

Chris Schutte 0:01

All right, just for the record, can you state one more time that you're allowing me to record this interview and that you understand that the transcripts will be anonymized to protect your identity? And that you have the right to skip any question or move your information from the data set if you so choose.

B. 0:14

Yes.

Yes, I understand.

Chris Schutte 0:21

Awesome. Well thank you again. So I want to start out with little bit of background, just about you and housing. So, where do you currently live?

B. 0:34

I'm currently I live in South boulder so a decent ways away from campus, kind of, outside of the student bubble of, you know, rentals and housing areas. Just right off of like table Mesa kinda in that area.

Chris Schutte 0:55

Awesome. And why do you live there.

B. 0:59

I live here, mostly because of the price of rentals here. I find that rentals closer to the university and closer to Pearl Street and kind of downtown boulder are much more expensive than rentals in South boulder plus as I found, as I've renewed my lease here that it's a pretty convenient area of close to a lot of bus lines, grocery stores, restaurants, so it's convenient place to live. And also has the benefit of being pretty cost effective as well.

Chris Schutte 1:31

So would you say in the end that you're happy with the housing that you are currently in right now.

B. 1:36

Um, I would say I'm pretty satisfied with it. I mean, obviously, nothing's ever perfect but I do wish I was a little bit closer to campus. But I yeah I'm pretty. I'm pretty okay with it.

Chris Schutte 1:50

What's the place that you're in like?

B. 1:51

so it's definitely an older building. It's a townhome split level bedrooms are on top level and then kitchen, no living spaces and an extra half bath or on the bottom floor. We have a nice little walk out patio and then a few parking spaces which is nice. I really like that we get that much for what we're paying because I know people who are getting a lot less for a lot more in other areas. However, we did kind of work it were two people share bedrooms, so it's kind of that also decreases the cost. Now I mean I like that part of it. The lower rent part. But yeah I mean it's it's kind of like a small apartment complex in a kind of a busy street but closer to a neighborhood so it's not so bustling with activity like a little city center so that's kind of what it's like.

Chris Schutte 2:48

You mentioned that, where you're getting more than other people that you know who live here, where do those people live?

B. 2:57

So typically, the hill area is kind of the most. I guess inflated area in Boulder, you get very old, very rundown apartments and houses that are rented to students at a very high price often at least \$1,000 per bedroom. Mostly just because they know they can do it and people will pay. And typically the students that work there

Residence: South Boulder

Location Location Location
Live There for: Price/Bus
Lines/Shopping Center
Boulder is Expensive

Location Location Location

Older Building/Townhome

Value is Good
Boulder is Expensive
Small Complex/Busy Area

Location Location Location
Hill: Overpriced/Rundown
Boulder is Expensive

aren't having to work for their own maybe they get assistance from their parents for part or all of it. So that's kind of how that system continues to thrive and continue and also people typically don't live there for multiple years at least in the same property. So they're able to continuously get a new tenant, a new tenant after the last one gets tired with the fact that they're paying a lot for not very much.

Chris Schutte 3:49

Because it seems that you have pretty extensive knowledge on this subject, why are you so knowledgeable in this subject?

B. 3:56

Um, so, I was a... during my freshman year of college I was doing a real estate internship in Austin and because of that I was able to kind of get a feel for how to scope out areas neighborhoods property values. And then, in my major now in college, it does have something to do with real estate so I have to kind of be knowledgeable about areas of Boulder, and housing values, what the neighborhoods are like, as well as, you know, I just, I'm constantly looking for a new place to live. We're moving out next year. So, I've had recent knowledge also it's kind of like a weird hobby of mine that I like to get on rental listing websites and just kind of scope around, see what's happening and get a feel for the trends that are going on in the housing and rental markets. So,

Chris Schutte 4:48

that's kind of way. I'm going to move the microphone just really quick.

B. 4:52

Okay,

Chris Schutte 4:53

so it can pick up both of us just a little bit better.

B. 4:55

Okay,

Chris Schutte 4:58

awesome. I like it right there. So you mentioned that you are going to be moving out next year. Is there a reason for that?

