

Oral History with Annie Carvalho

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Interview of Annie Carvalho
SESSION 1 (6/4/2019)

[00:00:00]

TRAN: How do you pronounce your last name, just so I could be accurate?

CARVALHO: Carvalho.

TRAN: Alrighty, so I am here doing an oral history today at 9:32 A.M. on June 4, 2019 with Annie Carvalho. So Annie, can you start by telling us just some basic information about yourself, such as where were you born and when?

CARVALHO: I was born in Hanford, California in 1952 and I grew up here, my mother didn't rear me, my grandparents reared me, my mother's parents, and—nobody believes this, but it's true—I had thirteen living grandparents when I was born. So I had a whole slew of grandparents here. Great-grandparents, great-great-grandparents, step-grandparents. So I just bounced around from house to house. And most of them were farmers. I left for the Caribbean when I was young, probably seventeen years old, and lived there for many years. Married, had children there. I've got three sons. They're all grown and living in Portland, Oregon now. And I'm back in Hanford, not because I want to be, but because my mom took a bad fall, and I'm caring for her until she gets up on her feet. I don't know what else you want to know.

TRAN: And then when you said you're born here, can you clarify what that means?

CARVALHO: I was born here in Hanford, California, and that's where I am right now. It's an agricultural town. Really, the only thing that keeps it alive is agriculture and the naval base, which is nearby. It's a little cow town.

[00:01:50]

TRAN: Can you tell me a little bit more about your parents or your family background? If there's any more you want to expand on?

CARVALHO: Well, my grandparents, like I said, my grandparents reared me. My grandfather was a farmer, and he farmed other people's land until he was probably in his sixties when he finally bought land, but for the most part, he farmed other people's land, and so we moved around a lot. And he was my primary caretaker. My grandmother worked at Sears and so, from the time I was really small, I went with my grandfather everywhere. And I suspect that that's where I got my first exposure to chemicals because back in those days, nobody knew they were dangerous. And I would ride on the tractor with him, and I can remember coming in from the fields covered in the DDT (dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane). All you could see were our eyes, we didn't wear any protective clothing. So he reared me. I grew up on the farm basically, until I was seventeen and ran away to the Caribbean.

TRAN: Can you tell me more about your time in the Caribbean?

CARVALHO: It was a wonderful time to be there. I got there in 1970, I think, '69 or '70. And it was small, not a lot of tourism yet there. I worked several different jobs. I worked for a hotel there as the receptionist, which is how I then got my first job as a legal secretary. One of the attorneys that rented offices there, had a secretary quit and came and offered me double my pay to work for him. So I mean, there weren't a lot of people there, so he didn't have a lot of people to choose to hire from. I went to work for him, and he trained me. It was just a wonderful place to be then, it was small and the community was small. You had friends from sixteen years old to eighty years old, because everyone just kind of hung out together. I lived in Old Sugar Mill (California) for a while, other times I did some house sitting for a hotel during the off season. So I lived in a little bungalow out on the beach, and it was just magical. I've had a great life.

[00:04:08]

TRAN: Is there any reason you decided to move to the Caribbean for a little bit?

CARVALHO: My biological father was living in Puerto Rico. And the reason I left was because I was a teenager and just wanted to run away from home. My mother's husband was a policeman. And there was a short time, during my last year in high school when they moved here to Laton, which is about eight miles from Hanford and wanted me to live with them. And it was really difficult because since she didn't rear me, it was hard for me to look at her as someone who could tell me what to do. And I just refused. So we'd butt heads. I ran away and went down to Los Angeles, because I had some friends down there and got a job there. And then they found out where I was and threatened to put me in juvenile hall. And it was just a few months until I was eighteen. And I said, "Yeah, watch this," and I borrowed money from friends. At that time, I could fly to Puerto Rico for seventy, seventy-five dollars. So I just got on a plane and went to Puerto Rico where my biological father was and from there got out on my own. And I got to St. Croix—how did I get to St. Croix? I married my first husband there in Puerto Rico, and his parents lived in St. Croix—that's how I first got to St. Croix, we went to St. Croix.

TRAN: So, to get the timeline straight, so you moved to first the Caribbean and then Los Angeles.

CARVALHO: No. So, when I was seventeen, I moved to Los Angeles. And I was only there probably two months. And then from there, I went to Puerto Rico.

TRAN: Alrighty. And now we're just going to take it back a bit into your home and chemicals in the house. Do you mind describing your childhood house? I know you moved around a lot, but whatever is most salient to you.

CARVALHO: Well, we lived in many different houses because my grandfather every other season had a new job, so I can remember a lot of different houses. To describe it, I'm not sure what you want, like how many bedrooms or what do you mean when you say, "Describe it?"

TRAN: We could start just like what sort of products you remember in the homes, in terms of cleaning chemicals, fragrance products—

[00:06:44]

CARVALHO: Oh, chemicals. Well, I don't know what kind of chemicals they used. I don't remember any problems with cleaning. I suppose they used Comet Cleanser to clean the bathtubs and I do remember one of my grandmothers having an air spray in the bathroom that I hated when they sprayed. It would give me a headache. But I don't remember a lot of chemicals in the house. They probably just used washing soda and bleach and maybe ammonia to clean with, just basic chemicals, nothing really. I think where I got exposed to chemicals was outdoors with my grandfather farming, not so much in the houses.

It's hard for me to describe houses because I bounced around from house to house. But my favorite house was one here in Hanford, and it had trees outside and I loved those trees. And there's still one of them out there and I go by and say hi every now and then. But I spent a lot of time at my other grandparents' farm. It was a farmhouse. She didn't use any chemicals in there to clean with that I can remember, just basic. I don't think I was ever exposed to chemicals inside the house. I think it was outdoors. I can remember coming in from one farm and I'd always have hives, something out there gave me hives. And yeah, I don't know what else you want to know.

TRAN: We can move on to talking about farming outside and how that maybe have impacted your chemical illness. Did you show any signs of this when you were young and as a teenager?

CARVALHO: Yeah, especially as a teenager. But when I was younger, the only thing I really remember is the hives. I'd go out to my grandparents, (the) Carvalhos, and every time I'd come in with hives. And I did a lot of running around. Back then it was different than now. I was like five years old. My grandfather would make me a fishing pole out of bamboo, and I'd walk across a huge field and go to the slough and go fishing. I mean, you'd never let a five-year-old kid go fishing alone these days, but I did. You know, it was wonderful. And so I'd walked through that tall grass, which probably had been sprayed with something—who knows, and I play out in the cornfield which I'm sure had been sprayed. I'd play out in the cotton fields, which I know has been sprayed and had fungicide on them. So a lot of my exposure was there.

