

From: Dave Varshock [<mailto:dave@coastcentralrealty.com>]

Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2014 3:29 PM

To: 'Staci Leeper'

Subject: RE: [AllRealtors] Need Anecdotal Stories about squatters in vacant properties

Hey Staci,

While managing the fourplex at 1824 B St. I had a "gentleman" get out of jail, put the address of the units on his release form, break into one of the vacant units, and take up residency. The county sent him follow up correspondence to that address that same day he got out. It was received by him the following day just before I arrived to find someone had broken into, and taken up residency in the vacant unit. When I contacted law enforcement, they responded, arrived at the scene and asked him to produce proof that he lived there. He promptly showed them the mail the jail had sent him. They turned to me and told me that he lived there and that I would have to evict him! Moreover, that he was due a 30 day notice! No lease, no application, nothing, just a letter from the jail confirming that he was released, sent to an address that he had no legal authority to receive mail at. But, since the post office delivered that letter, it was all he needed to legally establish his tenancy under California law!

Made me ill! I still tell people about it.

Thank you for helping get the word out there.

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From: Dan Johnson [<mailto:Djohnson@danco-group.com>]

Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2014 1:16 PM

To: 'Staci Leeper'

Subject: RE: [AllRealtors] Need Anecdotal Stories about squatters in vacant properties

We have a 17 acre site in Arcata that has anywhere from 15 to 100 squatters everyday we spend over 20k each year cleaning and evicting

Dan Johnson

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djohnson@danco-group.com

From: Parker, Larry [<mailto:larry@benchmarkrealtygroup.com>]

Sent: Thursday, July 10, 2014 9:53 PM

To: Staci Bishop

Subject: Re: [AllRealtors] Need Anecdotal Stories about squatters in vacant properties

I was showing a vacant house and it was going well until we reached the bathroom. The door was locked? I rattled the knob and a voice from within said. Yes, may I help you? I looked at my client with fear in her eyes and I said, hi, I'm a Realtor, do you live here? The voice said, No, I said what are you doing here, they said taking a bath. I was stunned and my client was ready to run for the door. I smiled at her and said. Well could you describe the bathroom for us? The voice said huh, I guess. We both laughed, I said never mind, we have seen enough and headed for the door. I called the list agent. They immediately changed the locks.

From: Parker, Larry [<mailto:larry@benchmarkrealtygroup.com>]

Sent: Saturday, July 12, 2014 6:45 AM

To: Staci Bishop

Subject: Re: [AllRealtors] Need Anecdotal Stories about squatters in vacant properties

My client and I met at the vacant home out on Hookton. The property bordered the wildlife preserve. As we were enjoying the quite and the view my client asked if the seller was taking the wood stove or leaving it as it was sitting in the middle of the floor, so we weren't sure wheather is was coming or going. I called the listing agent and she said, " middle of the floor, is wasn't like that when I showed it yesterday" she said I will be right over. My client had to leave but I waited for her to arrive, when she did we decided that the home had been broken into and they wood stove was being dismantled to make it easier to carry. She called the police. I waited with her. They arrived shortly after and found the burglar still in the attic. I must have surprised him and he chose to go up instead of out. Well he got to go up all right, up the river to jail.

From: [Michelle Voyles](#)
To: [Victoria Copeland](#); [Lois Busey Humboldt Assoc. of Realtors](#)
Subject: Squatter story
Date: Monday, July 14, 2014 2:35:32 PM

Squatter story

My situation was a bit different, as the home was filled with the deceased owners contents until the executor could come and go thru the home and possessions. She asked me to periodically check on the house, as she lives in Montana, and make sure all was well. I had keys to the home, and went by one day and the owners car was parked on the front lawn and the door was wide open. I stopped and went to the door to see who was there. By the time I got out of the car and got to the door it was closed. I knocked, had my husband check to see if it was broken into around the back. I tried my key only to discover that the person inside put the chain across the door. From what I could see thru the narrow opening was frightening. The house was essentially turned upside down, stuff everywhere, and some wasted girl on the couch. She wouldn't open the door, so we got into the car and were calling the police when the fellow came out. It was the owners convicted felon grandson who had gotten into the house and did the damage. Since I knew him I told him why I was there and said he was not to be on premises. He became agitated, so I left and called the executor. She then called the Arcata police, and was told it was a civil matter and he needed to be formally evicted! Seriously? She started the eviction process, came down, and went to the police station with me to get an escort to go into the house. They put us off until she said she was going in whether they came or not, and hoped no one would be injured, as she asked for help at the station. Well, we were escorted in as the grandson bailed out the back door. The home was trashed, drugs and needles, crap everywhere. The police basically said that they would come by and check on the house during rounds, and make sure it was secure. We buttoned up the home as best we could and made a plan to come the next day with New Life Service Company to start the clean up.

