

TENANTS TALK

NEWSPAPER OF THE ALL-CHICAGO TENANT ALLIANCE

★ WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON? JOIN THE CITY-WIDE TENANT STRUGGLE! ★

TEXT (773) 770-5650!

ALIANZA DE INQUILINOS DE TODO CHICAGO



ALL-CHICAGO TENANT ALLIANCE

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'ACTA' MEANS...

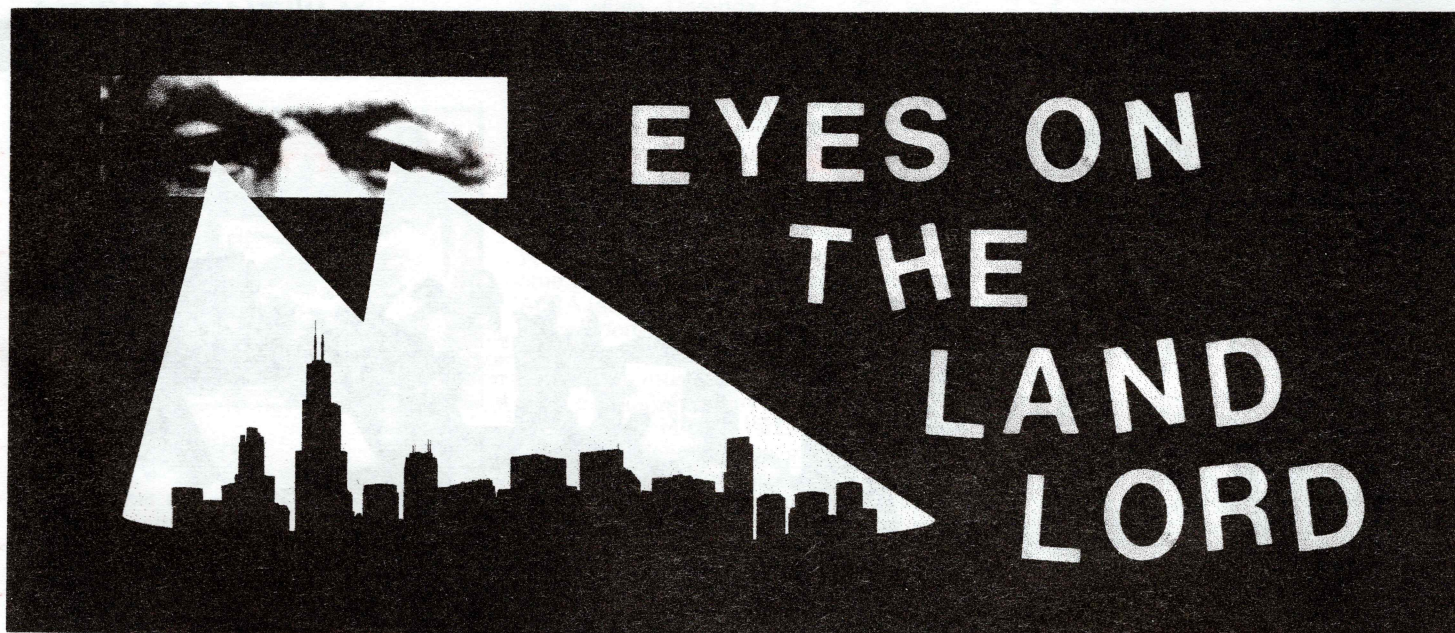


ALL POWER TO THE TENANTS!



STOP LANDLORD TERROR AT THE ROOT!

★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★



Keep your eyes open!

Don't let your landlord isolate you from the tenant movement blossoming in Chicago!

Be ready!

Decades of landlord control over our neighborhoods won't end without a fight!

Stay smart!

Landlords pump their perspectives into every news outlet in Chicago; it's time tenants had a voice of their own!

Tenants Talk has eyes on the landlord. Do you?

DUANE EHRESMAN - THE DECAY OF THE EHRESMAN EMPIRE

If you asked any of his friends and family, they would tell you Duane Ehresman is a "good man". Duane is a father and a familiar face in the neighborhoods of Lawndale and Austin (despite living in Oak Park). His real estate empire, which he has built over the last 44 years, has earned him a Chicago Neighborhood Development Award. His real estate company, Ehresman Management's tagline is "in the heart of the neighborhood".

On the surface, Duane has created an image of being a saviour of the neighborhood, providing housing to the poor residents of the West Side. One step inside a building he owns will shatter that illusion instantly. Rats, mold, litter, broken

stairs, holes in the walls, mysterious stains and smears, collapsing ceilings, leaks, useless locks, shoddy repairs, rust, mailbox doors pried off the hinges, shattered tiles, sinking foundations, cockroaches—you name a problem and you'll find it in Duane's properties.

The tenants know Duane is a slumlord. Duane's website claims "Duane Ehresman loves this community and has built his business around the idea that we can all make the world a better place by working together. It takes mutual respect and understanding. It takes hard work. But it can be done," but tenants tell a different story. Anyone who's spent any time renting can tell you there's no such thing as a good landlord, but Duane takes slumlording to another level.

"I think he gets off on having power over black people," said one tenant. Another tenant talking about difficulties getting repairs to her apartment told Tenants Talk that "Duane likes to make people like us beg."

Duane's daughter Rachel, the heir to his empire, has started taking over operations and makes it clear she sees herself as better than the tenants. Every tenant who has spoken to Rachel reports being belittled and disrespected. The pattern is clear. While Duane saw himself as a white savior, Rachel sees herself as a despot, entitled to the hard earned rent checks of West Side residents.

"Duane likes to make people like us beg."

If you live in a Duane Ehresman building, you should know that your

neighbors are meeting and getting ready to push back against the Ehresman family's neglect and abuse. If you agree that the neighborhood should belong to the people and not to racists from Oak Park, then you should come to the next meeting! Duane's power comes from the rent money tenants like you send to him every month. It's time we get together and make plans to cut that cashflow off at the source.

