

# Detroit Eviction Defense

**Facing Foreclosure? Getting Evicted? Say No, Stay Put, Fight Back!**

[www.detroitevictiondefense.org](http://www.detroitevictiondefense.org)

**313-530-0216**

## Time to Stop Vulture Investors!

They Feast on Detroit's Housing Crisis, Undeterred by the County and City

The worst scavengers in Detroit are not the local thieves who steal furnaces from empty homes. Bad as they are, the real vultures are the wealthy investors living in West Bloomfield and Grosse Pointe who bilk tenants with inflated rents, swindle homebuyers on land contracts, neglect maintenance, evict families, and abandon the properties to tax foreclosure – opening the door, *literally*, to the metal scrappers who follow.

The County, instead of stopping the exploitive and fraudulent practices of these vultures, feeds them new victims by allowing them to bid in tax foreclosure auctions. Both the county and the city then move slowly and ineffectively to clean up the devastation caused by these predators.

## Time to Organize

It's time to confront the slumlords who are gutting our city, together with the government leaders who enable these well-heeled looters.

Some of the biggest predators are already well known, even when they hide behind their many corporate fronts: Michael Kelly, Steve and Stevy Hagerman, Matt Tatarian, and Sameer Beydoun. Other vultures large and small still operate in the shadows. We need to shine a harsh light on as many of them as we can identify, then find ways to act in defense of our neighborhoods.

The organizing meeting and housing clinic on February 24 will be a chance for us to come together and develop strategy, targets, and actions.

**Scam Investors are Destroying  
Our Neighborhoods**  
**Organizing Meeting &  
Housing Clinic**

**Saturday, February 24**

Noon - 2:00 pm

Old St. John's Church, 2120 Russell St.

at Gratiot, just south of Eastern Market

Weekly meetings are every Thursday, same location



Charlevoix Villages Association Organizing Meeting on Resisting Displacement June 2017

# DANIEL MURRAY'S HOME WAS DESTROYED BY THE DETROIT LAND BANK



From the published comic by Jeff Wilson on counterpunch - Demolish! The Story of One Detroit Resident's Home - <https://buff.ly/2y4mzsq>

Daniel Murray lived at 15745 Quincy in Detroit for decades. He grew up in the home. The Detroit Land Bank gained control of the property in 2014 after tax foreclosure but never notified Daniel, who continued to live there as normal. Although the Land Bank owned the property for years, it never notified him until Land Bank agents broke down the door in April 2016 to conduct an inspection. This was the Land Bank's first time entering the house since it gained ownership years earlier.

Daniel filed a police report for the break-in and contacted his elected representatives. Finally got a call from the Land Bank, which notified him that it owned his home. Daniel demanded to know what was going on, and why the Land Bank broke into his home, but got no answers. The Land Bank told Daniel that it needed to send an inspector to

verify his occupancy, and Daniel was more than willing to cooperate.

That never happened. Instead, Land Bank agents arrived at Daniel's house without notice or explanation in May 2016, broke down his door (again), threw out his belongings, trashed his home beyond repair, and demolished the house shortly afterward. Daniel lost everything.

The Land Bank refused to follow the law, which required it to serve Daniel with a month's advance notice and then obtain a court order that would allow it to evict Daniel. The Land Bank never followed this process, instead simply arriving at the house out of the blue one day to destroy the house and Daniel's lifetime of possessions.

Daniel is currently pursuing a lawsuit against the Land Bank in Wayne County Circuit Court. Despite all evidence to the contrary, the Land Bank continues to claim that Daniel did not live in the home, and that throwing him out of his home was perfectly legal.

In December, the court denied the Land Bank and demolition contractor Rickman Enterprise Groups' attempt to dismiss Daniel's lawsuit. The judge also allowed Daniel to add two high-level Land Bank employees, Public Relations Director Craig Fahle and former Demolitions Director Rebecca Camargo, as personal defendants to the lawsuit. The case continues in court, and Detroit Eviction Defense will keep you updated on upcoming court dates and other ways we can oppose Daniel's unjust eviction and the racist displacement of Detroiters.

The Land Bank is a taxpayer-funded public entity that claims to represent the public interest. How does it serve the public interest to demolish a home someone is still living in? How does it serve the public interest to waste taxpayer dollars fighting Daniel for over a year in court rather than take responsibility for its illegal and racist displacement?

# THE FALL OF FERNDALE HOUSING'S REIGNING QUEEN: DEBORAH WILSON

By Jennifer Bailey December, 2017

Autumn house was an awful place to live under the Deborah Wilson regime. I became a resident of Autumn House, which is run by the Ferndale Housing Commission in 2009, and it was like living in a Nazi Camp with freedom to leave, freedom to be seen and not heard. Deborah even controlled the Ferndale Housing Commission Board members under her ridiculous spell. We were allowed to attend meetings but told not to voice or make complaints about our living surroundings, even though our building was taken over by roaches, rats, mice and bedbugs.