The only problems I remember as a child, until I was seven, was the hives. Now when I was seven, I got a really bad headache and a high fever and a neck ache and I went to the doctor and I had spinal meningitis. And I had a lot of spinal taps. And I was in isolation for about two weeks in the hospital. And after that I would get headaches. And for my whole life since then I've had really bad headaches. And I never really connected the dots to fragrances. But it seems almost that that's what triggered the whole thing. Because after that—oh yeah, and I've got a headache right now, actually, I don't know what happened—anyway, but after that, the migraines and the headaches set in quite regularly. And I didn't connect it with fragrances. I didn't connect it with fragrances until I was working at the hospital and all that happened, and I got diagnosed with MCS.

[00:10:29]

TRAN: And then, let's see, did you ever bring up your chemical sensitivities to doctors?

CARVALHO: Yes, I did. And I want to go back, too, and also say as a teenager, I had a lot of behavioral problems. And they could have been for a lot of different reasons. But now that I understand the MCS, I feel that a lot of times, it could have been that I was in the middle of an exposure, because even now when I'm in the middle of exposure, I can go from Dr. Jekyll to Mr. Hyde. And so I think sometimes those streaks of meanness, you know, or whatever it was, but because I was on high alert with my sensitivities, I didn't realize what it was. Now, I forgot your next question.

TRAN: Actually, to explore that a little, how was your illness or chemical sensitivity when you were a teenager perceived in your family?

CARVALHO: That I was just a monster child. That I was just uncontrollable, that I was stubborn and headstrong and liked to argue. I really didn't. I just didn't feel good. And back then, they didn't pay a lot of attention to you if you were a kid and had problems. It wasn't like now, there were no helicopter parents.

[00:12:00]

TRAN: And then how did you ever end up bringing your chemical sensitivity to doctors as you got older?

CARVALHO: So I got a job. I worked as a legal secretary and for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service most of my life, until my kids were reared. And then I just wanted to do something different. I got a job as a certified nursing assistant. And at that time, I was living with my boyfriend and we lived close to St. Vincent's Hospital (Providence St. Vincent Medical Center) in Portland. And so I got a job with them. And that's when I started really noticing, really getting sick and having constant flare-ups of the MCS and at that time I didn't know what was happening to me. I didn't know what was happening to me. There'd be times I'd be in bed for four days. I couldn't think. I was forgetting things, I couldn't remember. There were times I couldn't even remember my sons' birth dates. It was really frightening. I had constant headaches. My neck and my shoulders ached, my hips ached. I just felt horrible all the time. And I started going to doctors trying to figure out what's wrong with me. And they diagnosed me with rheumatoid arthritis. And then a specialist said, "No, that's not it." Then they diagnosed me with sarcoidosis. And they said, "No, that's not it." And they just misdiagnosed me with several different things. And I just got worse and worse and worse. And then one doctor wanted to give me Valium, and pardon my French, but when they wanted to give me Valium, I said, "I'm not taking Valium, I feel like shit. Don't just drug me so I don't know why I feel like shit. Find out why I feel like shit!" And nobody could do it. I went to doctors for months and nobody could do anything.

And that was just when people—me, anyway—people were starting to have internet at home and I got on the internet and started doing searches. And I started putting in all my symptoms. And every time 'multiple chemical sensitivities' would pop up. And I thought, what is that? So then I started reading about it and learning about it. And I convinced myself, pretty much diagnosed

myself and convinced myself that that's what it was. So then I started looking for a doctor because I got into chat groups and found out that there were doctors who treated this or who at least knew about it. I got online in a chat group and found out that there was a specialist in Coos Bay (Oregon). And at this time, I was living in Portland, Oregon, so that's just a few hours away. I called him and made an appointment with him and went to him and he diagnosed me and he said, he was like, "Yeah, this is one of the worst," he told me at the time, I'm sure everybody says this, but he told me it was one of the worst cases he had seen. At that time, I was so sick. I was so sick, in fact, I think we slept in the car that night because there was no way I could go into a hotel. So he diagnosed me and he told me what I needed to start my healing journey. One of the things he did was he gave me a choice of chemical chelation or long-distance walking and saunas to try to chelate the chemicals that were, at that time, stored up in my body. And I did some research on chemical chelation and decided I didn't want to do that, because I discovered that a high percentage of people ended up with liver and kidney damage. And I just didn't want to take that chance. So—am I talking too much?

[00:15:50]

TRAN: No, no, this is all great. Please continue.

CARVALHO: Okay. So, the guy I was living with at the time, and his name is Joe and he and I were together for about fifteen years. And MCS probably is what broke our relationship up. But he hung with me as a friend. And he's really a good friend. And you'll hear me talking about him a lot. Joe was a recovering Catholic and I said, "Where am I going to walk? How can I do long distance walking in the United States? It's not safe." Because he's not talking about taking a one-hour walk. He's talking about walking for five or six hours a day. And there really wasn't anything—I mean, there was so much money and planning involved in doing the two trails on the East Coast—the Pacific Coast Trail and the Appalachian (Trail) —it wouldn't have been worth my while. And he said, "Well, what about the Camino (de) Santiago? Have you ever heard of that?"

I said, "I don't even know what that is. What is that?" And we had been to Europe. And I'd been several times because I have family from Portugal.

So he said, "Well, it's this pilgrimage in Spain. And it's about five hundred or six hundred miles long, and you just walk every day. And there's support all along the way, places you could stay," blah, blah.

So I said, "Oh, that sounds good." So I started looking into that. And I asked him if he would go with me. So I went for the first time with Joe. It wasn't that busy then because the movie—which I was an extra in, actually—hadn't come out yet. And so there weren't so many people on the route that it was uncomfortable. I walked every day, five or six hours for six weeks straight. And I went from being in bed four days a week to feeling really good and feeling normal by the end of it. I mean, it was just miraculous really, how it had chelated my body, and eating good food and getting the fresh air. So when I got back to Portland, I saw my doctor again, and I told him what had happened, and he was amazed at how much better I was doing. And I decided I really needed to do that at least once a year. And I couldn't afford to do it. Because I was not able to

work. And so I put my brain in gear and I decided to take groups. I had a friend who lives in South Africa who was taking groups on the Camino. And she had one year said she might need help. I contacted her and told her I'd like to take a group because I needed to walk but I couldn't afford to go. She let me take one of her groups that following year. And it was crazy because I took Joe with me again that year, and I booked one group in the spring and one in the autumn, and in the in-between time I went to Wales and stayed with friends there. And it was too many people and it was crazy.