Text (773) 770-5650 to find out the info for the next meeting.

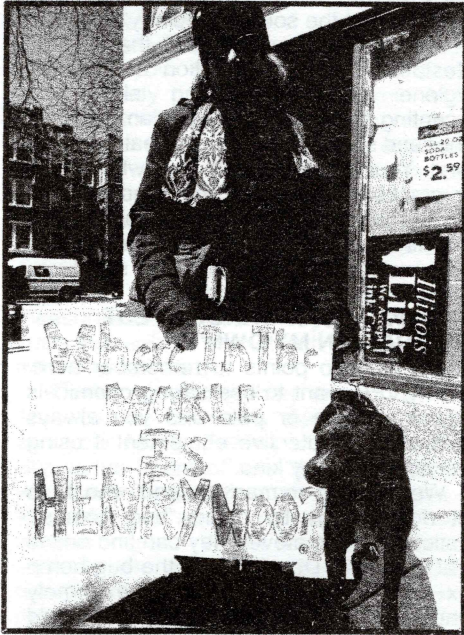
TENANT TERROR TIMES TWO: WINNEMAC AND WOO

On the afternoon of April 26th, around 75 people gathered in front of the sprawling apartment building at 1154 W Lunt in Rogers Park for a rally hosted by the Lunt Tenants Association (LTA). Calling the meeting to order was JJ, in a neon green hat, who strummed an acoustic guitar and led the group in a chorus about an unnamed, "greedy landlord."

LTA is a group of tenants who live in the Winnemac-managed building and is attempting to organize against poor living conditions. According to LTA member Quincy, a week after he moved into the building in the summer of 2023, he had a bed bug infestation. He told Tenants Talk that, "after reaching out to the property manager...he told me that this building has never had any history of bed bugs, and this was something I had to deal with myself." However, two other tenants testified during the rally about their struggle with bed bugs, too. One, another LTA tenant named Ceilia, said that, "Winnemac knew and was treating one unit [for bed bugs] but did not notify a single neighboring unit in the building." This sounds like a 'history of bed bugs' if you ask us.

But, of course, actions have reactions.

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necessary to keep dozens of homes in good working order until being threatened by an organized rebellion.

McCloud naturally played the role of punching bag throughout the afternoon. Despite his attempt to convince everyone that he was there to get off on the right foot with the aggravated tenants, the courtesy was met with groans and mass ick. If he had done himself the favor of staying home, attention might have remained focused on Henry Woo, the building's owner.

Despite laying his head in his vacation home in Honolulu, Hawaii, Woo owns the 50+ beds in 1154 W Lunt and dozens more in at least two additional Chicago apartment buildings. Life may be a beach for Woo, but for his tenants, it's a bitch. It's easy to collect Chicago rents under Waikiki umbrellas, but it's much harder to control tenants at that distance, that's why he pays Winnemac to do it. So LTA's enemy is rightfully two-fold; Woo and Winnemac.

Organization has already started in other Winnemac-managed properties, hence the formation of the Winnemac Tenants Union. Lunt Tenant Association is presumably a constituent element of the WTU, which all together appear to carry the banner of the Chicago Union of Tenants; one of two current efforts (beside that of ACTA) to consolidate the entire Chicago tenant union movement. If this all sounds confusing, that's because it is.

What is not confusing, in any case, is why tenants everywhere in Chicago are snapping out of their day dreams about "tenants rights laws" and starting to fight back on the only plane that matters: organized, economic struggle that cuts directly at the throat of landlords. LTA plans to legally withhold portions of their rent to account for the disservice of their building under Winnemac's management. This will no doubt get the attention of McCloud and Woo, but it remains to be seen if LTA will be able to avoid the booby traps of legally sanctioned action before escalating their struggle to the apex...if you're an avid reader of Tenants Talk, you know what we're referring to.

Winnemac Tenants! Join the struggle, find your comrades on instagram at [@winnemactenantsunion](https://www.instagram.com/winnemactenantsunion). ★

What is not confusing, in any case, is why tenants everywhere in Chicago are snapping out of their day dreams about "tenants rights laws" and starting to fight back on the only plane that matters: organized, economic struggle that cuts directly at the throat of landlords.

Everything has its opposite, etc. "This event started a building-wide movement to fight Winnemac Properties' terrible management practices," Celia continued.

That movement was apparent at the rally. The springtime sun was out and spirits were high among the large crowd. The Lunt tenants walked with a swagger through a series of speeches, songs and chants, after allegedly having their building's abusive property manager, Freddy Raygoza, fired the week prior - an occurrence the tenants describe as "a win for LTA."

Winnemac knows better than to let a building full of rebellious rent serfs go unsupervised. In fact, they used the occasion of the rally to introduce the tenants to Fred's replacement, William McCloud, who showed up to supervise the festivities. McCloud cut a sharp profile in this setting, no doubt. Whether it was his barn-red coif, or the fact that he was leaning against his BMW in the back of the crowd, he stood out like a sore thumb among the dozens of lefties on hand.

We asked McCloud about the tasks he inherited from his predecessor Raygoza, and he had this to say: "Freddy is still a crucial member of our team. I was brought on to this building to bring a new face, new ideas, and address all the tenants' issues. So far we're working on violations for the building, which is an enormous project, a \$500,000 project. We're changing all the electricity, it's a very old building. We just addressed security concerns, we installed new cameras, we're fixing the doors so that people can't sneak their way in. So there's still a lot to go on, but, you know, I hate to step in a building where everyone hates me already...which it seems like they kind of already do."

McCloud might ask himself why Winnemac would not invest the capital

QUESTIONS OF A WORKER WHO READS

A POEM BY BERTOLT BRECHT



Who built the seven gates of Thebes?

In books you will read the names of kings.

