

Cheyenne, Yeah Man!

Why Cheyenne, WY is one of the USA's best kept secrets

By: Mike Casey

In today's installment of "The Castle & You," I'll be exploring why the city of Cheyenne, Wyoming is amazing and why you should drop everything you are doing to go there now. I mean it. Do it.

Well... ok, fine... not really drop everything you are doing but still go there as soon as you can.

Truly, it's a high quality city without the price tag.

Why do I say this? Well, maybe you should read on and find out!

Maybe you saw it on a map or went nearby on your way to Colorado or elsewhere but I recommend spending a few extra hours or a few days there when you can. Maybe you can find more time for it than that but if that's all you can do, it's worth it.

Below, you'll find a few of my reasons for why I say that and why I loved that place. Including a concise summary of what I learned in the grand scheme, journey and game of life from being there. Nestled in the foothills of many rolling hills and far off mountains amongst the prairies all around.

May your adventure bring you to the capital of Wyoming.

Reason #1: The sign started it all. Glowing as a beacon of trust it said, *Wendy's*. As we walked in, the smells of the burgers filled the air. The sweet aroma of the beloved red haired woman's namesake filled our hearts with joy at the same time. Our quest though was different than what lay ahead for our noses' sweet delight. For what we were after, it wasn't those bacon-filled creations of love (even though I wasn't eating bacon at this time). It was instead... the frosted goodness of the ice cream that lay inside. The desert that has finally arrived in the night in Cheyenne. Walking up to the clerk of the empty restaurant, we ordered our frosted creations. One small and one medium. As we put our order on the same ticket for convenience sake, a question pierced the crisp indoor October air. "What name should I put this under?" We froze and in the non-existent line, we could only imagine the impatience of the person behind us. I said my name and he just wrote "Charlie Brown Snoop." The name of infamy, the name of some

underground hip hop prodigy. Or maybe something else entirely. Where could this name come from?! Pure genius or maybe, just maybe, the motivation came from looking at and reading my Charlie Brown and Snoopy Holiday sweater. Makes sense I guess... It was a pretty cool sweater. Either way, classic Cheyenne.

Reason #2: *Lincoln Theater.* That's what the large neon sign had written outside. All I had to go by experience was the Safari in Moorhead and the cheap theater in St. Cloud which is now a Famous Daves so I didn't know what to expect from downtown Cheyenne's cheap second-run theater. Reading the times, we planned to see *Suicide Squad* on its way out of the general 2016 cinema schedule. Entering the building, the front box office look was straight out of a time that I have never lived in but you still remember it fondly. It was delicately and precisely painted and designed to captivate the audience as they walk in. As we approached the front desk, we got our tickets for an amazing price. \$3.50 each. 7 dollars total to see one of the largest films of the year. Giddy with excitement, we sit down and prepare for the movie to start. As approximately 6 other people entered the room, the ads and trailers began to start. Looking up and around, we saw the room that we are sitting in. It's almost like it's a theater from a completely different age. Great seemingly stone columns rested next to the screen, which lies in front of a large stage, used for grand orchestral concerts I presume. Behind us, an empty balcony rests above our bewildered heads. The feature film begins and that is how the second night in the great city comes to a close. It was spent watching a cinematic creation of DC anti-hero glory in an old style theater. Super epic and for that moment, it was truly a moment spent in a movie lovers' sweet moment of bliss.

Reason #3: It was Sunday morning on our last night there and we needed something to do. Walking through the streets of downtown, we saw a card store one block ahead. They sold many kinds of cards and sports collectibles, advertised on a few different signs and on Google Maps. On top of that, they especially sold what we were specifically on the hunt for. The cards that were wielded by the likes of Yugi, Kaiba and Marik alike. Even Jaden, Crow, Kite and Yusho used them too. Don't forget Varis, Luke and Yudias as well! As we surfed through boxes upon boxes of Yu-Gi-Oh cards, we were amazed upon the prices and selection. We found them all. Spells, Traps, Monsters. Of all kinds. Continuous spells to halter all attacks with Monsters used by the most powerful duelists and for what... 10 cent common and 25 cent rares. Dropping around 6 or 7 dollars, the price tag meant nothing at that point. Finding some new gems there,

my duel deck and my smile became stronger in Wyoming's largest city on that beautiful and sunny Sunday morning.