So then when I got back, I told my friend, "I think I can do this on my own." And I just started booking a group of seven or eight people every spring and every autumn and I would take the spring group and then Joe would take the autumn group. And that's how I got my exercise. And I didn't go this year because my mom fell and I couldn't go, and I feel it. But anyway, so that's kind of what I did. And I don't know how I got off on that. The hardest part about that—the best part is all the chemicals go away by the end of it, you're just feeling great. The worst part is the airplane right there and back. It's torture, it takes me several days to recover from the trip. But once I'm there, I've made relationships there. So now I know—you know, first I had to contact every place and say, "Do you use fragrances?" and it was a lot of work. But now I've established places where I can stay each year that are fragrance-free.

And then when Joe and I split up, he made my son's garage into a safe house for me and I tried that for a few months, I was sleeping in a hammock strung from wall to wall. But it was too close to the street and the exhaust was really making me sick. So he then built me a bed in my Mercury Tracer. And I lived in the Mercury—I'd say I lived out of it, not in it—out of the Mercury Tracer and just camped. And then when my disability case settled, I took the settlement and bought a house in Portland with my son and made it a safe house. But then a couple of years later, my son got married and I had to get a roommate. And that was a problem. Even though I advertised for someone fragrance-free, people don't understand really what that really means, fragrance-free. And after a couple of years, I just couldn't deal with that. So I sold the house two years ago to my son and bought a van and now I live out of my van and follow the sun.

[00:21:08]

TRAN: Wow. Thank you.

CARVALHO: Sorry.

TRAN: No, no, that was all great. I would love to go back and just unpack everything that you talked about. I first want to talk about what was your doctor's official diagnosis to you? I heard that there is an interesting definition that he used.

CARVALHO: Oh, his diagnosis—hang on, my phone is ringing. Hang on just a second. He diagnosed me with multiple chemical sensitivities.

TRAN: And I'm just looking at the pre-interview notes. Was there a description of this (diagnosis) that he uses to tell people?

CARVALHO: Right, I know, I know what you're talking about. So—can you hold for just a second?

TRAN: Sure, no problem.

CARVALHO: So he said, this really was great, because I've told this to a lot of people and they understand it. And he said, "What you tell people (about) MCS is it's like this: You're walking down a mountain trail, and you're happy and you are just walking along. And all of a sudden you come around the corner and you almost step on a rattlesnake. And you jump back and all these fight or flight chemicals flood your body. And suddenly you're on high alert, your hearing, your smell, sense of smell, sense of taste, sight, you know, your eyes are dilated, they're big, so there's a lot of light coming in, it affects your body, your muscles tense up, and then you look down and you realize it was just a stick. And in most people that fight or flight will then turn off. And within just a few minutes, they'll be feeling normal again, with you"—meaning me—"with a person with MCS, it doesn't turn off. It compounds, it just keeps getting bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger. And that's why you get sick because you're just being flooded with those fight or flight chemicals."

So, today, for instance. I was stupid last night and slept with the window cracked open because it was hot here. And someone was apparently doing their laundry in the neighborhood and the smell from the fabric softener or laundry detergent had been wafting into my room while I was sleeping and it woke me up with a horrible headache. My muscles are aching and tight, I've got kind of a brain fog more than usual. All these symptoms, even though as soon as I got up, I closed the window, flushed out my nose, took a shower. It won't go away. It'll probably hang with me today and tomorrow. This is not a severe reaction. It's a mild reaction. But in a normal person, they just go, "Oh, that stinks," shut the window and they get over it. But he says it just won't, it's an overactive immune system response and your body just won't turn off that response. And all those chemicals that it's flooding your body with make you sick. And that's what he told me.

Now, that's probably not scientific, but that's like a way to explain it to people. So they go, "Oh, okay, I get it." Otherwise, people don't get it. They'll go, "Oh, I just put on a little bit of lotion." And then I say, that's like telling someone with a fatal peanut allergy, "There's only one peanut in that salad." Right? I mean, they just don't get it.

[00:24:42]

TRAN: And then seeking this doctor, did you do this after you worked at the oncology place?

CARVALHO: Yes. And I think that, and it's been a long time, I believe I was still working when I went to see him. But after I was diagnosed, he told me I really needed to get out of that job because I was being exposed to chemo every day. And that was one of the things that would make me sick. I mean, he didn't tell me to quit my job, but he gave me a list of things to do, and to get rid of in the house and to not be around, and one of those was chemo. If you can, you need to quit that job and get a different job. So at that point, I quit.

The other thing is, when I went to work there, they gave me a series of vaccinations. And I always wonder if that kind of triggered it, because it really got worse when I was working there. Although up until then, I got constant headaches, bad, bad headaches, and I didn't know why. And now I know it's because I was wearing perfume. And I didn't know it was making me sick. I can remember when I was a younger woman having horrible headaches. But I also remember I was one of those women who just bathed in cologne. And I probably had a cloud around me ten feet in diameter. And I hate those people now. I go, "Why did they have to wear so much?" And then I go, "Remember, you used to do it." So, yeah.

TRAN: Can you describe in what ways your symptoms got worse when you worked in oncology? What did that look like for you?

CARVALHO: Well, it started with the headaches. I would just get headaches. I'd get to work, within a very short time I just get a headache. And then my joints would ache and it would hurt to walk and it would hurt to move my arms. And then I would get this brain fog where somebody would tell me something and two minutes later, I'd be going, "What did they say, what did they say?" And I felt angry. I felt angry all the time, started fighting with my partner at home because I was just—it seemed like every little thing he did upset me. The lights really bothered me at the job, the fluorescent lights flickering, which just killed my head and they were so bright. And I just found myself being impatient because I just didn't feel good. And then there were mornings I'd wake up and it would literally hurt to move and I just couldn't get out of bed and I'd have to call in sick. And then after a few days, I'd be okay. And I'd go back to work and the whole thing would start over again.

TRAN: And then—

CARVALHO: —of course, I was doing things at home that I didn't realize were also making me sick. At that time, you know, before I knew what was wrong with me. And I think that that hospital job triggered it. I've always thought that—

[00:27:46]

TRAN: And did things at home include fragrances?

CARVALHO: —Sorry.

