

The laws in the state of Oregon are not sufficient to protect its citizens against predatory towing practices. I am not alone in falling victim to immoral towing practices that are allowed to go under the radar. The only way to change this is to seek out new legislation. The public should be made aware through local press.

My vehicle was towed by Retriever Towing using unethical and predatory practices. I went to visit family for Christmas at The Forest Hideaway Apartments on Friday December 25th, 2020. This is the first time I had visited in many months due to Covid-19. I arrived at around 7pm, it was already dark out, and pulled into the back entrance of the complex, where I remember there is visitor parking. I went back on Saturday, the morning of December 26th to investigate signage and take photographs. There was no signage in the entrance of the back driveway up until you reach a house that is not part of the apartments. The signage is obscured behind a tree, and on the fence of the house. I have been towed from this apartment complex over a year ago, parked along the back of the fence to the house, where there is signage that is designated as permit parking only. The signage on the fence of the house and at the main entrance says permit parking only. I believe I was towed over a year ago because I have no parking permit. There are no signs on the buildings of the apartments. There was no signage in the spot I parked at, nor the spot next to the one I parked in. The sign at the front entrance is broken off, and spray painted over in red spray paint. I did not come through the front entrance. I did not park along the fence where the signage was present. When it came time to leave, at around 1am, my vehicle was gone. I called Retriever Towing at 1:44am and they confirmed that they had towed my vehicle. I made an appointment to get my vehicle at 2:45am on December 26th, 2020. I explained to dispatch, that not only is it Christmas, but I was parked in visitor parking. She said visiting hours end at 12am. I decided I would dispute this at the tow yard, rather than over the phone. This is my exchange with the driver, that I remember to the best of my ability:

Me: Merry Christmas

Driver: Yeah, I'm sorry.

Me: No you're not. No, you are not.

Driver: You've been towed by us before, you should know better

Me: There is no signage where I parked.

Driver: It doesn't need to be at the spot you parked, there is signage throughout the complex. It is permit only from 12am-6pm.

Me: Can I ask what time you towed my car?

Driver: Yeah, it was right around 12:02.

Me: Oh, so you were just waiting then?

Driver: No, I was patrolling the lot.

Me: So are you going to charge me extra because it is Christmas?

Driver: No, its the same flat rate year round, but I wish I could charge you more for being so pleasant.

Me: I'm sure you would.

Me: I'm sure you saw the Retriever pass in my car

Driver: Yeah, but not for that lot.

Me: That's not the point, you do not pull this at the apartments where I live.

Driver: That's because we have permission from the landlords at these apartments to patrol their lot.

Me: You guys are so predatory.

Driver: Do you even know what predatory means?

Me: Yeah, you guys steal people's money from them.

Driver: No, that would be if we had someone waiting.

Me: Which you were, because you said you towed it right when the visitor hours ended and I came out to my car an hour after that to find it gone.

Me: If you were me, wouldn't you be pissed off too?

Driver: I was when I had my car towed, and then I got a job with them.

When all was said and done I paid \$374 dollars to get my vehicle back from Retriever Towing, I am not wealthy. I make less than \$40,000 a year and just filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy. I had just managed to put \$400 dollars in savings, and it was gone, on Christmas, while visiting family I hadn't seen in over half a year. My case is particularly unconscionable considering the circumstances of the holiday and the pandemic.

I reached out to Washington County Police on the following Monday December 28th, 2020. I have an incident report and was told that there are many reports just like this. The trouble is that by law, patrolling is within their rights to do, if given permission by the management. I also reached out to Retriever Towing to request a copy of the signed agreement from The Forest Hideaway apartments, as well as the photograph taken at the time of the tow. There are years worth of complaints similar to mine on Consumer Affairs, Oregon Department of Justice, the Better Business Bureau, and Yelp. They do not have customers who willingly seek them out, but rather unwitting victims who are extorted for vehicles that are likely their livelihoods, as my vehicle is mine. I plan to file my own complaints, but the trouble is as I said, consumers do not seek them out to provide a service.

They do not provide a service, but rather make their money through holding vehicles ransom. What they did to me, and to many others is illegal in the state of California. Similar legislation has not passed in Oregon. This needs to change. This change is more achievable through lawsuits, lobbying, and bad press. The tow truck drivers have incentive to tow more vehicles because they work on commission. This company should not exist. I know that it is illegal to provide a cut of their profits to businesses or residences that allow them to patrol their lots, so I am curious what the incentive is for businesses and residences to allow their patrons and tenants to be preyed upon in this way. I want Oregonians to be aware of this. I want state legislators to do something about this. My hope is that you are willing to take up the mantle to stop this from continuing to take place. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your response.