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STREET SHEET



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OP-ED: LET'S HOUSE PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING TENANTS

Jordan Davis

About a year ago, District 5 Supervisor Dean Preston, who represents the majority of permanent supportive housing tenants in San Francisco—including myself—introduced and passed a resolution calling on the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) to fill vacant PSH units. Given that the Supreme Court's recent decision in the Grants Pass case makes it easier to sweep unhoused individuals, and that Mayor London Breed is now trying to bus homeless people out of town, it would seem that there is a renewed urgency to fill these units.

But, as a permanent supportive housing tenant advocate, I must ask whether the city should fill some of these units, or whether it should instead look at creating housing opportunities elsewhere in the city.

According to a July 31 report from NBC Bay Area, approximately half of all vacancies of PSH units are due to damage, which will require a major investment from the City to repair. Some of this damage may have been caused by tenants, but some of it stems from the fact that many of these buildings are century-old hotels with high capital needs, acquired before HSH and the department's standards for new housing were established in 2016. But we don't know whether the damage, or to what extent, occurs at older legacy sites as opposed to newer ones—data that would be quite useful.

The idea of the city intentionally leaving PSH units vacant is hardly novel. The San Francisco Chronicle's "Broken Homes" investigation from 2022 profiled the troubled Baldwin Hotel, a case study that showed how putting vulnerable tenants in spartan hotels with small rooms was more costly than anticipated. The city was spending \$1,000 more per month per unit for rent at the Baldwin than the average cost of a studio apartment in San Francisco, the investigation found. Due to all of the human and fiscal cost issues at the Baldwin, building owners intentionally left 25 rooms vacant, then 55, just so they could manage the building more easily.

The Baldwin was eventually decommissioned, and tenants were given a just transition to other buildings, including the Garland

Hotel, where all the units had private bathrooms and kitchenettes. At the May 2024 Homelessness Oversight Commission meeting, Commissioner Christin Evans praised the Garland for its low vacancy rates, low evictions, and its cost-effectiveness, costing the City only over \$2,000 per month compared with The Baldwin at between \$3,300 and \$3,600.

The Baldwin may be gone, but a lot of similar permanent supportive housing buildings remain, many of which don't have necessary amenities like private bathrooms and food storage and preparation facilities. Also, it's not known whether there is a cost-benefit analysis of keeping these buildings online and open to referrals. Furthermore, the capital and repair costs means that they might remain offline for an extended period of time, which might leave the City asking if it's worth it to fill these units.

I have previously written about scattered-site housing, and it may be best to think about using the tax dollars that could be used to fill these units to allow for an individual who is ready to leave homelessness to use a subsidy for renting a studio on the private market. Otherwise, our City might not make progress in keeping people housed, costing more money in the long run.

So, where do we go from here? It might be time to think about a just transition for tenants in some of the more challenging single-resident occupancy hotels into better quality housing; a component of this plan should include linking the funding to the tenant rather than a specific unit. Although tenants at the affected sites would need to be persuaded, I believe that tenants—especially those in the high cost, high needs, high-vacancy, low-amenity SROs—were provided vouchers for better housing, almost all would accept right away. We need to consider why these units are offline, and how we could house PSH tenants safely and economically.

Jordan Davis (she/they) is a permanent supportive housing tenant who fought to reduce thousands of her fellow tenant's rent to 30% of income. She can be reached at 30rightnow@gmail.com

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COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS

The STREET SHEET is a project of the Coalition on Homelessness. The Coalition on Homelessness organizes poor and homeless people to create permanent solutions to poverty while protecting the civil and human rights of those forced to remain on the streets.

Our organizing is based on extensive peer outreach, and the information gathered directly drives the Coalition's work. We do not bring our agenda to poor and homeless people: they bring their agendas to us.

STREET SHEET STAFF

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

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Street Sheet is published and distributed on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples. We recognize and honor the ongoing presence and stewardship of the original people of this land. We recognize that homelessness can not truly be ended until this land is returned to its original stewards.

