pretty cool.

Sure there are a few concerns. There's that pair of Pit Bulls on Martha Ann. Two-legged Mommy walks us by there a couple times of week. Those Pitts are enough to scare the poop out of you, and they do. Ever go by the lawn at the very next house? Man, Macaroni Face and I lay down some big ones every time.

Then there are coyotes. Stick your nose out at night or at dawn and you know they are around. If I liked cats, I would pity them. But I don't. Macaroni Face and I hang out in the back yard after dusk, hoping to tree an ugly possum or maybe a squirrel. I keep thinking that we might see a coyote stick its head over the brick wall to check out any leftover dog food. Now that would be interesting. While Macaroni Face looks like an easy-going, face-licking Yellow Lab, she can be one mean bitch. Just recently sweet Roni turned me into a conehead for 10 days. Had to wait for the stitches in my ear to heal. And that was just over a tiny scrap of turkey.

Macaroni Face is just ripped. I have never seen a Labrador with less body fat. No coyote is going to mess with a true field Lab and a street hardened Siberian Husky like myself. But I digress. This story isn't about the toughest dog in Rossmoor. It's about me, the most beautiful dog in Rossmoor.

Truth be told, I really like this place though you would never know it listening to how I bolted the hood when I first arrived. You have to forgive my judgment. I was in a world of hurt back then, full of fleas, parasites and other nasties, and starving too. Now when Two-legged Mommy takes me for a walk, people take photos. They pet me. They point as the drive by. We go three to four miles every day and it happens every time. You know the Hopkinson Elementary School kids. They tell their moms, "There's a real husky!"

This story started out 25 miles away on Spring Street in Los Angeles, right near City Hall. I had been on the run for weeks, maybe months. I was too delirious to remember. My claws were worn thin running on the cement sidewalks and asphalt streets. My beautiful coat was matted and brown. I don't recall when I had last eaten a decent bowl of kibble. I dined on some rats in the bushes and learned there's often food in trashcans.

People pretty much ignored me. I understand why.

Now I look just like the Husky Mommy I was stolen from three years ago, probably back in Minnesota or some other place where there are puppy factories. I have that same luxurious snow-white coat. We share the same piercing, laser like blue eyes that mesmerize humans. But on that day I was dirty with black fleas and mud. I'm told I had a crazed look in my face and was eating the leaves of plants to get moisture in my system. It sounds plausible, but I have shut most of it out of my mind -- all but that memory of aching loneliness. No Husky Mommy, no human friends, no dog buds like Macaroni Face -- just me, a little more than a year old and with no home and no friends.

I didn't really notice him at first. Rescuer looked like all those other people walking down Spring Street. They all have plastic badges so that they can get into the courthouse, City Hall or one of those big business buildings there. He looked right at me, stopped and

seemed to think. It was like he pulled a cloak of invisibility from on top of me. A lady - - years later I met her dog Franny, a good kid though a little noisy – stopped and talked to Rescuer. I still wasn't paying attention but they talked about a car, the garage and a back seat. The lady stepped close to me, looking for the collar and tags that were long gone. Rescuer disappeared for a minute and came back with a car as white as me after a morning at the doggie spa. He opened the back door and the lady pushed me in. We were off to Rossmoor.

I was really scared at first. Rescuer put me in this long, narrow stretch of grass with a gate at either end. Although he gave me food and water, I was still in a panic. He also didn't know about how great huskies are at leaving. Late that night, I tore up the wooden fence and scampered off. I sniffed out the coyote trails and followed them along some creeks to a big river and just ran. Now I know what a stupid move that was, but don't blame me. I just was not right. You try living on the street and see how smart you are.

I left the river trail a few hours later in a place called La Palma, hoping to find a bite of trash or maybe a rat. It wasn't much later when this big guy with huge leather gloves nabbed me. He stuck me in a cage in a truck with a bunch of other dogs. He looked me right in the eyes and said I was going to Canine Guantanamo. I figured out that was bad when we drove in, just past this place called Theo Lacy Facility, which looks like a really ugly kennel where they store humans. They stuck me on the side of the jail they call the Orange County Animal Shelter. I couldn't figure it out. You go to prison in this town for pinching a little trash or bowl of cat food? Where's the Humane Society when you need them?

Lucky for me, I had my own personal Humane Society. Sure enough, Two-legged Mommy appeared and posted my bail. She took me to the doctor's office over and over again until I was all fixed up. Back at home Rescuer showed me a big fluffy bed that was all mine. He gave me a good belly rub and said everything would be ok. They stuffed me full of yummy food, endless kibble and treats such as avocado, salmon and chicken. My coat is now as beautiful as my Canine Mommy's. People ooh and ahh when we walk by. Paris Hilton couldn't have it any better. I am the most beautiful dog in Rossmoor.