Was it the kings who dragged the stones into place?

*And Babylon, so often destroyed
Who rebuilt it so many times?*

*In which of the houses of gold-gleaming
Lima did the construction workers live?
Where, on that evening when the Chinese
Wall was finished, did the masons go?*

*The great city of Rome is full of
triumphal arches.
Who set them up?*

*Over whom did the Caesars triumph?
Did Byzantium, so much praised in song,
have only palaces for its inhabitants?*

*Even in fabled Atlantis, that night when
the ocean engulfed it,
The drowning still roared out for their
slaves.*

*Young Alexander conquered India.
Was he alone?*

*Caesar defeated the Gauls.
Did he not have so much as a cook with
him?*

*Philip of Spain wept when his armada
went down.
Did no one else weep?*

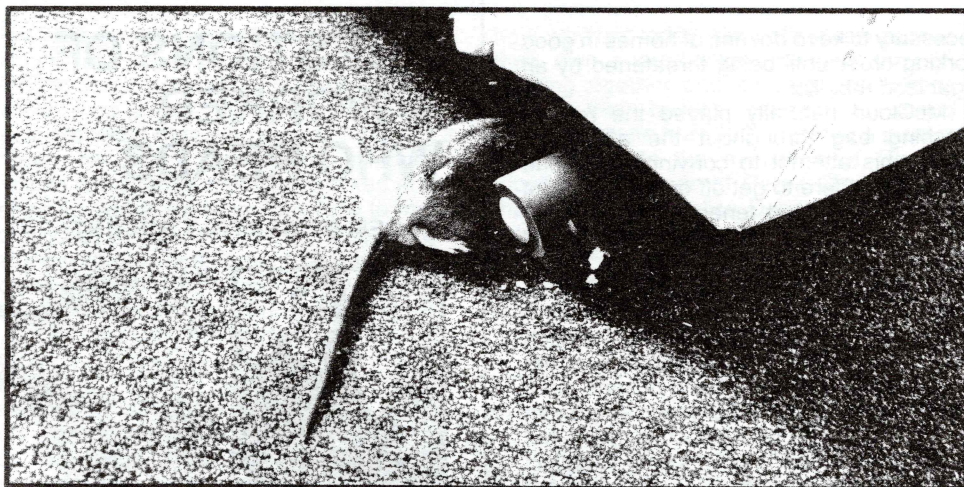
*Frederick the Second was victorious in
the Seven Years' War.
Who else prevailed?*

*On every page a victory.
Who cooked the victory banquet?
Every ten years a great man.
Who paid the bills?*

*So many reports
So many questions.*

Who built the building in which you live? Or the roads that take us from one place to the next? It was perhaps your parents, or their parents. The structures of society have been built by those who have had nothing but their work to sell. Workers maintain the engine of our society but in the news you only ever see stories of "ingenious" landlords or entrepreneurs. ★

★ NEWS FROM THE TENANT POINT OF VIEW ★



PEST SIDE STORY: MYTHS, MICE, AND THE LANDLORD'S LIES

Every Saturday, ACTA members knock on apartment doors and talk to tenants to see if they're dealing with a slumlord, and if they are, whether they want to do something about it or not. In fact, if you're reading this now, it's possible we've knocked on your door with this very question.

One of the most common issues we hear about is pests. Rats, mice, roaches, spiders, bed bugs, ants, beetles, you name it. Clearly, your pest problems are being ignored by the rich lords of the land, who take your money every month despite not lifting a finger to help you. Crawling into the corners of your home, in your kitchen drawers, onto your couch, and on your pillow- these landlords won't give you a break!

After hundreds of these conversations, we've noticed a few complaints that are common and they each share one central theme: they remove the blame from the landlord and put it on themselves or their neighbors.

We're here to set the record straight, bust a few myths, and tell you as always that it's the landlord's fault! If you find yourself believing in any of these myths, don't feel bad. There's good reason they're widespread - hint hint, it's landlord greed. A few google searches from pest control websites will have you see that these claims are supported.

MYTH #1 "MY NEIGHBORS ARE CAUSING THE PESTS!"

"The people downstairs are disgusting!"
"Check across the hallway, they're bringing in the pests!"

"There's nothing the landlord can do because my neighbors are so gross!"

While your neighbors may be messy by your standards, one of the most common myths is that bugs are only found in dirty homes. This is probably the biggest pest misconception out there. But, "pests don't care about your housekeeping. They don't know how often you change your sheets or when you last shampooed the carpet. They want shelter and somewhere to nest. And any human home can offer that."

You see, pests enter homes through cracks in walls, windows, doors and vents, even through ACs and pipes. While keeping a tidier home may not attract the bugs and rodents as much, you cannot attract something that can't get in. To bother you at all, they need to be in the home to begin with.

In an upscale apartment downtown with a security desk downstairs, tenants still attract pests. The difference between them and what you may be dealing with is the fact that their landlords hire pest control (you pay your landlord monthly to do this sort of thing, too!) Cleanliness alone cannot guarantee a pest-free environment. Landlords need to have a proactive strategy to manage the pests. The reality is that we live in a city with a lot of rodents and, like anywhere, a lot of bugs.

Bugs don't discriminate. They are notorious hitchhikers, attaching themselves to clothes, luggage, and other personal items, which allows them to travel easily from one place to another. Bed bugs, roaches, and even mice are survivalists. They can hibernate and go without meals for long periods of time.

So, while you're busy imagining that your neighbors are happily chilling with a cockroach on their table while they eat, your landlord is making out like a bandit collecting your rent without doing shit to address the problem at the source! Even if your neighbors tidied up, many pest websites speak about how killing a few pests won't solve the problem. Cockroaches are nocturnal and hide really well. Seeing just one means there's likely an infestation nearby. While you can kill as

many as you see, the problem needs to be addressed at the source regularly.