B. 5:06

I'm reading a couple of roommates so we have grown the number of bedrooms, we have also it'd be nice to find somewhere a little bit closer to campus, especially since we're adding more roommates it'll be cheaper so we can probably afford to live there, as well as you know, having a couple years with a property management company. You can kind of learn their ins and outs and their flaws, so we're looking for, you know, landlords that might be a little bit more proactive.

Chris Schutte 5:35

So, we'll get to that in just a second, that specifically. The last thing I want to ask you is the neighborhood, the neighborhood of South Boulder. What's the best and worst things about being in South Boulder?

B. 5:52

The best thing I think is the convenience of kind of the center of South boulder which really is just this shopping center that it's on the corner of Broadway in table Mesa. That's really nice to be within walking distance of there because they have pretty much everything you need like multiple grocery stores hardware store few restaurants, coffee shops, the tire place, you know, liquor store banks, kind of got a little bit of everything that you need so that makes it really really convenient especially during the time when I didn't have a car. So I really like that, the people are generally pretty nice or at least the it's a pretty good neighborhood pretty safe, which is really nice. I think that I don't like about it, maybe that's just because I'm coming from the lens of having worked in the service industry in this Shopping

Pricey due to wealthy students

Boulder is Expensive

Short term leasing

Lack of Knowledge

Bad Rental Companies

Lack of Knowledge

Didn't learn information from CU, learned due to previous employer

Typical in Boulder for Roommates

Bad Rental Companies

Problems with Large Rental Companies

South Boulder Convenient
Location Location Location
Safe Neighborhood

Older Demographics

Center City, I guess, for at least a year now is that it's kind of a demographic that I don't fit into necessarily as a student, as a younger person that's the people that live in South boulder typically are going to be older people that move to Boulder in like the 70s and 80s, so it can be a little bit jaded and a little brusque in the way that they go about their daily lives. It's not a huge issue. But, you know, I've definitely been turned off to South boulder a little bit by that kind of the elitism that comes with, you know, the stereotypical boulder types so that probably be the thing I dislike most about it. Other than that, there's not really a whole lot I don't love. I mean, there's a few college students around so it's nice to kind of, you know, when I'm shopping at 11pm see a couple of other people there. But yeah, I think that's kind of my, my opinion on South Boulder

Chris Schutte 7:47

Next section is kind of just your personal knowledge of the real estate market in Boulder. If you don't know the answer to these questions is totally fine just be like, I'm, I don't know. But we're going to start out with, what are the major neighborhoods in Boulder.

B. 8:02

So the major neighborhoods in Boulder. There's downtown Boulder, which is kind of that pearl corridor where you have a lot of retail shopping, entertainment, and the prices, they're very very high. Typically, the average person in Boulder cannot afford to live there unless they are, you know, in one of the tech companies that has recently moved in, or you know of a pretty wealthy person, so most people work there, most people but a decent lot of people work there but don't live there. Literally north of that there's North Boulder, which is kind of a growing area. There's a decent amount of older houses in like 60s developments 70s developments that are kind of right around the iris area and then as you move further north kind of into holiday. There's a lot more newer homes and kind of this new cell or this new North Boulder. Little Town Center, I guess. Then, if you were to swing a little bit south and west of that. There's the hill which is directly west of campus. And that's kind of where zoning ordinances have condensed most of the college students that live there, because their maximum unrelated tenant policies are much higher than in other areas. So you can have more people that aren't related per housing unit. And those the values are very very high because of its decency to campus. And this kind of built up this culture like that's what the college students live so property management companies can charge a lot to live there. It's very loud most there's not really a lot of families there is mostly college students. Then moving a little bit south of that should talk well that's kind of that baseline corridor west of Broadway, which are very high valued homes that people have been in for a long time it's, you know, they typically say no students. So, that's kind of where that little area, then moving south on Broadway, of that or South boulder which we kind of already discussed surrounding campus if you move east, there's what a what our terms of sophomore slums. So, it's affordable living space which again caters to a lot of college students. It's definitely a lot less developed and a lot there's a lot less but culture around it, then there is on the hill, mostly because there's no kind of, you know, central retail entertainment area to that it's mostly just car accessible. Single dwelling units there's a few apartment complexes like five Spanish towers, but, you know, it's mostly like single story homes or duplexes so it's definitely. I feel like we're a lot more of the studios center of the college students live. That doesn't really make sense but um yeah it's definitely a lot quieter than they were trying to say. And then moving upwards, kind of on 30th. There's like way north, there's Palo, Park, and, kind of, as you're getting towards the Belmont, a lower income community that isn't really addressed a lot by Boulder. There's a lot of manufactured housing a lot of mobile homes that house, a significant Latino population. So, that area is really not super well invested in by the city. It's kind of a little bit ignored it's not really recognized, not a lot of buses go out there. So it's a little bit, this a little bit hard to, you know, hard to get to, if you don't live there and have a car, which is unfortunate. Then as you move eastward into boulder out of Boulder and kind of have this periphery of the East boulder houses, it's kind of a mix of single family apartments. That's kind of the the main neighborhoods in Boulder.