TRAN: No, no no—

CARVALHO: At home, it didn't include a lot of fragrances but maybe cleaning, fragrances from cleaning supplies I was using. It was a condominium, and so there were people around who would be doing their laundry and I'd smell—of course at that time I didn't realize why but—the gas from their dryer or whatever was full of fabric softener and I don't think at that point I was wearing perfume. But we may have used fragranced laundry detergent also, because I didn't know that was doing it. But mostly was when I get to work. And we had to use hand sanitizer constantly and wash our hands constantly. And those things were fragranced at the job also. So I was just being bombarded. That job. You asked people not to wear cologne and they would look

at you funny. I didn't know yet what it was. But after I found out, I think I tried telling them what my problem was and seeing if there was anything they could do. But there was just nothing. And I ended up quitting and filing for Disability (benefits).

TRAN: I see, so you did try to ask for workplace accommodations and it just didn't work out?

CARVALHO: Yes. They wanted me to get the flu shot and I refused because the time I had gotten it the year before just made me really sick. But no, they wouldn't do anything about fragrances.

TRAN: And then I wanted to ask next, how did your illness and sensitivity affect your relationship with your family and your other relationships? I know you mentioned a little bit about your partner at the time.

[00:29:59]

CARVALHO: So with Joe, he kind of watched it all happening. And he's a pretty smart guy. I mean, for a year it was hell because I was just crazy to live with. And he didn't know what the hell was wrong with me. But after we got the diagnosis, and he actually talked to the doctor, and then he kind of understood what was going on. He was very supportive. But still I would fly into these crazy rages and things when I was exposed. And in the end, it broke us up and after the initial—well, what happened was, actually I went on the Camino alone, and how and did a lot of thinking about it and just decided I couldn't deal with the stress anymore. I had to get rid of some things. And the stress was one. And so I came back and said, "I'm moving out. You didn't do anything wrong, you're not wrong and I'm right. I just don't want to do this anymore. I don't want to sit down and talk about it. I'm just going to move out." He was really shocked because he didn't expect it. But that's what I did. And you know, it took him a few months to get over it. But he finally did. And now after all these years, we're really good friends.

But my other friends, I lost a lot of friends. So I basically had to tell people—I sent out a letter to my friends and family when I finally was diagnosed and knew what was wrong. And I said, "Here's what's wrong with me, here's what I need from you if you're coming to my house. If you can't do that, then I guess I won't see you. But this is my life now." And so I lost a lot of friends. My social life just went from really full to nothing. I couldn't go to dinner parties, I couldn't go to people's houses. I couldn't go to church. It was awful to go to church. I'd be sick for days. There were just so many things that I couldn't do socially. So after a while, people just stopped asking me to come over. My three sons, two of them understood and were really good about not wearing cologne. My oldest son, who is a surgical nurse, you think he'd get it, but he didn't. And it took him several years before he didn't just pooh-pooh it and insist on wearing fragranced laundry soap around me. And I just wouldn't see him. And I told him not to come over.

Now I've got a really close relationship with all my kids and my grandkids. And they all just know and a small group of friends who know that if they come around, they can't wear any fragrance. So it's okay. But yeah, it was hard, it was really hard. And then in the winters, Joe has a place at Desert Hot Springs, California, which is a fifty-five and over park. And so for the years we were together, I would go with him there in the winters. And it's a really socially active

place. And I still can't do anything there. I tried to go to the swimming pool. But the laundry rooms are near the swimming pool. So if I'm in the middle of a water aerobics class, and someone starts doing laundry, I've just got to get out and leave.

I was thinking about this the other day. I really don't have a lot of close friends, like I used to. And I really don't anymore because I just can't do the things they do or go the places they go, even to their houses. It's sad. It's lonely. But I've made a new community of friends in this van-dwelling group and it's good.

[00:33:40]

TRAN: So what group did you say again?

CARVALHO: So when I bought my van, I got hooked up with a group of a huge number of women. Like more than a thousand women who live out of their vans or RVs. And they have caravans and follow the sun and we just kind of hang out together and camp from place to place. So those are my new friends.

TRAN: I would love to talk about that later. But first I wanted to ask you about how you found your doctor. You said you found him through a chat room?

CARVALHO: Yeah, I was in a chat room and someone put up a list, it's been so many years ago, of doctors who treated multiple chemical sensitivity or who understood it. And he just happened to be on the list and (in) Coos Bay, and I called and made an appointment. He was an older guy, he was in his eighties. And he's retired now and I don't have a doctor anymore. But we drove over there and I saw him.

TRAN: So did you develop any relationships with an online community or forum, with others who deal with similar illnesses or sensitivities?

CARVALHO: Oh, I wouldn't say relationships. I'd stay in those forums a little while and then I'd get discouraged and leave because I have a philosophy that if I wake up happy and go to bed happy, I'll be happy. And I'll attract what I put out. And actually, after I got sick, I tried the Gupta Program—if you want to talk about that later, we can. And the Gupta Program had said, "Don't talk about all your ills." One of the things he says is, "Just don't talk about it. Don't say, 'Oh, how bad I feel' all day long every day to everybody because then you will feel bad all day." So I didn't talk about it. So when I'd get in these chat groups, and there were like 150 people, and every one of them was just complaining and complaining and complaining. I just thought you know, I really don't want to be around that (negativity), so I'd leave. And then I might try a different one. I probably tried three or four. And so no, I wouldn't say I formed any relationships with any of those folks. I couldn't even tell you any of their names now.

[00:36:07]

TRAN: And then I want to talk about also, after your doctor diagnosed you with MCS and recommended you try just walking long distances. Can you tell me more about your journey

through the Camino de Santiago and Europe? Is it just one walk a year and then you're kind of good to go? Or is it just that one big, long walk and then doing little walks in between?

CARVALHO: Yeah, it's like that one big walk—if I can take that one big walk, it seems to me over the years, I'm so much better than I was when I first got sick. Also, I want to say that I wouldn't even be on the phone when this first started, or the computer too much. But when I walk I can almost feel my body getting cleaner and cleaner and cleaner, because you sweat—the constant exercise—you're sweating and you sweat out a lot of those chemicals and work them out of your body. And so I usually feel really good at the end of it. And then as the year goes by, not so much anymore. Because these days I've learned to immediately recognize a trigger substance and just get out of the area. So I'm not exposed a lot like I used to be before I knew what all the triggers were. But then after a while, you know, and especially after a year, I'm not feeling so good every day anymore. So then I do the Camino again. In between, yeah, I have been doing a lot of walking, a lot of hiking. But this year, about two months ago, I developed something that I believe is Morton's neuroma on my foot, and I can't walk (like I want to). I don't know what I'm going to do because I'm having trouble just walking around my mother's house caring for her. So, I don't know, I have to look into that. And I'm not going to have surgery. So those walks may be finished until this fixes itself, I don't know. We'll see. And I didn't go this year because my mom took the fall.