It's crucial to understand that a pest infestation is not a reflection of personal hygiene or housekeeping skills. By accepting this, we can stop blaming each other and start addressing the real issues at hand. Your landlord is the one who allows for cracks in the walls and windows that don't shut, creating entry points and uncontrolled moisture in your home... a warm welcome to critters big and small.

MYTH #2: "I CAN HANDLE PEST CONTROL ON MY OWN"

"There are two points to remember here. You NEVER want to use strong chemicals around children or pets and you always need to use protective equipment if using pest control of any kind."

We speak to so many tenants who try to get rid of bugs by using "bug bombs", pesticides, or whatever they can find online or at the store. Despite what the bug bomb box may claim, this often is extremely dangerous. Without the training, you could be causing yourself or others harm while, at best, only achieving extremely short-term results.

Not only are you putting yourself at risk, you're wasting your hard-earned money because pests are simply not that easy to get rid of. Even by doing your own sealing of cracks or covering up windows, you will not rid your home of pests. Building-wide prevention is crucial. Pest control should be done by specialists, who can do it safely and efficiently and, most importantly, on the landlord's dime.

MYTH #3: "I DON'T HAVE PESTS BECAUSE I HAVE A CAT"

While I'd personally encourage everyone to get a cat, this is not a solution. Your cat may catch the occasional rodent, but unfortunately, cats are more often contributing to a rodent problem than solving one. "Cats frequently release their prey in the home." And once they're in, especially if injured, they're more prone to spreading diseases and staying in the home. Once again, even if you don't see them, if you don't have regular exterminations, pests are there. Additionally, rodents often carry parasites that may seriously harm your pets.

Having a cat as a replacement for exterminators is similar to how multiple families we've spoken with no longer use anything beyond paper plates or no longer store any food in their homes because there are so many pests. Sure, it may work - kinda - but this is your home, shouldn't you be able to eat there without fear of disease? A cat is not a real solution.

MYTH #4 "THERE'S NOTHING MY LANDLORD CAN DO ABOUT IT"

As already stated, your landlord can and should do something about this! What else are you paying for? It is quite literally one of

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their only (supposedly) enforced tasks that the city asks them to do.

You need to have year-round pest control in your home, especially if things have already gotten out of control. While there are some pests that come out more as the weather warms up, rodents for example, are year-round. Pests like termites can remain active and create structural damage at all times of the year. Even if you are not being bothered by bugs running around, it's extremely important that your home is inspected regularly and preventative measures are taken so that you don't face a crisis that will not be met with great urgency from your landlord.

Pests are more than an annoyance. They can be extremely dangerous to you and your family. Talking to tenants in the city, we've heard of rats "the size of dogs" who have chewed through steel in cars in the parking lot and completely ruined them beyond repair. We've been told about children who are constantly woken up by roaches, who are taken to the emergency room because they keep getting bitten. Bed bugs, cockroaches, and mice are known to carry diseases. Many people have serious allergies to bed bugs and will not know until they're bitten, and it's too late.

In fact, few know that you can personally get fined for not reporting bed bugs. In Chicago, the law states that you must report any suspected bed bugs to the city and the landlord or management company within 5 days. If you do not report, the city can fine you up to \$2,000 with additional fees for each subsequent day. Why is the tenant continuously held responsible for the negligence of the landlord?

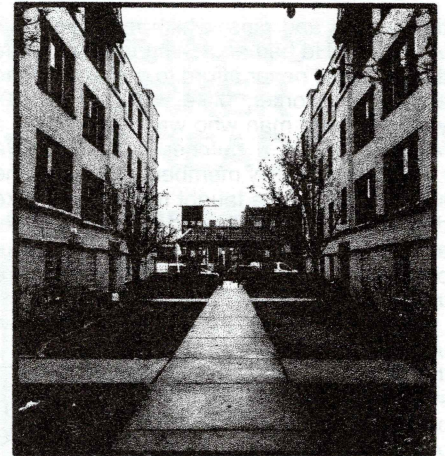
Bed bug outbreaks can be common among the elderly who, like most, do not

have the ability to replace all of their furniture on a whim, nor should they or anyone be fined for landlord terror! Always get any reporting in writing as we know slumlords are not above pretending that you did not report. The city should fine the landlord after not doing their part to hire exterminators, but we know firsthand that this very rarely occurs. And what's a small fine to a landlord who makes that much in only 1-2 apartments each month?

So what can you do? For many people reading this, you've already done all you can to get your landlord to listen. Maybe you've reported to 311, maybe you've simply accepted this is how it is. We in ACTA see the only way to seriously combat this is to form a union in your building and demand action from your landlord. We will help you. Remember that your landlord is counting on you to feel exhausted and hopeless. Your suffering is how he pays for his mansion and fancy vacations.

If you're fed up, it's more than likely that a few others in your apartment are too, and that's all that is needed to begin a union. There are many ways we can force your landlord's hand. It is in his best interest for you to blame your neighbor; he encourages it! He profits from you thinking that this is something that you must spend your money on to fix. Landlords quite literally pay the media and others to spread the idea that the city will do something, cause he knows that they won't. Landlords know that every cent they can save by not hiring an actual, effective, and preventative pest service is the money that they can hoard for their next trip to the islands.