In 2014, we had enough. I talked with other tenants and said I would speak up and we all should speak up. We started attending board meetings together in great numbers to take back and enjoy what was our homes. In April of that year, we met the Detroit Eviction Defense team fighting for Detroit voucher holders. Ferndale Housing Commissioners were bullying voucher holders who lived in Detroit in homes they had chosen and which had passed all inspections. Ferndale Housing tried to force them to move out of Detroit from the homes they had chosen. I met a beautiful team who wanted justice and happiness for the people. The Detroit team was Dave, Bob, Lish, Miriam, Mary, Chuck and news reporter Crystal Proxmire, and a host of other tenants and supporters.



Image from Comic by Jeff Wilson: Racism in the Motor City from World War 3 Graphic Novel

As we attended meetings together and voiced our concerns, Ms. Wilson got scared and called in her Ferndale Police Department force to shut us up or put us out. The policemen attended three meetings, realized what was going on, got bored and restless being there and called it quits. We also protested in and out of the Ferndale City Hall Building. The city director got the news and came and planned for us to have a meeting with city hall representatives. Tenants went, and we spoke our minds.

As we were fighting for justice, Ms. Big Bad Wolf Wilson was entering residents' apartments and stealing their prescription medications, narcotics. She was caught, prosecuted, sentenced with a slap on the wrist, and paid a big bonus of severance pay, about \$130,000, called a loophole. We protested that and Ferndale Housing had to stop their payments to Wilson after giving her more than \$60,000. Ferndale Housing had to repay some of that amount back to HUD.

Conclusion: Teamwork. We have a different Board and a great director Director, Heather Van Poucher, who is human. Things are not perfect, but life is much better than under Wilson's selfish ways. Sometimes life seems a harsh struggle with little way out. But! If a person can gather strength and plan well-organized meetings, get people working together and not fighting among ourselves, great progress can be made. Questions can be answered, and progress can be achieved.

## Does This Sound Familiar?

A vulture investor buys houses at the tax foreclosure auction, then works one or more of the following scams:

- ↳ Moves tenants into homes in disrepair— a broken furnace, a leaking roof, mold
- ↳ “Sells” tenants the house on phony land contracts at inflated prices
- ↳ Leaves them responsible for water and property tax bills the investor didn’t pay
- ↳ Evicts them when they can’t meet the payments
- ↳ Repeats the same scam with a new victim
- ↳ Walks away from the house when it’s foreclosed for back taxes
- ↳ Then returns to the tax auction to buy more houses

## Keep the Vultures out of the The Tax Auction

Tax foreclosure is the principal feeding mechanism for vulture investors. Over the last ten years, as economic recession and poverty have pushed many Detroit families to the brink of foreclosure, the city has delivered the final shove with wildly inflated property tax bills. State law requires the city to lower property appraisals when housing values fall, but the city delayed this reappraisal for years after the housing crash of 2008, punishing Detroit homeowners with outsize and illegal tax bills that remain the basis for foreclosure.

For years the city has also made it hard for low-income homeowners to apply for – or even know about – the poverty tax exemptions they’re entitled to. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Many of the fraudulent land contracts come out of the tax foreclosure pipeline. The city and county know this and they know the vultures are taking full advantage. This has to stop.

### Legal Resources

#### **UHC**

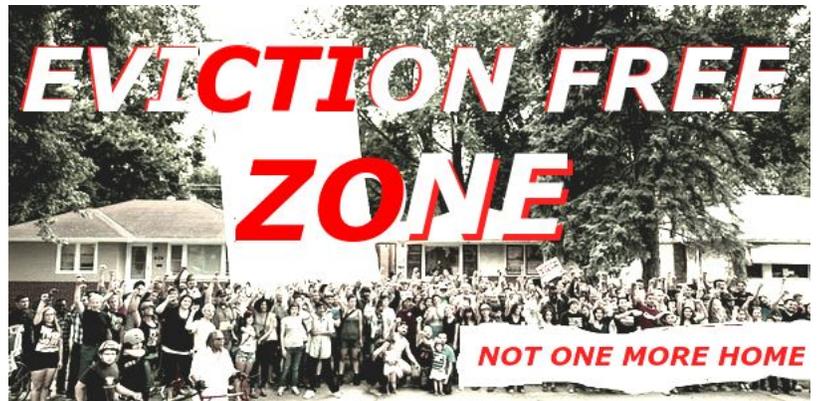
2727 Second Ave. Ste. 313 Detroit, MI  
48201 313-963-3310

#### **Lakeshore Legal Aid**

2727 Second Ave. Ste. 318 Detroit, MI  
48201 (888) 783-8190

#### **Michigan Legal Services**

2727 Second Ave. Ste. 333 Detroit, MI  
48201 313-964-4130



**DETROIT EVICTION DEFENSE meets every Thursday at 6pm**

**Old St. John’s Church, 2120 Russell St. (near Eastern Market)**

We oppose evictions, foreclosures, and displacement. We stand with the people of color, women, and poor and working people resisting the attempts to erase them from this city. No one is coming to save us, and we have to rely on each other. We believe that there is a “new Detroit” that doesn’t include many of us. To survive the gentrification and displacement, people must fight back.

We operate on the principles of solidarity, respect, direct action, and standing together. We are not a social service agency, non-profit, or government group. If you are willing to fight, we are with you in this struggle.

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