

# The Trash Lady

Contributed by Wayne  
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In another installment of our tour of Nashville we highlight once again how the capital city outshines all other Tennessee towns in street people. This young lady strolled around the tourist district showing top notch bum skills as she sorted and dug through the trash cans in front of the trendy restaurants. It speaks volumes about the quality of life in our state capital, and the quality of the homeless, when they are welcomed to dig through trash in the tourist and restaurant district while people eating inside the restaurants look out the big windows and watch. Being a discriminating street person she did not take just any cast offs but examined each box searching for what appealed to her palate. We applaud her discriminating taste because you really have sunk to the bottom of social ladder when you will eat just any thing that has been thrown away by others. It really demonstrates a work ethic that she sorted and selected what garbage she would eat.

While we watched her cover a territory of four blocks stopping and checking out each trash receptacle for the fruits that provide the simple joys in a street persons life we noticed her active marketing. Much like the city buses bedecked with marketing slogans and four color ads for pro sports teams this inventive street person applied modern marketing to her shopping cart of plenty. As you can see she posted signs on her cart letting people know she was homeless and in need of help, just in case people thought she was just making a trip home from the Winn Dixie. A little advertising never hurts. Of course in the 30-40 minutes we followed her not one person recognized her, her plight, or offered her any aid including these little love birds who strolled up the street as we took pictures.

Now we had a chance to talk with her and she was very pleasant not a morsel of garbage was stuck in her teeth which unlike most street people she still had in her head. We must have caught her in a lucid moment because she admitted that she has mental health issues and tries to stay on her medication but has a tough time as social services for the homeless often requires more effort and record keeping than she can manage due to her illness. She shared that she qualified for free housing but could not get any landlords to accept the voucher she was issued which then expired. She added that the rules change so often that she often is dropped from medical care, placed on disability, and then transferred back to TennCare all the while running out of medicine and losing the ability to function. I asked her where she stays and she let us in on a Nashville secret that a bum village exists down by the new Tennessee Titans stadium. It seems those millions spent on redeveloping the river front are paying off as the homeless are living in the woods surrounding the stadium so next time you go to see a pro football game that person pissing in the parking lot may not be a drunk fan, just a homeless person who is waiting for you to go into the stadium so he can pee on your car door. She did not ask for any money when we approached to ask her questions and ask if we could take pictures, but appreciated that we offered to pay her for her story. I guess it was a good day as we took our last photos she found a treasure that she could cuddle with back in the bum village, a cute stuffed animal.