Contact ACTA at 773-770-5650 if you are fed up and are ready to do something about this. ★



I AM A REVOLUTIONARY

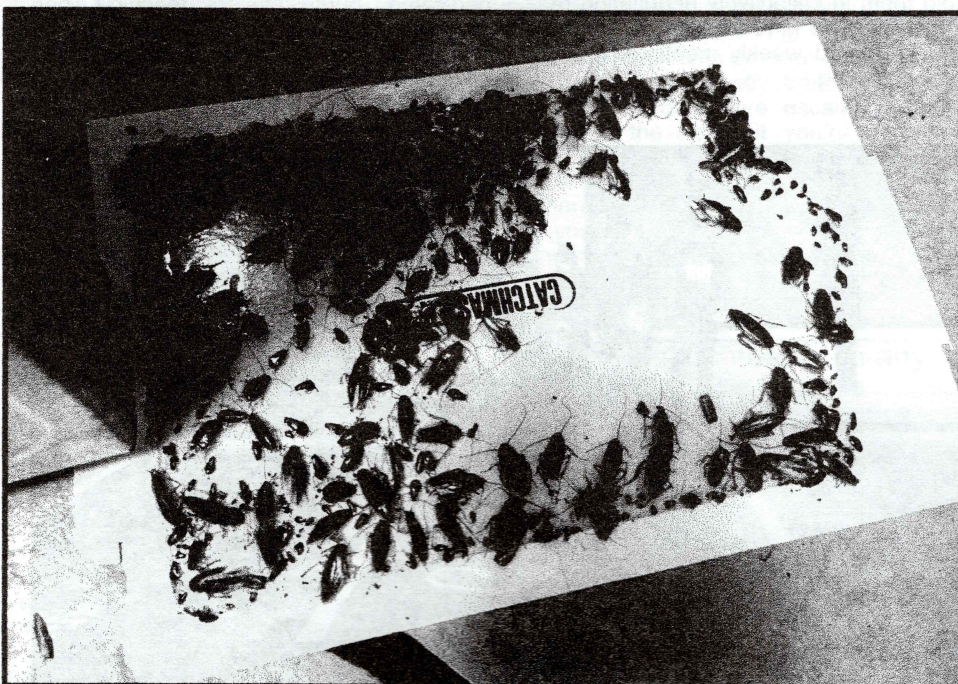
I am 27 years old. I grew up in Kansas City with my mom and brother. I have lived in Chicago since 2017. For most of my time here, I have lived on the West Side of Chicago around Humboldt Park. I love living here and I want to stay as long as I can.

I am a revolutionary. This means that I fight very hard to change the world around me into a better world, no matter what. This means that I am concerned with how best to fight. I was not born a revolutionary.

In Kansas City, I grew up around rich people. My dad grew up rich, too. After he died in 2004, my mom got a job teaching Pre-K at one of the local Catholic schools. She raised my brother and I alone. In a week, I am going back home to celebrate my mom's retirement from teaching.

I lived a comfortable childhood. My dad's parents helped pay for my brother and I to attend the nicer schools in the area. My brother and I never once struggled for meals thanks to my mom's sacrifices. We lived in-between two worlds; spending most of my time in wealthy schools around wealthy people but not having the same lifestyle at home. I felt disconnected from my peers' and their families in ways I didn't understand at the time. They lived far away in much bigger houses than mine and had very shiny teeth.

When I was 14, I started working in a grocery store that one of my mom's boyfriend's brothers worked at. I really liked working there. On paper, my co-workers were very different from me. I had one co-worker, Malcolm, who was a skinny 60-something-year-old black man that commuted from far out to the store. He and I worked as fry cooks together. We smoked cigarettes together and talked about problems with



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the bosses and girls, which made me feel very adult. He had an aching tooth problem that he could never afford to get rid of. I had another co-worker, Mike, who was a 40-year-old white man who was just starting a family. He was a butcher and he and a couple of his family members worked at the store for years. He taught me how to make dirty jokes with the other co-workers and get along with people different from me. Unlike other older folks in my life, everyone there treated me as an equal and collaborator.

I felt alienated in the environment I grew up in. Outside of my job, the whole culture I was steeped in was focused on reproducing warriors of the ruling class to manage and dictate the lives of workers like Malcolm and Will, who were segregated from our private schools and our expensive neighborhoods. Their lives were used as lessons on how "miserable" my life could be if I did not walk the ruling class path. Before I began working, I had very few relationships with real working class folks. Through working, I saw how much more in common I had with them than I'd been told. In fact, I had so much more in common with them than any other folks in my life.

Despite not having the words and ideas to describe it then, I was critical of this environment at a young age. I did not have the courage to do much beyond reject it as much as I could. I stopped taking school seriously and fell into poor habits of study and self-maintenance. By my late teens, I found my refuge in partying with punks and other artsy-kids who shared the same critique of the culture, but, too, felt incapable or irresponsible of changing it.

Around my early 20's, I got sober and started to get exposed to critiques of the current order of the world and the root causes for my feelings of alienation. Most of my social media feed became populated with posts critical of social problems at large: the exploitative U.S. healthcare system, the failing education system, the climate crisis, and other ways the rich oppress the majority of the world. 'Capitalism' was named as the culprit for these problems across the board. This was a concept I was familiar with, but not at great depth.

A handful of friends who were involved in labor organizing led me to new ideas about workers, those who produce things in exchange for wages, as a distinct class of people who have diametrically opposed interests to the ruling class, those who own everything and thus are able to dictate how it is to be used. They gave me examples of

how workers today can collectively pursue their own shared class interests through working together, or unionizing, and fighting against their bosses. I began to attend protests. In late May 2020, I joined a protest in response to the execution of George Floyd at the hands of Derek Chauvin and the Minneapolis Police Department, where I was arrested along with hundreds of others. For a while, I was scared of protesting because of this. I still desired a changed world.

I was finishing up college around the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. I was out of work and money was tight. My roommate and I joined a flash-movement of renters across the city who all stopped paying rent to their landlords in protest of rent-seeking during a global crisis. We ended up settling with the landlord at a reduced rate of rent for the month.