Older Wealthy Crowd

Elitism
Boulder is Expensive

Neighborhoods
Location Location Location
Downtown: The Most Expensive/
Shopping/Companies
Boulder is Expensive
North Boulder: Growing/Older
Houses Closer to Downtown/
NoBo Shopping Center

The Hill: Most College Students/
Loud/Expensive/Very Little
Families

Baseline Corridor W. of
Broadway: No Students, Very
Pricey, Rich Families

South Boulder: Convenient,
Cheaper, Older

Sophomore Slums: Cheap/Low
Quality/ Calmer than the Hill

Palo Park: Low Income Housing/
Latino Community

East Boulder: Spread Out/ No
Busses/ Cheaper/ Less

Chris Schutte 12:14

Thank you for that breakdown that's, that's awesome. Yeah. What are things are totally shifting gears coming out of the neighborhoods. Um, because you covered a couple of my questions kind of in one, which is awesome. Um, what are things that you typically look for a Lease?

B. 12:36

In a lease the thing that's been primarily driving my search for lease, which probably isn't shared by a lot of college students is the pets allowed feature, if that's a lot of things I have a large dog so that kind of narrows my search, which then makes it a little bit easier to find places because you don't have that whole, you don't have very as many choices. The other thing I look for is definitely the next main thing is bedrooms, or last few bedroom for everybody. That's kind of the most important thing. Number of bathrooms. I like to have two people per bathroom and no more. So that's kind of what I look for. I look for. I tried to look for an overview property management company. Of course the reviews for those kinds of companies are typically always going to be negative because people rarely leave positive reviews, but I try to at least look for the ones with the least amount of horror stories. I look for in the pictures of listing updated appliances. They don't have to be super new but at least some places that's clean and at least recent to my recently updated. Hopefully was in the last 1020 years parking spaces are nice, but I can do without them. And then the other thing that I would look for in listing is location, which people say that's kind of the first real real, real estate, but was being able to have a car and, you know, the public transportation in Boulder being pretty okay. I'm kind of open on location but that's definitely a factor.

Chris Schutte 14:14

Um, I love that response you actually answered a question I wasn't going to ask but I certainly should. Um, but I was talking about in the lease legally. Oh, legally, what what do you look for in a lease document, I should say,

B. 14:27

oh no lease document. Okay,

Chris Schutte 14:28

yes.

B. 14:29

Um,

Chris Schutte 14:31

but I did appreciate your insights about listings. I will be adding that question to the interview. So, that was awesome. Yeah,

B. 14:38

yeah, for sure. I'm sorry about that, you know,

Chris Schutte 14:41

that's completely my fault.

B. 14:43

No worries. Um, so in a lease agreement. I try to look for language that holds the landlord accountable for things that were wrong in the space before I arrived. So, lease agreements are typically pretty cut and dry. I mean that's not universally true, but, you know, there can be very insistent like deposits but that's not really part of the agreement itself the legal document. So, it's important to me to know that as a renter. I won't be liable for all the damage that occurs to the apartment that may be out of my control. So that's something I definitely look for. I look for, you know, some flexibility with communication with the office. Some way for me to acknowledge damage that was done to the space before I arrived. So, when I moved in here there was a whole list where you could send in pictures and things of the state of the apartment before you left so you wouldn't get charged for damages after you moved out. But generally just trying to be very careful, the

Leases/Listings:
Pets Allowed

Bedrooms/Bathrooms

2 per Bathroom
Bad Rental Companies
Pictures with updated
appliances
Lack of Knowledge
Clean and Recently Updated
Public Transportation Routes

Landlord Accountability
Bad Rental Companies
Communication with the Office

language in the lease is super super important, and reading that with a critical eye. I haven't signed a ton of leases I've only signed one so far so it's been a fairly positive experience but I definitely know to be wary of the fine print.

