

Me and My Ego

Christine Tourino



In the Spring of 2007 my husband and I moved from central Texas to Edgewood NM. The first week after moving I bought a copy of the local newspaper and was excited to see a full page add for Hug a Horse Day at Walkin N Circle Ranch, only a few miles from our new home. While in Texas my husband and I were very active in canine rescue and fostered many puppies for various rescue groups, so the idea of living so close to an equestrian rescue center seemed like fate. I rode horses for many years in my earlier life and missed every aspect of living with, caring for and experiencing a relationship with horses. The next day I called the ranch and made an appointment for a tour of the ranch. By the end of the tour, I was hooked. I saw joining WNCR as a volunteer the perfect opportunity to reenter the equestrian world I so misses and long to return to.

At my ranch orientation I was given a big, kind bay gelding to work with. It was love at first sight. Ego, Ego Maniac is his registered name, was 20 years old and had been at the ranch since the Fall of 2006. I spent that summer with him and our lives intertwined. I adopted Ego that fall. Oh my, it had been 25 years since I cared for and rode a horse, what was I thinking? Thank goodness Ego was patient with me as I regained my horse sense. As our relationship continued to grow, I began to ask more and more of Ego and when I pushed him, a dark immersed. This prompted me to begin asking about his history before WNCR.

Ego is a registered Appendix and was born in Albuquerque in 1987. He grew big and powerful. When he was four years old he was sold to a family in Albuquerque whose young daughter trained Ego to compete in the Hunter Jumper world. In a short time Ego became a Grand Champion on the show circuit in both NM as well as AZ. Six years into his competitive life he began showing signs of burn out and a desire to retire from the Hunter Jumper world. Fortunately for Ego, his owner loved him very much and understood it was time for him to start the next phase of his life. A more relaxed, laid back life style, free of the stress of competition. Ego was still healthy, powerful and full of life. A deal was struck

between Ego's owners and his breeder. Ego was to be semi retired and be used as a schooling horse. That would have been a happily ever after story, had the story ended there. Unfortunately for Ego, his response to pressure I had experienced told another story, so I dug deeper.

The woman who promised to give Ego the laid back life he deserved was not true to her word. Because Ego was still a beautiful, powerful horse cowboys were allowed to use him for barrel racing and only Ego knows what abuse he endured during that period of his life. Because of the scares both mentally and physically I have a good idea as to what he lived through at the hands of these cowboys.

Ego has had Angels in his life. That is the only way you can explain how he was saved from slaughter. His first angel was in New York at an equine sale. If you know anything about animal sale barns, the kill group is sent through last. A lady was leaving the sale and saw this big bay horse in the kill group with New Mexico stamped on his butt. She was from the Albuquerque area and looked at the sale flyer. Well Ego is registered and somehow his registration number was in the flyer. She had a computer and looked up his registration on the Quarter Horse web site and when she read his name she gasped. She knew Ego as a Champion Hunter Jumper and could not imagine how he could have ended up at the sale barn in the kill group. At that very minute he was sold to a kill buyer and was being loaded onto the kill truck.

Luckily for Ego, his registration was still in his original owners name. His angel made a call and the phone was answered. Claire, his previous owner and second angel fell to the floor when she heard where Ego was and that he had been sold for slaughter. With haste, Claire with help from the lady in NY, bought Ego back at a profit to the kill buyer. Claire sent a vet to doctor Ego so he could make the long trip back to NM. When Ego got off the trailer in NM, Claire was there to greet him and Ego laid his head in her lap and gave her thanks in a way only a saved animal can. Ego was several hundred pounds under weight, but otherwise in good shape given his ordeal. Claire was on the Board of Directors at WNCR at the time and she knew that with the care and love he would receive at ranch Ego would be safe. Ego spent the next 4 years at WNCR helping other new volunteers and was the Barn Boy's Star clown.

I will not call myself one of Ego's angels, but Ego's friend and forever partner. Ego is now close to 24 years old, happy, healthy and a great companion. He is still powerful and grand. He enjoys riding to the mail box and sharing his new barn with his pals Chester and Moe. Ego is in his forever home and enjoys long loving stokes, playing with his human staff and the best thing in life, COOKIES!
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