

## Summary of Events Summer/Fall 2023

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First let me provide you with background I obtained on Bill and Donna (not their real first names), after they deceived me and took over my home for six months

Bill and Donna are an unmarried late-middle-aged couple that became active in my local church, St. Johns Western Run Parish. Bill told the church members that he lived in Los Angeles and was traveling the country working on a documentary on a grief-related topic (his son had committed suicide while attending Gallaudet University, a school for deaf and hard of hearing students). Verifiably, he had an Internet Movie Database page and many years ago had actually directed one feature length movie. His personal grief narrative was of public record and factually accurate. His girlfriend Donna had been a partner in a failed restaurant in Baltimore and bounced around a number of semi-creative self-employed jobs such as feng shui master. They used the contacts they made at my Church to find short term housing situations, initially “to finish post-production on the documentary;” later “to wait for one more interview from someone in Maryland whose interview was particularly meaningful for the documentary.” They would quickly outstay their welcome with their housing provider and would present their situation to another church member: The person they were staying with needed them to leave *immediately* on some pretext, such as a relative coming to visit from another country. The new church member might offer them temporary housing at an affordable rent to help them out of their jam and then find themselves with a tenant that refused to leave or pay rent. Two years went by and the documentary was never completed and I was advised that Bob and Donna moved at least five times and at one point it appeared they were living out of their car.

With that background not known to me, The first of June 2023, Bill strolled up my driveway. He said he was there because he needed a temporary (2 week) place to live. He appeared desperate, telling me the place into which he was to move had fallen through. Out of Christian charity I told him he was welcome to stay in one of my spare bedrooms for the limited two-week period. No rent was charged. I did not sign a written lease with him as I thought I was just helping him out for two weeks

Bill moved in the same day. What he did not tell me was that his partner, Donna, would be moving in with him. She arrived shortly after Bill began transferring his belongings from his car to my home. Donna also moved her belongings into the house. But unlike Bill, her belongings were extensive, taking over two days to transfer. A sense of unease came over me – the amount of their belongings suggested a stay of more than two-weeks.

At the end of the initial two-week period, there was no sign that they were leaving my home, or had any intention to depart. They were silent regarding any future plans.

Given that they had not departed, or shown any intent that they intended to do so, I thought compensation (i.e., rent) for use of the spare room (which had become use of the entire house), was appropriate. I then talked to them about monthly rent, to be retroactive to when they had moved in.

The rent would be due the first day of each month. We agreed on \$1,200 a month. However, there was no written lease. An end of August move out date (I thought) was agreed to as I had family coming

No rent was paid until mid-July when Donna came to my summer home to pay me \$1,200 in cash. I had suggested that she leave the money in the dry sink in the hallway to the dining room. Since she didn't do that, and she drove over an hour to get to my summer home, I had a sense that she did not trust Bill. I told her that she still owed rent for July and once more emphasized the required August move out date. I also expressed some concern for her welfare because she was working 2 to 3 jobs while Bill had no income/job. At that time, Donna suggested Bill do some chores around my home to keep him busy and count. I told Donna that was not necessary. Nevertheless, Bill painted my side fence; that I had started to paint, I supplied all the materials. Unfortunately, he undertook tasks I did not request, for example, trimming bushes I had no intent to trim.

I continued to stress to Bill and Donna that the longest they could live in my home was until the end of August. I would be having my niece and her family coming the first full weekend in September. Then, I had agreed that my neighbor / cousin could stay for the Maryland school year. His family had moved to Virginia. But he had to complete a teaching contract

Mid-August arrived. I had not received any additional rent payments. And I saw no efforts to move out by the end of the month. Bill advised me his services (painting the fence) constituted compensation for his use of my home. He actually, obtained estimates on what a fence-painting job would cost, and told me that was his rent. I did not agree

During the period they stayed in my house, I came home 1-to 2 days each week to do laundry, pick up mail, and complete small chores around the house. I also touched base with my neighbor friends to find out if they had seen any suspicious activity by Bill and Donna. Huge arguments were in fact overhead...

Then Labor Day weekend arrived. Bill and Donna did not move out. Bill advised me that he and Donna could not move because the place they had lined up had fallen through. I strongly doubted his excuse. I had to cancel my niece's plans and those of my cousin to stay at my home for the 23/24 school year. Both had to rush to make other arrangements.