When I'm on the Camino—well, I learned again over the years, most people stay in albergues (hostels), which are basically just a hostel, and it only costs—I don't know what they cost now. But when I started, they were three or four euros a night, three to five euros, maybe. So it's cheap. And all it is is a bed and there could be twelve beds in there, there could be three beds in there or there could be a hundred beds in there. It just depends on where you are. And all that includes just the bed. You have to take your own sleeping bag, and they usually have hot showers, sometimes cold. So the first time I went, we stayed in those. And sometimes I'd have to deal with fragrance because people would have on perfume, not a lot, most hikers didn't put perfume on. But maybe the cleaning stuff they mop the floor with. I can remember a couple of times using the towels to clean the floor and trying to get the cleaning solution off of it. Over the years I learned where I could stay and where I had to book private lodgings. So now all the people I stay with when I book my trips know that I don't want fragrance and so when I book the lodgings they're fragrance-free places. Forgot what I'm talking about. So what else do you want to know?

I went through about two years where I ate only raw foods. There were a lot of things I did for my initial healing and raw foods was one of them. Got all the metal out of my mouth, that was another one. There were just different things I did. The walk was another one. So when I was on the Camino the first time, I ate mostly raw food. Sometimes, actually, we did eat cooked food, but the food there is so much cleaner than the food here. Spain makes the United States look like a third world country. It's just crazy, their infrastructure is so much nicer than ours. Anyway, so what else. Since I take my own bedding, when I walk, I take my own sleeping bags, I don't have to use their sheets. And it's just good. I feel good when I'm walking. Even just after a couple of days I start feeling better.

[00:40:39]

TRAN: And then how long does it take you to finish this trip?

CARVALHO: If I take the whole trek, it's six weeks. When I book my groups, I only book for three weeks and take them to the highlight cities, the beginning, the middle, highlight cities, and then the end. But then I always stay there for at least six weeks. And I'll walk for a couple of weeks either before or after my group, usually before because I need to recover from the airplane trip and then get myself in a little bit of shape before I can go with the group. So I usually go two or three weeks ahead and walk on my own. There are different routes that I can walk that aren't as busy. And there are routes all over Spain to walk. Sometimes I'll just walk out in Madrid, it's like two weeks up to the Camino. Just depends how I'm feeling. So I'd say six weeks, six weeks of walking?

TRAN: And how many years have you been doing this, again?

CARVALHO: I think 2008 or 2009 was my first trip, about ten years.

TRAN: And then I wanted to ask about—so I know it was very physically therapeutic for you because it got out all the chemicals, but what about the walk—was (it) in any way mentally therapeutic for you or mentally healing?

CARVALHO: Mentally healing. It was very mentally healing. And especially the second or third time I went. I think the third time is the time I went without Joe. I had a lot of time to think about that relationship. And so decided that, you know, with everything else I was dealing with, I couldn't deal with relationships right now. And it was mentally healing and I had a lot of time to think about everything. So it was yeah, it was really nice. And like I said, the first time I went, there weren't a lot of people. They weren't as many people in the Camino. It wasn't like a big fad yet. So it was a lot of quiet time. Now you can't walk without having ten people in front of you and ten people behind you. That's an exaggeration. You know what I mean.

[00:42:58]

TRAN: Then I want to ask about—looking at your pre-interview about—so after you stopped your job at the oncology ward, how are you able to get Disability payments? Would you mind talking about that a little?

CARVALHO: So, after I was diagnosed by my doctor, and he basically told me, there's nowhere you can work. You can't work in a building without getting sick, you're too toxic right now. And so I decided I would file for Disability. And I knew from exploring the internet that I'd probably be denied the first time. So I went ahead and applied. And I was denied. You have to apply at least once before you get an attorney. So it looks like I applied in 2008. So the first Camino must have been either 2008 or before that; I know when I applied, I'd already started walking. So anyway, I applied, I was denied. And then—I don't know how, again, I guess I just was on a chat group or something and I found the name of this attorney. And I honestly couldn't even tell you his name now. I'd have to look it up. But he had MCS—he has MCS. And I just got lucky and he was taking cases. And because he had the condition, he knew—he was brilliant. Because I had a

telephone court (hearing), I couldn't go to court because I couldn't go inside the building. So he arranged to have a telephone court where I just got on the phone on a group call and talked to the judge. And the judge asked questions and he answered the questions for me. And he knew the important thing to say. They'd say, "Well, why couldn't you get a job at a warehouse where they are open, there's a lot of air?" And he'd say, "Okay, so what happens when she has to use the toilet? Are you going to supply her with her own private toilet? No, no, she needs a bathroom where there's no fragrances. Can you keep people with fragrances from going in and out of the bathroom? Can you be sure that the place you're working doesn't have fragrance soap or fragrance cleaners or spray?" I mean, he just knew all the important questions that someone else may not have even thought of. And so they granted my Disability. And it was retroactive, so I got a chunk of money for about two years. Because it took two years from the time I filed, got denied, filed again, and then got my Disability.

[00:45:49]

TRAN: Wow. And what was it like to work with him overall, if you have any more to say about that?

CARVALHO: To work with the attorney?

TRAN: Yes.

CARVALHO: It was great. I want to say that we agreed that he'd take a third of whatever I got. That was fine with me because I just needed some sort of income. I didn't even know I'd get that chunk of payment. He was really friendly. He was very sympathetic because he has this condition. So he knew exactly what I was talking about when I'd tell him, you know. And he had a secretary that I dealt with most of the time and she was the same way. She was really good. She understood everything. So it was easy to work with him. And I was just so grateful for him because he knew to do things like arrange a telephone conference instead of making me go into a courtroom. And he knew all the right questions. So I really liked him. His name was Michael but I can't remember his last name. I tried looking him up. I think he may have retired, I don't know.

TRAN: And then I wanted to talk to you about your time living with your son. Did you say you moved out into a safe house?

CARVALHO: Well, when I left Joe, I moved into a little apartment that was just a little efficiency. That didn't work for me. So then my son—my middle son had a house with a detached garage and they weren't using it. So Joe went over and remodeled it and made it into a little one-room house that I could live in without any chemicals. And he was really careful with what he used in the construction. And I thought that would be the answer. But it wasn't because it was too close to the street. And the fumes from the cars were triggers for me and made me sick. So then I was living out of the Mercury. And then when I got my Disability, my son and I decided to buy a house at Portland. I don't remember what your question was now.

TRAN: Oh, yeah, just expanding more. I know in the beginning of the interview, you talked about this, I just wanted to gain a more in-depth detail, like walking through living arrangements.