By 2021, I was out of college and working as a COVID-19 tester along with my partner at the time. We moved in together in an apartment building in

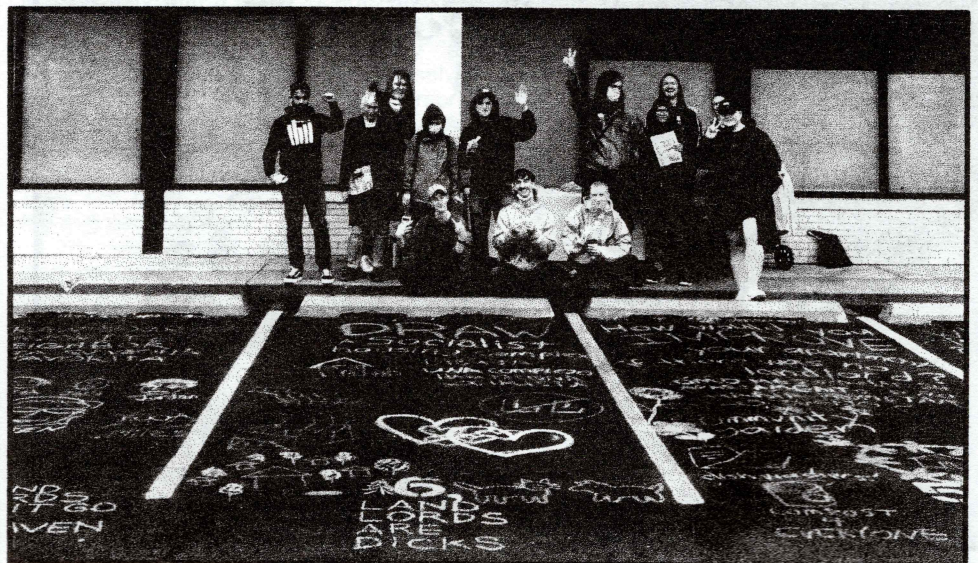
Logan Square owned and managed by a company called 'M. Fishman and Co.' A year prior to our arrival, a tenant union had been formed underneath this landlord in response to the same rent-seeking in the global crisis. In the summer of 2022, right before signing a new lease, I had neighbors in the union knocking at my door asking me to join them in collectively negotiating rent increases at the landlord's office. I joined them. They had weekly meetings which I began attending.

I am a revolutionary because everyday I look to consciously change myself and the world around me in the pursuit of these goals. Sometimes this means doing something I love. Sometimes this means making personal sacrifices. I am a normal man like anyone else and these choices are not simple or easy, but I would not want to live

This union was called the North Spaulding Renters Association (NSRA). Here I met people just like myself: critical of a system of housing where the few controlling homes they do not need or live in dictate who gets to stay in them, while the many of the world who can not afford purchasing a home foot the bills of someone else's in the form of rent. Here I was introduced to the idea of socialism; an order of the world where private ownership of the world's resources is dissolved and superseded by public ownership and management. This was the antithesis to the current order of capitalism, where private ownership reigns supreme. At first, the idea seemed "unrealistic," but the more I understood the severity of the problems in the current world order, the more pressing the task of making socialism realistic became.

In this group of like-minded people, we began concerning ourselves with how we can legitimately abolish private ownership. It felt like too big of a problem to even consider our responsibility to deal with. As the group began posing questions about what was needed in order to effectively take on this grand task, it became obvious that a certain intensity was needed of us in order to achieve our desires. The severity of the task was impossible to ignore. I began to take the task seriously and change myself in order to see that our group pushed forward in our pursuit.

Today, I am a part of the revolutionary organization called the All-Chicago Tenant Alliance (ACTA). This organization resulted directly out of NSRA and is guided by many of the same members. In the All-Chicago Tenant Alliance, I stand shoulder-to-shoulder with tenants like me who share the same desire and vocation. All of us have dedicated ourselves to teaching one another and learning how best the tenants of Chicago can be active subjects in the collective ownership and management of



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our homes. We work tirelessly organizing the working class of Chicago in this pursuit. It is thanks to this organization that I can call myself a revolutionary. The organization has transformed me from a disparate subject suffering from the pangs of capitalism to an active subject in its destruction and replacement with socialism.

We by no means have the path to this horizon laid out before us. In many ways, we have to make this path by walking it. Our task, and the task of all the tenants of Chicago, is to walk this path together. The All-Chicago Tenant Alliance is a revolutionary organization because we are legitimately concerned with walking this path, or in other words, we are legitimately concerned with winning.

The driving force in my life today is to learn how best to struggle. To increase the amount of responsibility I and others have to one another, to wage war against our oppressors and strip them of their private ownership of the world, to win, and thus to create a fuller and richer life both collectively and individually. I am a revolutionary because everyday I look to consciously change myself and the world around me in the pursuit of these goals. Sometimes this means doing something I love. Sometimes this means making personal sacrifices. I am a normal man like anyone else and these choices are not simple or easy, but I would not want to live any other way. Living another way would mean ignoring what must be done.

If we take the problems of the world seriously, we have to treat fixing them seriously. While I do look to fight to win, the greater truth is that life of fighting is a life truly lived. The fight is not just a means to an end. It is a way of living, a way of constantly concerning yourself with the world and changing it. This is what makes a revolutionary: one who lives to fight best. I am a revolutionary and I think you can be one too.

"To educate the masses politically does not mean, cannot mean, making a political speech. What it means is to try, relentlessly and passionately, to teach the masses that everything depends on them; that if we stagnate it is their responsibility, and that if we go forward it is due to them too, that there is no such thing as a demiurge, that there is no famous man who will take the responsibility for everything, but that the demiurge is the people themselves and the magic hands are finally only the hands of the people." -Franz Fanon ★

THE RENT STRIKE CONTINUES

It has now been three months since the tenants of the Belden Sawyer Tenant Association stopped paying rent and two months since Fuerzas Inquilinos de Broadway y Cuyler joined the strike.

An alliance of tenants from across neighborhoods uniting against their landlord is a near unprecedented occurrence. Every month that the fight continues, the landlord, Drew Millard bleeds money.

