

Prince, Part Six: Paths Cross

Rio and Prince have continued to do fantastic in their runs side by side. And Rio has been great at picking up on Prince's cues and moves to the other side of the run when he senses Prince wants to be left alone. The runs had been staying open more and more with the good weather and Prince has been enjoying every bit of it. On April 8th, it rained for the first time while the runs were open and we were anxious to see what Prince would do. If he lived his whole life in a stall, had he ever been rained on? Well he stood out in the pouring rain and loved it – nature's bath. Then the next thing we knew it started hailing, but Prince did not want to come in. He stayed out there soaking up the moment and taking everything in. He made the decision to stay and we respected that decision.

Prince was doing great up to this point, but where do we go from here? Sue had experience with stallions in the past, but never a violent one and Prince had definitely been violent with more than one person. (Sue was also half her age when she worked with the stallions!) So, Sue kept wondering, where do we go from here? And to those of you who believe in Angels and Guides as Sue does will appreciate that later that night after the rain, Sue was laying in bed pondering this question and clearly heard the name "Mitch".

We had a great relationship in the past with Mitch Bornstein, the author of "Last Chance Mustang". He was gracious enough to come to some of our fundraisers and even did a book signing for us. Mitch is known all over the United States for humanely working with and helping wild mustangs and dangerous horses in general (always as a result of human mistreatment). The key word here is HUMANELY- he does not use physical anger, cruelty or brutality to train horses which unfortunately is all too common in the horse training world. He doesn't run them into the ground. He doesn't hobble them to force them to stand still (which is what is believed to have been done to Prince). He doesn't tie a leg up and run them into submission. He doesn't try to break their spirit. All this was like the world Prince came from and we would never allow that to happen to him again.

The next morning, Sue called Nancy Young (our treasurer and marketing coordinator) since she has the connection to Mitch and asked her if she thought Mitch would be interested in helping out. Nancy emailed him that day. Mitch immediately replied (but we didn't know it as for some reason the email went to spam). So we waited for a reply.

Meanwhile on April 11th, it was a quiet evening at the barn so Sue took down the V gates in front of Prince's stall for the first time. She put Rio on crossties right in front of Prince so he could watch her groom Rio. If Prince and Rio really stretched they could reach each other and touch noses. Everything went great. Rio, as usual, stood like a champ and enjoyed his grooming. Every time Sue used a brush on Rio she showed it to Prince. It was a watch and learn lesson. Then at a safe distance, Sue started using



the soft brush on Price's head. At first he did his usual and went into freeze mode, so Sue would stop and continue brushing Rio. She did this with each brush. By the end of the grooming time, Prince had relaxed and was enjoying having his head brushed. It was another big step for Prince- to accept and trust being touched by a human without expecting to defend himself. And Prince's new buddy, Rio, was a big part of it.

Sue did this regularly when the barn was quiet so Prince was not overstimulated. He was doing wonderful and gradually Sue was grooming his head, neck, chest, and whatever she could reach from outside the stall. It was all by his choice. We were still not invading his space in his stall. Then on April 25th from outside his stall, Sue put a halter on Prince for the very first time. We knew this wasn't the first time he had ever had a halter on, but we let it be his choice. He could have backed up into the stall and said no but he didn't. It was his choice and he did fantastic.



By this time, Prince had been with us for three months and had not had his hooves trimmed. This was a scary endeavor for us as he would need to be in the aisle with us holding him while our farrier worked. We decided to use a little help from tranquilizers to ensure everyone's safety. Sue gave him just enough to make him mellow and not be stressed. Farrier Jennifer was a trooper and Prince did very well and we were able to trim his long front feet. His back hooves were not as long and he wasn't ready for us to try that, so we were all relieved when we put him back in the stall. Phew! Everything went well, we were all safe, and it was a good experience for Prince.

Finally, we were able to connect with Mitch and we had a long conversations about our situation. Arrangements were made and Mitch came out on May 6th to meet Prince for the first time. This was hopefully going to be a life altering relationship for Prince as now we had someone who had a lot of experience working with dangerous horses and now he was coming to evaluate and possibly work with Prince. It was incredibly exciting and also completely nerve racking as our first concern is always safety. Now we were asking someone to walk into the ring with a horse that could clearly hurt him. Horses are prey animals but Prince certainly knew how to be the predator. Prince was being great with Sue - on his terms - but what was going to happen when a stranger walked into his world? Mitch arrived with a calm and focused energy and was so wonderful about all of our concerns. For Mitch this was another day at the office - for us we were on pins and needles. Mitch's biggest question was: What is our goal for Prince? Our goal was to have him be safe, happy, hopefully rideable, and find him a great forever home. He was a healthy sound 10 year old horse that needed a chance and we were hoping Mitch would be his chance. Casey's had saved Prince the first from being put down and we were now hoping and praying that Mitch would save Prince a second time.

Mitch went into the ring and we were all holding our breath while hoping and praying for the best - and this is where our lives once again intersect with Mitch. Now that our paths have again crossed, we want to introduce you to Mitch's point of view. For the next several days, we will be sharing with you Mitch's posts about Prince. We also invite you to "Like" his FaceBook page – Last Chance Mustang (link below)

[Last Chance Mustang](#) where you can catch up at your own pace and follow his posts on Prince.

Get ready for quite a journey...