The next day the door was again chained and he was back in. The Police were called and the routine was on. The grandson left a burner on, on the stove blown out, the house was filled with gas.....who know what he was thinking, or cooking. Finally, we had the police helping us and had an alarm system put in same day. 2 dumpsters later and a whole lotta work, we had the house cleaned out and ready to sell. What a sad situation for this family. The grandson ended up back in jail on different charges, so we did not have to deal with him. The house since sold, but at a lower amount due to the problems he caused.

Michelle Voyles
Azalea Realty
707-845-1609

Sent from my iPad

From: [Susan Pryor](#)
To: victoria@mingtree.com
Subject: Squatters in vacant properties
Date: Friday, July 11, 2014 11:06:53 AM

Hi Victoria:

I had an incident which didn't involve a "squatter" necessarily, but certainly a "visitor" in one of my vacant listings. It was an estate sale and in a location on the outskirts of Fortuna along a path that the transients would take to come into town. Because of that, I checked on it almost daily. One day I went to check on the house and as soon as I opened the door, I knew someone had been inside. I didn't think too much about it until I went into the laundryroom and saw the window busted out and blood all over. I started thinking that someone could still be inside the house in one of the bedrooms, so I immediately went back outside to my car and called the Fortuna Police Dept. Two officers came and checked the interior and exterior of the house and found it clear. But it did cost me \$90 to replace the broken window.

The person could have just as easily stayed in the house as all the utilities were on for showing purposes. I could tell it was a man because he left the toilet seat up. lol.

Susan Pryor
Action Realty
(707) 845-2967

From: [Trueman E. Vroman](#)
To: victoria@mingtree.com
Cc: vroman@humboldt1.com
Subject: Squatters
Date: Thursday, July 10, 2014 9:38:15 PM

I do not know where to start to describe all the problems I have had with property trespass related crimes. In the City of Eureka, I have been forced to demolish two residences and a commercial building do to repeated break-ins and stripping of the buildings. The City of Eureka treats the property owner as the criminal and is held responsible for all the damage. You recieve fines for having a vacant structure. One party even gave false information and had PG&E turn on the power and gas. The police will generally only show the violators to the sidewalk whereupon they immediately re-enter the structure. There is no support from police because there is no will to prosecute by the District Attorney, and no room to incarcerate for property trespass related crimes. We have an ever increasing population of homeless who feel entitled to violate the property rights of owners and when confronted have no consequences for their behavior.

In the County, the situation is similar. I have had repeated break-ins of all kinds of structures iredardless how well they are secured and resecured. These include houses, barns, and vacant lands where they camp and tow in travel trailers. The property owner is often told by law enforcement that this is a civil matter and you should hire an attorney to secure an eviction even though these are clear trespasses by individuals who have no lawful right of entry. My properties are often used as dumps for trash and hazzardous materials. The property Owner thereafter recieves an abatement notice from the Code Enforcement Unit to clean up the mess at his expense. There is no reduced fee schedules at the transfer facilities for disposing of other peoples trash. When evidence of the violator is given to authorities, there is no will to prosecute.

It is clear to me that we are tolerating an increasing population of individuals who seem entitled to commit property trespass related crimes that the legal system encourages by failing to punnish perpetrators. Any new legislative relief would be appreciated, however the problems will only be eliminated by enforcement.

Sincerely, Trueman Vroman

There is a constant "Craig's List" rental scam ongoing. Ads are place for a property to rent and applicants are emailed paperwork stating that the home is not for sale but the owners do not want squatters to move in so they are pretending to sell the properties just don't bother the Realtor with calls. The potential renters are to send their application and funds to an out of area owner who state they live on the east coast and are given direct deposit information for a local branch of a national bank. I have report this to the local DA but was told that there is nothing that can be done since there is no "local" meeting for any funds transfer. Usually the renters do call and they are alerted by my office that this is a scam.

Robin

(Robin Ronay, Broker Associate with Remax Humboldt Realty)