[00:48:18]

CARVALHO: So, my son understood the condition. My youngest son understood the condition. He was single at the time. He makes more money than I've ever seen in my life. And so he and I talked and I said, Look, I'm getting this chunk of money, I can make the down payment if you'll make the most part of the mortgage payments. And so we made that agreement, so I didn't have to pay. You know, I paid like a third of the mortgage payment, he paid two thirds. He's paid a lot of my expenses and helped me a lot. He pays for my phone now. But that worked out really, really well because he understood my condition. And it was a three-bedroom house so there's lots of space.

But then he met someone and got married and they wanted their own space. And he moved out. And I got a roommate. And when I advertised, I advertised that I had MCS and needed someone one hundred percent fragrance-free. And the guy that moved in, he was nice. He was probably there for two years. But he just didn't get it. I mean, he'd have a girlfriend come over and she'd be covered in perfume or there was just little things that just chipped away. And after a while, I told my son, if they wanted to move back in the house and buy me out, they could buy me out and I was just going to buy a van. And by then I had learned about the vanning community. So I was just going to buy a van and go live out in nature because when I lived out of the Mercury and was out in the woods, I felt so much better. So they bought me out. They're paying me off a little each year. And the last two years, I've lived out of the van and enjoyed it very much.

TRAN: Can you talk more about the community you found through living in your van?

[00:50:19]

CARVALHO: Yes, the community. So years ago, when I first got sick, I bumped into this community website called cheaprvliving.com. And I had watched a lot of the videos that Bob, the guy who runs it, had put up. There were many fewer videos back then because this has all kind of exploded now. But they had a forum and so I talked to people on there about it. And it just sounded like something that I would enjoy doing. And there was, I think, at least one woman on there with MCS who was living out of her van and I liked the idea of the fresh air and no house to clean and no utility, you know, no bills, really, except gasoline. And so I got on a forum online, two years ago, on that forum—hang on, I have to take a drink of water. And I found out there were a couple of gals—women—not with MCS, but who were van dwellers. I'm choking, hang on, I have to get some water, hang on. Yeah, I'm still on, I had to get the water. (To her mother) You okay, mom?

So I found out there were a couple of women in Portland. And there was a woman who had written a book called *Nomad Land*. Her name is Jessica Bruder. And they were all the women in this vanning community. A lot of them had been there at the beginning, when it first got started, and had been characters in her book. And she was doing a book reading at Powell's bookstore there in Portland, and they invited me to go along. And they were having dinner ahead of time at a restaurant that had outdoor seating, because I told them I can't go inside the restaurant. So there are about eight women. So the first time we met, we met there and had dinner. They were

such a kooky, fun group of women. And I think the youngest one was in her early twenties and the oldest one was probably ten years older than me, and I'm sixty-six. Some lived out of their van, some lived in a Roadtrek, and one lived in an RV. And then one had a camper and lives in a truck camper. And some had been in this group called the RTR (Rubber Tramp Rendezvous). The RTR is the Rubber Tramp Rendezvous and it's an event they have every year in Quartzsite, Arizona. And it began with like fifteen people. And this last year, I suspect there was close to 4000 or 5000. And those are all people who live out of moving vehicles, whether they're RVs or vans or trailers or whatever.

So anyway, I had dinner with these gals and it was just so much fun. And then we went—I did go inside and go to the book reading. I had to wear a mask and I had to leave early. But inside there I met more people from that community and I just loved them. So I invited them to all come over to my house for coffee. And I told them they couldn't wear fragrance and none of them did wear it anyway because when you're living in a vehicle, you don't have room for a lot of extra stuff. So they all came over and we chatted again. And they were all going to the desert for the winter, and I picked their brains about that, and they picked my brain about the Camino. And so I decided to go to that RTR that winter. And so I did, I got in my van, and went there and hooked into a nice group of women. And then the following year, they started something called the WRTR (Women's Rubber Tramp Rendezvous). The RTR, the Rubber Tramp Rendezvous, is for men and women. They decided there was a need for a women's only group. So either before or after the RTR now, they have the women's RTR, which is women only. And there were thousands of women there. So I met a lot of women there this year. And now there's a Facebook group that I'm hooked into. So we kind of keep track of where everybody is. And this year, they started something called caravans where they've got three or four different caravans. I think two are male and female and then two are women only. So you can join a caravan of people if you don't want to camp alone, and just go with them from place to place where they do a route that follows the sun. And it's always free camping. So that's that.

And the RTR, you can look online and read about it. Basically, what they do is they educate people about how to live out of your vehicle, because there are more and more and more people wanting to do it. In that community I've only met two or three other people who have MCS. But there are enough—

TRAN: Do you mind—

CARVALHO: —I want to say there are enough that this year at the WRTR, they had a section set aside that was absolutely fragrance-free. So even though some people don't know that they have MCS maybe yet, they do know they can't deal with being around fragrances or campfires.

[00:56:16]

TRAN: And do you mainly live out your vehicle today? Or how does that work?

CARVALHO: So I mainly live out of my vehicle. And that means basically I sleep in my vehicle. I have a kitchen in the back of my vehicle. You can look online, if you want to check me out I'll give you so you can see my vehicle. I had my front passenger seat turned around so I can

work in my vehicle. And during the day, I'm usually parked in a nice place. I laugh and I say every two weeks I have a different front yard. Because wherever I am, I try to find beautiful places to camp. So I can most of the day just sit outside and read or do art. I do pet portraits. I'm an artist and make a little bit of extra money doing that. And so I can sit outside and work or in my van if it's too hot. And yeah, it's easy. And I find myself a lot healthier when I'm out in the van.

Right now, for the last—my mom fell May 18th. I went up to San Jose because she had a surgery up there and I slept in my van for a week at the hospital. And then when I came back down here, I left for about ten days and went to the desert in my van. And then she needed me. So since six weeks or so ago, I've been living in my mom's house and my van's parked out front and I really want to get back into it but my mom needs my help. So here I am. And it's been over the years difficult with her trying to get her to stop using fragrances but she finally gets it, especially now that she needs me here. So the house is fragrance-free. However, she smokes like a smokestack and even though she goes outside to smoke, when she comes in, of course I can smell it and there's just nothing I can do about it. I just stay away from her until she airs out.

TRAN: How long have you been living in your van? Just two—

CARVALHO: Two years.

TRAN: Has there been accommodations that you have made in your van to accommodate for your chemical sensitivity?