ACTA members and tenants from the buildings have coordinated multiple rallies in front of the management office and even in front of Drew Millard's house. What did they say when we got there? "This is our home!" protested Millard's wife. Well, us tenants have to wonder: *What about our homes?*

Why can Drew Millard threaten to kick families who have been living in their building for **forty years**, since Drew Millard was in grade school, and then turn around and demand peace at his home? Are tenants second class citizens? We answer Drew Millard and all landlords of Chicago: *No peace at our homes, no peace at yours!*

It remains to be seen whether Drew Millard will cut his losses and give in, but whether he does or not, these events have already frightened landlords across the city.

What does it mean that tenants are refusing to be pushed around? What does it mean that they are standing up for themselves, their home, their children—that they are fighting for dignity and the right to control their own lives?

To the landlords the strikes are a bad omen. They are used to getting their way, but if this can happen to Drew it can happen to them. **No landlord is safe from a rent strike.**

To tenants like us, these strikes mean hope. The strikes mean hope for a future where landlords don't get any say over where you live, how long you live there, and how much of your hard earned cash you'll have to burn each month on rent. The strikes mean hope that one day the money we spend on rent will go towards our own buildings, and not buying a new building on the other side of the city.

So we urge you again, as fellow tenants, *Support the strike! Form tenant unions! Join ACTA!* ★



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ACTA MONTHLY REPORT: APRIL 2025



ACTA TURNS FIVE

How time flies! ACTA celebrated its 5th birthday this month. We had a big dinner and gave some commemorative speeches. We are amazed at how much has happened, how much we've changed, and what is now on the horizon for our not-so-little-anymore organization.

5 more years will take more than just us. Are you ready to join a serious organization? Join ACTA!

¡FUERZAS INQUILINOS ESTÁN EN HUELGA!

20 tenants in Chicago's mightiest tenant union, Fuerzas Inquilinos de Broadway y Cuyler are on the offensive against enemy of humanity Drew Millard. Their rent strike will pass into its second month at the end of April. The enemy's henchmen are hard at work trying to break the union, offering them bribes of \$2000 to walk away, calling the police on ACTA's cadres, sending unidentified armed forces into the building to terrorize the families.

MILLARD'S FRONT YARD

ACTA hit the road for a trip to Park Ridge with FIBC and BSTA for a protest on Drew Millard's front lawn. We happened to run into his family. Needless to say, they were not happy to see us. But then we met his dog, who ran out of the house wagging his tail very happy to see us. Good boy!



PARKSIDE TERRACE ALLIANCE SENDS A DELEGATION!

Austin's leanest and meanest tenants, Parkside Terrace Alliance, marched their demand letter to the office of their management company, Eastlake. PTA's

main villain, Darendra Carr - the wicked witch of the East - told the delegates that their company is not here to fix their problems, they're just here to collect rent!

We commend Darendra for her honesty and look forward to expelling her! Perhaps she can find a job based on harmony rather than hostility toward her fellow man.

ACTA'S STRIKE FUND IS LAUNCHED

With two rent strikes now taking place, it's time for the rest of the city to rally support. ACTA launched the Strike Fund- a pool of money donated by people like you to cover some of the risks tenants take when they strike. This money will only go toward legal fees that tenants may accumulate so that these brave tenants are not left alone in court or in the case of relocation.

This is an opportunity to actively support these tenants and encourage other tenants to strike in the future. We must not wait to act only once an issue becomes a crisis. Donate today so these tenants, and the strikers of tomorrow understand the city is behind them. Support tenants' strongest weapon against landlord terror.

RENT STRIKE RAFFLE

We raised \$1,810 for our strike fund with our art raffle. Thank you again to all of the artists who donated their work and to everyone who bought tickets. As far as we know, ACTA has the only standing strike fund for tenants in Chicago. We are dead serious about raising the strike forces in this city, and hope a standing war chest contributes to this effort and grows exponentially in lockstep with the war on landlords.

CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY

ACTA finished drafting and ratifying our new constitution. This signifies the completion of our formal transition from the North Spaulding Renters Association (NSRA) to ACTA.

THE PEOPLE'S COOLING ARMY GOES NATIONAL

Our comrades in the Valley Tenants Union in Phoenix Arizona are attempting to establish their own "A/C For Free" program. If Phoenix's landlords are anything like Chicago's, in combination with the southwestern climate, we can only assume that tenants are at an exceptionally high risk of heat-related illness and death. We are very humbled to see this effort spread and want to publicly acknowledge our comradeship, enthusiasm and support for the VTU. As we prepare to deploy the PCA for the third year, on a highly modified basis, our experience has taught us that this type of endeavor is no easy task, and we are on-call to offer any insights and encouragement to our friends in the desert.

If you are in the Phoenix area by any chance, reach out to the VTU to donate an AC or, better yet, join their organization and help them with this work. ★

ALIANZA DE INQUILINOS DE TODO CHICAGO



ALL-CHICAGO TENANT ALLIANCE

WHAT IS THE ALL-CHICAGO TENANT ALLIANCE?

The All-Chicago Tenant Alliance (ACTA) is an organization of Chicago tenants who organize tenants into tenant unions. We do this because we believe that building robust tenant organizations is the only real way to stop the landlord terror that we've witnessed firsthand in the slums of Chicago. Relying on laws made by and for landlords has only gotten tenants so far. Realizing this has led us to stress the economic relationship between tenants and landlords as the key arena of struggle because, put simply, landlords care about one thing: money. If a solid organization of tenants is able to threaten the flow of cash to the landlord by way of a rent strike, the landlord will be faced with an existential decision: do what the tenants demand or go broke. It is ACTA's goal to build this capacity in the unions we help birth.

