

Detroit Activists Battle Bailiffs in Defense of the Tiny Home of Taura Brown

After an intense struggle, agents of 36th District Court broke into the house and threw belongings into a dumpster

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WXYZ news report on the home defense can be found [at this link](#).

WDIV news report on the home defense below.

Taura Brown, a dialysis patient fighting eviction from the Tiny Homes on the west side of Detroit, has been a target of the Cass Community Social Services (CCSS) non-profit agency which claims that it is providing shelter for homeless people in the city.

However, a writ of eviction was issued by a 36th District Court Judge Shawn Jacque demanding Brown leave the home within ten days.

On Sunday April 2, approximately 50 housing activists held a rally outside the home pledging to defend Brown from the eminent eviction. Just two days later, on April 4, a dumpster was placed across the street during the early morning hours.

Soon enough dozens of housing and community activists from several organizations arrived at the home to carry out their defense. Just prior to the placing of a dumpster on Monterey street, Brown reported that a shot was fired into her home at 5:30am. This author witnessed a bullet hole over the rear door of the house.

After 10:00am, the Wayne County Bailiff accompanied by several aides arrived at the front of the house and announced that they were carrying out a court ordered eviction. The Bailiff told the activists guarding the front and rear doors of the home that they would be arrested if they did not move and allow them to enter the house.

A group of activists locked arms and were able to repel the initial attempts to enter the premises. Apparently, the police were called by the Bailiff and numerous patrol cars arrived on the scene.

Another attempt was made to remove the activists from the front door of the tiny home. Clashes ensued where people on both sides were knocked to the ground amid intense scuffles and angry verbal exchanges.

Within a matter of minutes, an officer identifying himself as a commander, ordered the police and the Bailiff to withdraw from the front of the home. Police began to pull back their forces while the Bailiff was seen on his cell phone calling for additional aides to be deployed at the house.

Several other men summoned by the Bailiff arrived over the next 30 minutes. Some of the assistants to the Bailiff wore scarves to cover their faces. Then another attempt was made to break through the front door which was again halted by the home defenders.

At this time the Bailiffs and his aides moved to the rear of the home and made yet another attempt to break down the back door. Punches were thrown at the activists while both the home defenders and people working for the Bailiff fell to the ground. One activist was pinned down by two of the evictors as he yelled that he could not breathe. After a brief period, he was rescued by other home defenders and provided with first aid.

The uniformed police at the back of the tiny home only monitored the situation and remained reluctant to intervene. When any officer attempted to halt the fighting, they were called off by their superiors.

Home Entered and Trashed by the Bailiff

Eventually the back door was flung open, and the evictors entered the home. They began carrying out the belongings of Brown which remained in the house.

The Bailiff and their assistants then attempted to carry the belongings in the home to throw into the dumpster parked across the street. Activists threw tires on the porch and lawn to halt the efforts of the evictors. There was a battle of the tires as the evictors and activists threw the tires away at the front entrance.

One of the vehicles driven by an assistant to the Bailiff had tires placed underneath to prevent them from driving off. Another parked vehicle blocked the same truck from leaving. Within a short period of time, a tow truck appeared on the scene to remove the vehicle blocking the truck belonging to one of the evictors.

Another standoff ensued as activists blocked for several minutes the attempted connecting of the vehicle to the tow truck. Eventually home defenders were forcibly removed by the Bailiff's assistants as the truck attempted to pull away from the location. The truck driven by one of the evictors was then able to leave the scene. Tires were also placed under the dumpster which could not be carried away from the Brown home.

The Bailiff and his aides then left the area of the eviction. Police cars soon left the area as

well. No one was arrested by the numerous police officers standing guard in front of the Brown home and the surrounding blocks.

Evictions Escalate in Detroit Despite Official Rhetoric of Renewal and Development

Although the administration of corporate Mayor Mike Duggan claims through their public relations mechanism and a supplicant media that Detroit is the center for urban revitalization, the reality is quite different. The municipality remains the most impoverished of any other city with a population over 600,000.

The Tiny Homes project run by CCSS has failed to create an environment that is beneficial for those living under economic duress. Evictions overall in Detroit are increasing due to the scarcity of quality housing and the rapid increase in the price for rents. Very few mortgages are being written for longtime Detroit residents who are 77% African American.

Duggan is often shown over the corporate media announcing new “affordable housing” developments. However, what is considered “affordable housing” is based upon the median income for the entire metropolitan Detroit area and not the city itself.

According to a press release issued by Brown and her supporters within the Detroit Eviction Defense organization (DED):

“Detroit resident Taura Brown has been fighting state violence at the hands of non-profit landlord, Rev. Faith Fowler, of CCSS for over two years. The non-profit maintains a \$7 million operating budget, which apparently is not enough for Fowler as she threatens to evict a dialysis patient speaking up against the mismanagement. Despite many legal attacks, Ms. Brown has stuck to her truth, that homeownership for all Tiny Homes residents after 7 years, as advertised and promised in its rent-to-own program.”

The home defense at the Tiny Homes is not taking place within a social vacuum. As the housing crisis in Detroit and around the United States worsens, there will be more clashes which could easily lead to violence, serious injuries and deaths.

The priorities of the corporate-oriented administration in Detroit are indicative of the trends within urban areas around the country. As the economic crisis deepens, the unjust character of municipal governance will be further exposed through legal actions, mass demonstrations and rebellions.

Just one week prior to the eviction of Brown, the City Council voted to award \$800 million in tax breaks to two white billionaires, Chris Illitch and Stephen Ross, ostensibly to build additional commercial buildings and apartments. These so-called development projects are becoming more obsolete with the drastically declining demand for office space and the financial defaults of large-scale real estate owners.

With the tightening of credit, corporations will become even more reliant upon the tax expropriations of working people and the impoverished. It will be up to the community organizations and their allies to intensify their struggles to reverse the processes of gentrification and forced removals from the urban areas across the U.S.

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