CARVALHO: Well, the only thing I would think of would be, I always carry nose spray. I carry nose spray and I always carry Bengay because even though I have chemical sensitivity, there's certain things I'm sensitive to and other things that actually seem to calm the nervous system. And for a weird reason—I guess it's the wintergreen or whatever's in Bengay calms it. So I always carry Bengay wherever I go, because I'll put it on a tissue and breathe it. It kind of is like when you breathe coffee when you're testing perfumes, to clear your head. It just clears whatever's causing the reaction and kind of calms things down a little bit. Those are really the only accommodations—I mean, of course, when I was putting it (the van) together I couldn't use any glues or anything that was scented and couldn't go buy new wood plywood. I had to use plywood that was old and gassed out. And luckily Joe's a contractor so he had storage that had plywood.

Yeah, the one time I felt like committing suicide, the only time in my life was after going into a Home Depot for about forty-five minutes. And I came out of there just crazy. If I'd had a gun, I would have killed myself. I mean really, seriously, not just saying that. I was just so despondent and I had such a reaction to the chemicals in there. It was a stupid mistake of my own. I knew I shouldn't have gone in. But I felt fine when I went in so I didn't think about it. But anyway, those are the only accommodations for the van is just to make sure that everything is scent-free. I can't really think of anything else. I cook outside, my kitchen's in the back so I raise the back and cook out there. Yeah, I can't think of anything.

[01:00:45]

TRAN: Yeah, I would love to shift the interview now just to focus on like the now. Yeah, so you talked about living in your van. And you also talked about how your illness has greatly improved over the years. How does it impact your daily life today in terms of social life and family life?

CARVALHO: Well, there is no social life. I can't go into other people's houses. If someone invites me to dinner, I just have to say no. And after a while they get tired of asking. If someone invites me out to a restaurant—now a neighbor that knows I have this, when I first got here invited me out to eat. And I said, “I can go, but if I get into the room and someone sits next to us, you know with the wrong perfume, I have to leave and I'm sorry, that's just the way it is.” And they understood, so I went and it was okay. When I first got sick, there's no way I could have stepped into a restaurant without getting really sick. So, it's better now, I guess. But I don't go inside places a lot.

My son gave me a Starbucks card for Christmas last year. And so because almost all the places I'm at are sunny and the weather's good, that's all of the weather, so I can just sit outside of the Starbucks and use their internet or whatever. If I go grocery shopping—I'm not much of a shopper anyway. But I used to be able to go shopping at the mall, I can't do that. I used to go grocery shopping and I'd just meander through the aisles. I can't do that. Now I make a list of what I want to get in, get it, and get out. And I stay away from the soap aisle. And if I'm in the grocery store with a cart full of groceries and someone with the wrong perfume comes up behind me, I've been known to just walk out and leave the cart rather than risk exposure. So that's something I would have been embarrassed to do before I got sick but I don't care.

I really don't have a social life. I stopped going to church years ago. I finally—I've tried over the years, I've gone back now and then. When I was walking the Camino, I was able to go. I'm a Mormon Catholic, if that makes sense. Half my family's Mormon, half is Catholic, so I'm comfortable in either place. So when I'm walking the Camino, if I want to go to mass, usually it didn't bother me because the churches are so big and so few people are there. Here, it's hard because so many people are perfumed. And a few weeks ago, I went—they're having a big Portuguese festival here and I wanted to see when that was going on. And so I went to church and I think I had to move my seat five different times before I got far enough away from anyone that I could stay for the whole mass. Mormon church is a little better, because I can just tell people my problem: “This is why I can't shake your hand, and this is why I'm sitting so far away from you.” And most people are pretty good. Or I'll wear a mask. But still a lot of perfumed people. So church doesn't happen much anymore.

You know, I used to go out to bars, have a drink, go dancing, I can't do that anymore. I can't invite people over that I don't know. When I lived at my house, I had a sign on the door that said, “If you have fragrance of any type on,” and I listed a lot, “please don't knock on my door or ask to come inside my house.” You know, that pisses off a lot of people. And it made me laugh actually, because I can remember when I was a little girl, I went one time to visit my mother. And she smokes like a smokestack and the people across the street had moved in and she'd gone over to visit them and welcome to the neighborhood then she started to light a cigarette in their living room. And they told her they didn't smoke, and they would appreciate if she didn't smoke

inside their house. Now, we're talking about forty years ago or more, probably. And I remember that she was so pissed off and she just thought that was so rude that they wouldn't let her smoke in their house. It's funny. So anyway, I don't know what made me think of that.

People get upset if you tell them, "You can't come to my house with perfume, you can't come to my house because of your laundry soap." The laundry detergent is horrible! And you can't get it out. I tried buying used clothing, but a lot of times, I can't even find any, because they've washed it in that scented laundry soap and you'll never get it out. You can wash it a hundred times, put it in the sun, and run over it with a tractor and you'd never get it out. I don't know what else about social life, I have a nice social life with my van-dwelling people because it's mostly outdoors. They have potlucks or just sit around and talk. And they're having a meetup in Tillamook in July and I'm hoping to be able to get up there and connect with them. And that's really my community right now.

[01:06:03]

TRAN: And then I was going to ask, or part of the question is, do you participate in online forum groups? I know you mentioned that you participated in a program that really got you off of those sites. Can you explain more about that? Was it the Gupta Program?

CARVALHO: I did something called The Gupta Program and you'll just have to look him up online. Basically, it's a program to retrain the amygdala, which is the reptilian brain. Because his theory is that that's where all the problems with MCS originate. And I tend to believe that that's true. So rather than me explain that whole thing to you it'd be easier if you just look up the Gupta Program, or I can send you a link to his website. I read a lot about it. It helps some people, some people thought it was baloney. I decided it was worth a try. And I don't remember what I paid but it wasn't a lot of money. And he sent me a set of CDs. And then there were some person-to-person calls I could have with him. I did exactly everything he said to do and I felt it helped me a lot. I felt positive about it. It didn't cure me but it helped me. That combined with a long distance walking I feel were really beneficial. So and I had learned about him in probably a chat room somewhere. Now, Facebook is like my chat. That's where I do my chatting with people, even the people in my WRTR group. There's a private group of those people. That's how I found out about you guys, actually. Someone said that you guys were looking for people to talk to.

TRAN: In your today's life do you have any creative outlets for coping with your illness or sensitivity? I know you mentioned something about art.