Reason #4: I've had a saying. "Go to the bell or go to hell." That may be an extreme statement but full disclosure, it's also a joke for when people say that Taco Johns is better. Yes, it is truly a joke. I'm aware that people are entitled to their opinions but in the spirit of criticism, I can say that they are odd opinions to be had after what I had in Cheyenne. Because wow... It was truly an incredible T-Bell experience. When you go into the Cheyenne Taco Bell near downtown, it's an adventure to the senses. The smiles on the employees shine throughout the building. It's a fast food joint where the workers actually seemed like they wanted to be there. As rare yet awesome as that is. Smiles all around as we ate our food, not a single taco, drink or burrito out of order. The large feeling atmosphere of the building was thwarted by the literal size of it. This was easily the biggest Taco Bell that I have been to on top of it all and that's music to my ears. With Mountain Dew Baja Blast in hand, I can say that without a doubt, The Bell definitely didn't disappoint in the capital of Wyoming.

Reason #5: Later on one of the nights, the adventure in this daring city has taken a wonderful twist, to the store of the American backbone, Wal-Mart. It was by large and by far, the nicest Wally World I have ever been through and I have been to a mighty fair share of Wally World's throughout the country. Every interaction with the staff was delightful. They were helpful and nice at every corner. The prices were fair and just, we bought our things and headed towards the exit of the building. As we were leaving, we began to notice one of the best parts of the place. The people, our fellow customers, inside were the icing on the cake. Women and men alike swooned as we strutted through those doors and rocked our tourist swag all over that glorious building. They almost could sense the "new-to-this-city-yet-I-own-this-mothereffer" vibes that we were unintentionally giving out. The women flirtatiously smiled at us and the men nodded their heads in approval. My roommate was in a happy relationship back home but for me, I smiled flirtatiously back at the women and nodded back to the men in that well-maintained structure. As tourists, we connected with many parts of this city and its people on our way to dance the day away in Fort Collins, but we would always remember the people who remained residents of this dashing and delightful city. It was as if the blessed city had spoken and we were deemed cool enough to be part of it. A moment where we could truly partake in the seemingly "run-of-the-mill everyday" culture of the majestic hub that is Cheyenne.

Reason #6: It was our beacon. Off of Interstate 80, we could see it from a distance, pointing which way to the campground. It was a coal refinery which lit up like Times Square at night. The lights shown through the darkness of the sun's absence. When we were off on our adventures in the city on those two days, we used that to guide us home. We would GPS and/ or guess our way back but it was its lights that reminded us that our beds and a small yet powerful heater would rock us to sleep. Our camper cabin which became home was ready for us soon enough. Our guidepost like refinery flame in the city which is known for its patriotically colored giant cowboy boots.

Oh and they have a dinosaur museum as well. Super cool too.

Summary of what I learned from this adventure:

When I first booked my cabin at the KOA in Cheyenne, I definitely wasn't expecting to be wowed by the city it resided in. It was with the help of our great adventure, the Lincoln Theater and "Charlie Brown Snoop," that I was persuaded into a new way of thinking about what is sometimes referred to as the "Flyover States."

This way that reminded me that even in a city such as Cheyenne, with its interstate dependent tourism, you could still have the new American culture mixed with a more traditional way of life. The older buildings on the south side of I-80 with the new apartments on the north. A city where such mundane tasks as going to Wal-Mart or Taco Bell could be considered a good time, at least I seemed to enjoy them there.

So, maybe it was just my attitude or maybe it was a certain energy there. Either way, I can't deny that Cheyenne is a place that made me feel something in my soul. A reminder to slow down and look at life in moments such as these so that I can find joy and happiness in the place that I am at. Not an awesome future moment or a past great one but the moment now. A contentness in the present moment, wherever that may be.

Simply put, to just be.

In that particular experience, over those two days, it happened to be the city of Cheyenne, Wyoming. But little did I know when I booked it, it was the exact place I needed to be.

So, yeah. No sarcasm is meant or even dare implied when I say that Cheyenne is one of America's best kept secrets and true treasures that I recommend visiting when you have the time.

May you find the magic there like I did.