Once Labor Day weekend arrived and Bill and Donna were still residing in my house, I realized I needed an attorney. Luckily, I was able to find one on Labor Day weekend who I met with on the immediately following Tuesday.

The first fact I learned from my attorney was that Bill and Donna not leaving my home, as requested, "happened all the time." The next fact I learned was that I had to go through a formal eviction process that could take months. In addition, because Bill had handed me a letter advising that I had harassed him, (Tuesday AM) I would need to immediately vacate my home. If I did not do so, per my attorney, suggested anything I said or action I took would be deemed by Bill to be additional "harassment." Luckily, I had multiple friends, in addition to my sister, that offered me lodging. I chose to stay with my sister where I resided until mid-December. Other than that short visit, I was unable to return to my home until December.

While staying at my house, Bill and Donna acted like it was their home. For example, they offered to give the new neighbors a tour of the house. They placed pumpkins on the front porch during harvest season. They rummaged through my basement and found other holiday decor, which they also put on the front porch. As a result, my attorney had to send a cease-and-desist letter telling them to stay out of my belongings.

I had posted a 90-day eviction notice on my property after my first visit with my attorney. When Bill and Donna did not depart, a hearing was scheduled for late November. I learned that placing an eviction notice on the property was only the first step in the removal process. And during the removal process Bill and Donna got to stay in my home. Based on the timing of the eviction process the hearing would be just before Thanksgiving. My attorney advised me that the judges and sheriffs don't want to evict during that timeframe. It's the holiday season. But the eviction process did not care about me -- the owner of the home. Protections were provided to Bill and Donna, who lived at my home rent-free and treated the house as if they were the owners

Coincidentally, I had an appointment with my cardiologist a week before the scheduled hearing. Based on my history (I had a heart attack in 2021), stress was deemed to be a predominant cause of the heart attack which released lipids. When I described the circumstances with Bill and Donna, my cardiologist wrote a letter to my attorney/ whomever explaining that the Bill and Donna situation increased stress and could lead to a future heart attack if not promptly resolved.

The hearing was scheduled just before Thanksgiving. The day before the hearing my attorney was contacted by an attorney that had been retained by Bill and Donna. My attorney sent their attorney a copy of the letter from my cardiologist. After receipt of the letter, Bill and Donna's attorney advised his client wanted to come to an agreement. He suggested that Bill and Donna would vacate my home by December 10, 2023. They did depart on that day.

But during the period when they occupied my house, I had no access to my home. I had to buy new clothes for the fall and winter season because everything I owned for those Seasons was in my attic. I could not make plans with friends not knowing if I would be in Baltimore or Anne Arundel County where my sister lives. 9(One time, when my neighbors told me Bill and Donna were not at the house, I stopped by to remove jewelry and similar valuable items, could not get to the attic spaces).I did not celebrate Thanksgiving in my home. But the largest problem I had was the psychological stress I suffered.

Immediately after Bill and Donna vacated my home, as recommended by my attorney, my brother and neighbors arrived do videoed a walk-through to see if they had damaged the house. We then discovered that Bill had emptied every bottle of alcohol that had been in the home. For example, I had a fine scotch collection that was owned by a supper club, called the Burns Club, which I organize around an annual Burn's Supper. He had placed a small amount of brown water, which looked similar to scotch, to suggest that the bottles were not empty.

As an aside, Bill attempted to harass our minister. The minister spoke to Bill on my behalf to resolve the conflict. Subsequently, Bill wrote the bishop re. the minister, and then again after they moved out from

my home. His letter informed the Bishop that the minister was terrible and unchristian and I was a "horrible person," and that I was not worthy to be on the church vestry that I had been nominated for by fellow congregants (which is our church board).

During the time period during which Bill and Donna resided in my home, I sought information about him on the Internet. I found an online post that advised "user."

In summary, I was taken advantage of because I thought I was being a good Christian by offering Bill a place to stay for two weeks. But that's not what happened. I lost my home for a long period of time. IN addition, the legal process did not assist me -- It was time-consuming and expensive. He had approached me in June for two weeks. I did not get my home back until December 10. The system favors those that know best how to abuse it. Unlike many others, I was lucky to have a place to live -- I don't know what others do in my situation. The legal remedies are one-sided in favor of those illegally staying over in the premises of another.

It's been traumatic for me to put together this summary of events. I try not to think about that time period. When I do, I'm stressed again. Life is too short. I just want a more efficient remedy so that others do not need to go through what I went through.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca E Boykin.