[01:08:18]

CARVALHO: Well, for a while I was rehabbing Bratz dolls. And I have to be doing something. And I'm artistic. And I get bored easy. So I've got to be doing something. So I rehabbed Bratz dolls on Etsy for a while and that was a lot of fun. And I kind of got bored with that and decided I wanted to take some art lessons because there's no way I could take these dolls on the road with me. There's too many materials and I don't have room to carry everything that I need. So I thought, Oh, I could do art. So I took some watercolor lessons and discovered that I was really

good at it. I wish I'd known this twenty years ago! I started off in watercolor. And then I thought maybe I might like a different medium that was easier to take in the van. And so I took some colored pencil lessons, and—I do very realistic, photorealistic work. So I didn't realize that was possible with colored pencils and I found out it was. So I started doing pet portraits and selling those and did pretty good up until the time my mom fell and the internet dried up and I have no way to drum up work. But I enjoy doing the art. I enjoy crocheting and knitting. I enjoy doing any kind of art.

And I like just doing things. Mom's dryer broke last week. It sounded like it was dying in there, it made so much noise. And it was going to cost so much to have someone come in that I just decided to take it apart, fix it, and I did. And I liked it, it was fun! So I just like doing stuff like that.

TRAN: And then—Have you done any activism work around multiple chemical sensitivities?

CARVALHO: No, I haven't, not other than just telling people that I meet. Because there are so many different triggers that people have and so many different—some people just have it mildly and some people can't read a book or read newsprint. Everybody has different triggers. I just got to the point where it was depressing me to hear all those stories. And for my own protection, I just couldn't do it. So I have not. The only activism I've done is if there's some kind of a poll or something someone can take, or something I can sign online to try to get something changed, I'll do it, but as far as being actively into activism, no.

TRAN: And then—and that's totally understandable. My last question to you for this interview is, what are some steps you believe could change society's contemporary relationship with chemicals, artificial tastes and smells, and what we associate with those things?

[01:11:25]

CARVALHO: Well, I think educating them and figuring out some way that they can be educated about it. And so they know that these things are harmful. But the problem is for every article that says how harmful a substance is, Monsanto or some other pharmaceutical company will have their scientists publish something saying it's perfectly safe. So people don't know what to read. And they're more likely—it's like, so here's an example—and this does have to do with my MCS—when they spray the damn sky. I don't know if you've noticed all the chemtrails, but they've been spraying the skies for many years. I'm sixty-six. I've lived in this valley, most of my life, growing up as a teenager. And you'd wake up and see blue skies. There's an airport nearby here, you never saw trails that were more than a few feet long. So when they started off spraying the skies, all these chemtrails, I could smell it coming down, they will come down in the air, the air would be milky, it'd look like snot. I get sick, I cough. And everybody just thought I was crazy. “Oh, no, those are just contrails, this is a conspiracy theory.” And I'm like, no. And so then Oxford University started advertising that they were training people to do weather control. The word escapes me right now what they're calling it, but they actually had classes and courses in it. And I'd post that up there. And people just were like oh no, it's just a conspiracy theory. Well, now the government's come out and said, online, “Yeah, we think we're going to try

spraying the skies and seeing if we can cool the earth,” blah, blah, blah. Well, they've been doing it you know for ten years, they're just now coming clean. This just cracks me up.

I guess my whole point is, people just don't want to believe that the government is poisoning its own people. For some reason they want to think bad of everybody else, but they want to want to think positive about the government. Or it wouldn't do that. “Why would they spray you? Why would they develop GMOs if it wasn't going to solve world hunger?” I don't know. I just don't get it, why people would do this. Sometimes I just get so frustrated with them. Your question was, I think just educating people, somehow pounding into their brain that these things are toxic, and they're killing you. And they're poisoning you on purpose so then they can sell you drugs to make you better.

I don't know. I don't know what it will take. I don't know—maybe people, maybe young people. We need to get rid of all the old, white farts in the government and get some young blood in there is one thing. I really strongly believe that. And I don't know. I don't know what the answers are.

I've kind of given up watching the news, or getting involved in political discussions because I'm so on the rope. You know, neither is right. I'm far right on some things, far left on others. I just don't even try to discuss that with people anymore. And I kind of follow this gal Esther Hicks, and I don't know if you have ever heard of her but she's got Abraham Hicks, which is a website. She's kind of a woo-woo person but I really like what she says. She supposedly channeled this entity, Abraham, which I know sounds really weird. But the stuff that they say or she says is just so uplifting and so helpful to me that I try to just follow her in the morning, and maybe in the evenings before I go to bed so I'm positive. Because I find the more positive I am, the more positive my life is. And it just works for me. So I stay away from people that drag me down, political—the news. She says, “It's like you have a pie, you're baking an apple pie and there's a clove of garlic that's peeled and sitting on the counter four feet away. And you're obsessing because you don't want to get garlic in your pie. ‘Oh my god, there's garlic over there! Oh my god!’ You can work yourself up into a dither or you can just go, ‘I'm not going to put any garlic in my pie.’” So I've decided I'm not going to put any of that politics and stuff into my pie. I'm just going to make an apple pie. And I try to just be grateful that I don't have cancer or a limb gone or something that could be a lot more horrible than MCS. I haven't gotten sick in a while. And it's taken a while.

[01:16:22]

TRAN: Do you have anything you would like to say or mention before we conclude this interview? Anything we didn't cover or discuss?

CARVALHO: I don't think so. I don't know. For me—I mean, I'm kind of where I am. And I'm okay. But I feel bad for young people who have MCS and maybe don't even know it. Maybe they just think they have fibromyalgia but they're not sure why. I wish that there was some way to educate people because I think getting fragrances out of the workplace, getting them out of the laundry products, which everybody uses. I mean, honest to god, it's a conspiracy theory. If I were a chemical company, I'd put dangerous chemicals in the laundry detergents too because

everybody uses them. And then you can give everybody cancer and then you can sell everybody cancer drugs. I mean, I honestly believe that's their whole show. It's making us sick so they can sell us medicine to make us well. I don't know how old you are. But I can remember television, when ads for medicines were illegal. Now you watch TV for five minutes, and then you get ten minutes of, "Ask your doctor about this drug." And I think it's the pharmaceutical companies are making us sick so they can sell you drugs to make you feel better. I really do believe that. If I were in charge, I would just outlaw all those chemicals that we've begun using since World War II and go back to the way it was.

TRAN: All right. Anything else?

CARVALHO: I don't think so. Don't wear perfume! Don't use scented products in your house. Don't use Febreze. That's the worst of all. Febreze just takes me down for a week.

TRAN: Alrighty. Thank you so much for sharing your story. This was really interesting, to hear just all your opinions and thoughts and your journey. I guess what happens next is that we'll be in touch to send you a transcript just so you have a chance to look over it and everything.

CARVALHO: Okay, sounds good. Thanks a lot.

TRAN: Yeah, thank you. This was great.

CARVALHO: All right.

TRAN: All right. Talk to you later. Bye.

[01:19:12] (End of June 4, 2019 interview)