On the citywide scale, ACTA's intention is to create an organization of tenant unions: a union of unions. We understand that the 'housing crisis' cannot be solved piecemeal—a union here and a union there will not lift all of Chicago's tenants from their scandalous conditions. The thousands of slums across the city are not due to "bad landlords". Slums are the inevitable result of the commodification and private ownership of housing. Landlords own more homes than they can use in order to generate profit...not from the goodness of their hearts! Even the little maintenance they do is calculated to extract as much money from you as possible. In order to change this, ACTA is working to build a united movement of strong tenant unions that can begin to change how housing is owned and operated. We believe that this will require a large degree of coordination between unions, in order for tactics and resources to be shared, ideas to be sharpened, culture to be built and a collective strategy to develop.

Changing the city is a serious undertaking that will require the participation of a great number of tenants. We need leaders who are ready to guide their neighbors in the struggle. This will be a difficult road, but we are not discouraged by this fact, but instead look forward to all the difficulties that we'll face standing together as the tenants of Chicago. Become one of the working tenants standing up for themselves—join ACTA. ★

THE COLLECTOR OF HOMES

Freddy & Angie were walking home from school talking about what they learned that day.

"In history, I learned that there used to be kings and dukes and princes," Angie said, "I like those," Freddy answered.

"They weren't like in the fairy tales, you know Fred," Angie said to her brother, annoyed. "They made people work in the fields all day growing wheat, and then took most of the grain! If the farmers said no, the king would take it by force!"

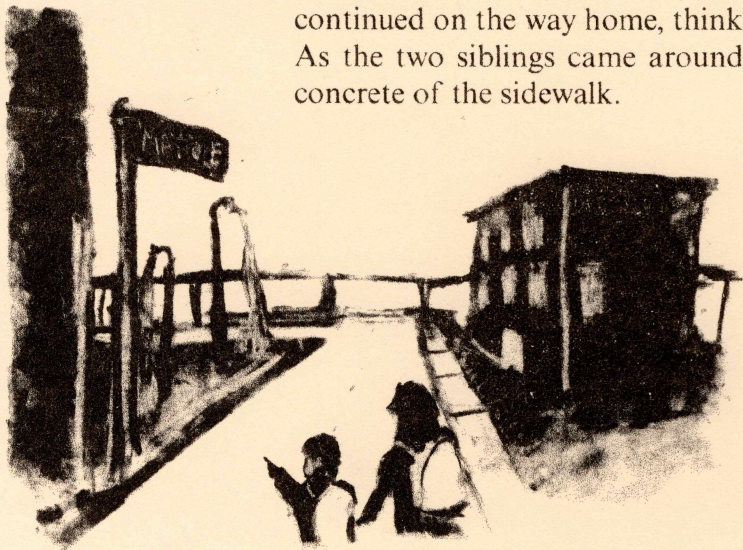
Freddy thought for a second about his favorite stories about princes and kings. He couldn't imagine them stealing from people, but he trusted his big sister Angie.

"I'm glad they're just in stories then," Freddy said earnestly.

"No, not just in stories, in history. They were real," Angie croaked, trying to frighten Freddy.

Fortunately Freddy's bravery was unshakeable, at least until nighttime. Both of them continued on the way home, thinking about how there is a grain of truth in every story.

As the two siblings came around the corner of their street they skidded to a halt on the concrete of the sidewalk.




"Where is our building, Angie?" Freddy squeaked. In front of them, where their building should have been was nothing but an empty asphalt patch. It looked almost like the building had been ripped off its foundation, leaving only the pipes sticking out of the ground, bare as trees in the winter. Somehow the old brick building had vanished, leaving no trace of the forty apartment units inside.

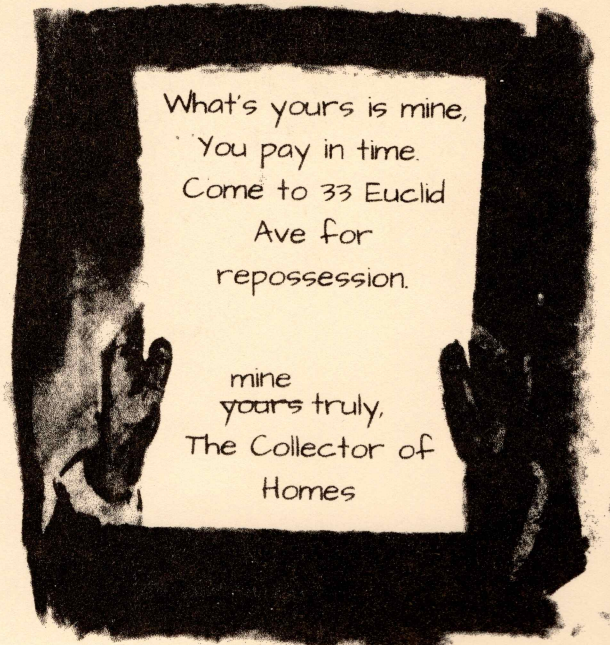
Their neighbors were nowhere to be seen: kindly Mr. Barnes, Mr. and Mrs. Hart (who always lent them flour), even those three older guys who liked to sit on the fire escape and watch the train go by.

"This can't be real," Angie said frantically, "we must have taken a wrong turn!" But sure enough the street sign at the corner said "Maypole Ave." in clear white lettering. It was their street alright.

"Where's mom?" Freddy asked, feeling tears begin to form. He hoped for a moment that the street would be empty. His hopes were dashed when he saw his mom's car, parked where it usually was when she got home from work.

"I'm sure she's okay. A building can't just disappear with everyone inside. Mom is probably somewhere, figuring out what happened to our home." As Angie spoke, a paper whirling in the wind fluttered right to her foot like a wounded bird. She picked it up and read it, feeling her despair growing with every word.

It said 



To be continued on the next Tenants Talk Kids page...

TENANTS TALK

Kids Page

These logos belong to unions made of tenants like you. We help them design the logo by asking them to choose an animal with traits they want in their union. For example, wolves stick together and are clever. We hope you enjoy coloring these animal logos!



Read
The Collector
of Homes
on the other
side