Chris Schutte 16:15

What are your rights as a tenant, that you know of?

B. 16:22

from experience, I know that I have a right to what is the term like a habitable space. I guess there are certain qualifications and requirements of the city sets for what that means, you need to have, you know, heating in the winter months, air conditioning is not a must, especially in Colorado like you can kind of make do but need to have a heater. You need to have hot water running water, electricity kind of just basic needs to survive. I know this because for a few months. Last year, we did not have hot water, and I did not know that that was part of my right and I could have called the city and said, I don't have hot water. What do I do about that and I could have legally broken my lease within 48 hours and not having hot water. So after that whole situation I found that out. And I was much more driven to educate myself about my rights as a tenant. So, you have a lot. I thought I had a lot more than I expected. But it definitely could be improved, especially in terms of listings that are more or properties not listings properties that are more geared towards college students. They don't really have a lot of regulation around making sure people get the security deposits back when it's justified. There's, there's a lot of, I guess not like controversy, but, you know, question about some of the practices that go on, especially in Boulder like do landlords have to disclose mold issues or things that are structurally wrong with the house before they rent it to someone. So those it should definitely be a tenant right. I believe they are currently but I don't know if everyone's educated on the fact that, you know, if your landlord lies to you about that.

Chris Schutte 18:23

So that's a similar situation, to the one that you are in where they were, I guess what you're saying is they were probably aware of that rule but you weren't so it isn't enforced.

B. 18:34

Right.

Chris Schutte 18:34

Yes, that's

B. 18:35

right.

Chris Schutte 18:36

So that would be a gap of knowledge, would you say,

B. 18:38

Yeah, I definitely think that there are, There's kind of a lack of education for renters, especially college students about their rights when it comes to being a tenant. I think it's pretty common for college students and first time renters to be taken advantage of, and just kind of thrown around when it comes to the prices of things getting charged for damages when they move out little things like that and then as well like more major problems. So I think like having some kind of program or, you know, course maybe in the first semester of college or first year college that really outlines These are your rights as someone who rents a space. This is what they have to provide you this is a language that must be in your lease. I think that would be super beneficial.

Chris Schutte 19:28

Yeah. Yeah. Thank you. Appreciate that answer. What... you talked about this just for a second. But I want to go into it. What are boulders occupancy laws?

Habitable Space Laws

Past Experiences Informed Knowledge

Lack of Knowledge

Security Deposit Abuse

Bad Rental Companies

Landlords Failing to Disclose

Prior Issues with the Property

Lack of Knowledge

Lack of Education about Renter Rights

Bad Rental Companies

Possible Class for First Years

B. 19:42

Okay, so, Boulder's occupancy laws is set up where there's a maximum number of unrelated occupants you can have in a home. So typically, that's one person per bedroom. However, in an effort to keep college students away from neighborhoods where they don't want college students they have lowered that. So, in certain zones and Max is three even though it might be a five to six bedroom home. Because I really want to discourage and limit college students from being in neighborhoods that are quieter and more family oriented more older people. In an effort to concentrate college students away from them, which is, you know, I can see the reasoning behind that they don't want loud parties and every neighborhood. They don't want, you know, the property values to go down I understand that. So that's kind of how that system works as you move outside of Boulder those things don't exist everywhere. So when you move to Lafayette, There's no maximum unrelated document occupants you can have 12 people in a six bedroom house and there's no legal thing that they could say about that. So, hence why on the hill, those maximum on Android occupants are higher number. So you can have more unrelated people living together. Hence, hence a lot. I'm sorry, but that's why you can have more college students living in the same space than why they want to concentrate them right there, because they know that's going to be a loud neighborhood there's culture built up around it. So they use the maximum annoyed occupants law and kind of will not law but code to accomplish.

Chris Schutte 21:21

Gotcha. Would you say that most people, you know, are aware of these rules... codes, sorry.

B. 21:30

Um, I don't think most people I know are aware of these I think most of the people I talked to in college, typically live on the hill and haven't really looked a lot outside of that so they haven't run into those kinds of roadblocks. Okay, so, because like I immediately moved to South Boulder, I was, that was kind of on my radar from the very beginning. But people that, you know, live on the hill the whole time or living Goss Grove of the whole time they don't really run into that.

Chris Schutte 21:58

Just a kind of a side question for you specifically. I know you're in Austin for your first year of college, do they have similar occupancy laws?

B. 22:08

I don't recall, I don't believe they do in West Campus which is their kind of version of the hill. They might in other neighborhoods around I wasn't doing a lot of research on student housing and apartments I was doing more listings related to luxury housing because I was the firm that I was in specialty, they're doing luxury housing so

Chris Schutte 22:33

I mean that's alright I was just curious

B. 22:36

Yeah no. Yeah, I never went into that in my time there.

Chris Schutte 22:38

Okay

B. 22:39

Specifically

Chris Schutte 22:41

How expensive is boulder per bedroom, on average, would you say?

B. 22:47

On average, um, I'd say 800 and \$900 per bedroom, on average, that's accounting for areas like the hill when it's 1000 plus and areas in East Campus in

Occupancy Laws put in place for college student control

Location Location Location

Lack of awareness of these important codes

Lack of Knowledge

Boulder is an exception for these ordinances

Location Location Location

Boulder is Expensive

800-900 on Average per Bed

South boulder being, maybe six to 700 if you're lucky.

Chris Schutte 23:05

Or, do you know how that compares to Colorado as a whole?

B. 23:12

Colorado as a whole, it's much higher. If you're we're talking about the whole of Colorado we're including rural areas and less developed neighborhoods and townships, so it definitely is much higher than those areas. It compared to other larger cities like Denver and Colorado Springs it's on par. If not, maybe a smidge more expensive, but it's definitely much higher than the bulk of Colorado.

Chris Schutte 23:38

Okay. Last couple questions in this category. What resources does campus have for renters?

B. 23:47

I know we have a lawyer on retainer that works with housing policy and housing law, you can't use them to represent you, but you can use them for legal counsel. I know we have that. Beyond that, I am not aware of any other resources.

Chris Schutte 24:01

Have you ever used any campus resources?

B. 24:05

Oh, like any campus resources at all?

Chris Schutte 24:07

For housing so for [B: Oh for housing] housing specifically.. Sorry, sorry about that.

B. 24:10

Um, so I guess I've used their kind of online website refuse lists look for rentals, I guess that kind of goes into the first question about resources for students who are tenants. So we do have that. However, I haven't found that super helpful because it kind of is mostly geared towards properties on the hill.

Chris Schutte 24:31

Interesting.

B. 24:32

But I've used that one so it didn't really, It wasn't useful to me but I am aware of that.

Chris Schutte 24:40

Understood. Okay. Last couple categories here. We're just going to go into the specifics of your current housing situation. What is your property management company if you feel comfortable stating it here?

B. 24:55

My property management company is Rent Boulder Now.

Chris Schutte 24:58

What did you know about them before you moved here?

B. 25:02

I thought they were a fairly large company they want a lot of properties. But I had, I didn't know anyone who had experiences with them so I wasn't really sure what I was walking into from the look at a look of their website it seemed well organized so I was confident that they have a physical office which is always a good sign. But I didn't know a whole lot.

Chris Schutte 25:23

Do you feel like they care about you?

Boulder is Expensive
Boulder has higher prices
than Colorado

Bad Rental Companies
Knowledge of Housing
Lawyer
Lack of Knowledge

Ralphie's List: But mostly for
properties on the Hill

Rent Boulder Now:

Large Company

B. 25:30

A little bit, it definitely as a whole know some employees in the office seem to care more than others about the tenants themselves have definitely had some really positive experiences with one of the employees and some other kind of puzzling experiences with other employees. But, as a whole, I know that they could just fill my unit with someone else. In the blink of an eye so they don't really care about us that much often let us have no hot water for two months so they must not care about us, you know, that much.

Chris Schutte 26:01

Is there anything they do particularly well?

B. 26:08

They're maintenance actually is beyond the hot water thing, fairly on top of it. So every time I've had like a minor issue like the blinds are broken or, you know, the toilet isn't flushing or there's leaking water, stuff like that. They've been really on top of and consistent about making sure it's fixed, like we had a drain that wasn't draining, they, you know, two guys came out, then they couldn't fix it so they called a plumbing specialist that he came out and it was fixed so those employees individually are pretty on top of it. I think the disconnect comes from when things have to go through the office to them, like with the water heater like the office had to purchase one. And then, you know, that was kind of the holdup there but the maintenance crew themselves seems pretty awesome.

Chris Schutte 26:59

Is there anything they do, especially poorly?

B. 27:04

Especially poorly I think the communication between the people in the office is terrible, because there have been so many times where I've talked to one employee, about, you know, a situation or problem that I'm having and seemingly it was resolved then I get an email two days ago, two days after that from a different employee, asking you know why I haven't done this thing but, you know, it was the opposite of what the other employee told me, and they were just been a ton of situations like that, where it seems like they don't really talk to each other, keep records of interactions with tenants. So that's the thing that I think is the most frustrating.

Chris Schutte 27:43

All right, last category: Hindsight

B. 27:50

20/20

Chris Schutte 27:53

What do you wish you knew before you moved here?

B. 28:07

That's a great question.

Chris Schutte 28:08

Thank you

B. 28:14

I think I wish I knew how to be more persistent. When I know things are great. Obviously, as you probably get some talking about the hot water thing again. But I have had a really hard time, standing up for myself to property management company because I felt like, Okay, I'm really in a not a position of power here. They're the ones that control where I live. So I felt really scared to be firm with the fact that I needed the service as fast as possible and I let it go on for way too long because I kind of felt as a tenant in the, not a position of power.

Chris Schutte 29:02

Seem to care, disorganized overall

Good Maintenance

Good Maintenance

Inter-office communication is lacking
Bad Rental Companies
Insufficient Record Keeping

Stay Persistent with Issues
Dealing with Utilities or Maintenance
Lack of Knowledge

Is there anything you feel like would have made moving or living on your own a little easier?

B. 29:09

Um, I think having an easier access to a moving vehicle would have been really nice. You know, if I hadn't had a couple hundred bucks to spare. I wouldn't have been able to run a u haul to get all my stuff from point A to point B, or you know if it would have had a call a bunch of friends. But not everyone has those kinds of resources. So I think if there was some kind of way, that there was a much cheaper way to move I think it would be very helpful to people that are lower income that need to move there things like no furniture and, you know, things that don't fit in the car.

Chris Schutte 29:53

Yeah, that's what I get that, what mistakes if any Do you think you made when you're looking for a place to live. Or do you feel like you made any mistakes at all?

B. 30:10

I think I've done a fairly good job of picking a place. There are definitely like, obviously it's not perfect, but I think for choosing my first place to live, I did a pretty alright job. I've definitely have heard some horror stories about people in their first apartment so I think oh no it's not bad.

Chris Schutte 30:34

All right, That's all I have for you. Thank you so much for participating. My whole team really appreciates your time. And if there's anything else you want to state for the record, you can do that right now.

B. 30:46

Um, the one thing I will say that I didn't mention which is kind of a reality for a lot of people that are renting is being careful about your roommates. It can be really difficult to find good roommates. And if you end up having a dispute or finding that it's impossible to live with that person. It can be really hard depending on your lease agreement to find a new roommate, and, you know, resolve that situation. So, it isn't really important to have a good resource for finding responsible. Good easily with roommates which. It's kind of hard to do because that kind of gets into like differences of personality and living habits so very difficult to find but I think this is also another really important part of renting and leasing, but I just wanted to, you know, address, before we ended.

Chris Schutte 31:39

I understand and I thank you for adding that is that it

B. 31:43

yeah that's everything thank you for your thoughtful questions.

Chris Schutte 31:46

Well, thank you for thanking me for my thoughtful questions I appreciate it. All right.

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Moving Vehicle is Crucial

Good Roommates are a
Must
Lack of Knowledge