**BECOME A
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STREET SHEET is currently recruiting vendors to sell the newspaper around San Francisco.

Vendors pick up the papers for free at our office in the Tenderloin and sell them for \$2 apiece at locations across the City. You get to keep all the money you make from sales! Sign up to earn extra income while also helping elevate the voices of the homeless writers who make this paper so unique, and promoting the vision of a San Francisco where every human being has a home.

TO SIGN UP, VISIT OUR OFFICE AT 280 TURK ST FROM 10AM-4PM ON MONDAY-THURSDAY AND 10AM-NOON ON FRIDAY

CALL TO ACTION:

SUPPORT RV DWELLERS ON THE WEST SIDE



As of August 1, a critical situation has unfolded for low-income families and individuals living in RVs in District 7 on San Francisco's west side. The imminent threat of displacement looms large, and without immediate intervention, these residents may face homelessness. These are not abstract statistics: they are our neighbors, people thrust into this precarious situation through no fault of their own.

For over three years, the Coalition on Homelessness and committed allies have been working tirelessly to support these communities. Given our limited resources, we have engaged with City officials, advocated for improved housing solutions, and provided as much assistance as possible. Despite these efforts, the demand for help far surpasses what has been offered, leaving our most vulnerable residents in a dire position.

The RV residents in District 7 have endured significant hardship, includ-

ing harassment, insecurity and traumatic experiences. RVs are not as much a chosen lifestyle as it's a last resort brought on by the economic fallout of the pandemic. Despite these formidable challenges, these residents have shown extraordinary resilience. They take great care of their neighborhoods, support one another and strive to maintain a clean and safe environment.

The most immediate and effective solution to this crisis is the establishment of a designated safe parking site. Such a site would provide these families and individuals with a secure place to park overnight, free from the fear of displacement or harassment. This critical temporary relief would be instrumental while longer-term housing solutions are pursued.

The urgency of this situation has intensified recently. After being displaced from Winston Drive on August 1, several residents relocated to Zoo Road in front of the Pomeroy Center, only to

face further displacement. Currently, RVs are scattered across various streets in search of stability. On Lake Merced, residents are facing harassment under the 72-hour parking rule, despite their efforts to comply by regularly moving their vehicles for street sweeping. They are receiving fines exceeding \$200, which adds a heavy financial burden.

Our team is working diligently to keep vehicle registrations current, but the community is on the brink of losing hope. The lack of stability is especially heartbreaking as the school year begins and families are struggling.

Homelessness is an escalating crisis in our city, with the shelter waitlist for families exceeding 500. Addressing this issue demands cooperative and effective solutions. Supporting the creation of a safe parking site could make a substantial difference in the lives of these individuals and families.

In light of the recent changes in park-

ing regulations on Winston Drive and the need for a stable solution, we are advocating for the San Francisco Zoo to provide a designated space for these residents. A site near the Pomeroy Center could offer the stability and security these families desperately need. They are not asking for much—just a place where they can park safely and with dignity.

We urge you to support our petition for the establishment of a safe parking site and advocate for the zoo to offer a designated space. Your support is crucial in ensuring that our city demonstrates compassion and takes action to protect its most vulnerable residents.

Please join us in pushing for this necessary action and raising awareness about the pressing issue of homelessness. Our community's well-being depends on our collective efforts to support and protect those in greatest need.

DRIVEN OUT: FORMER BERNAL RV RESIDENTS STILL SEARCHING FOR SAFE PARKING

MADELEINE MATZ

In late March, Armando Martinez and other RV residents who had been living outside of Bernal Heights Park were forced to move when a long-dormant parking ban went into effect. The group splintered, with Martinez, Darwin Pena and a Yucatecan couple together relocating first to the Mission, then to the Bayview and finally to the Excelsior District.

The moves have taken a toll.

Martinez told Street Sheet that shortly after arriving in the Excelsior, he was parked near McLaren Park when a man whom he believed was drunk approached Pena, who was parked across the street. Martinez heard yelling, and rushed to the two men. The presumably housed man, who was older and white, was brandishing a knife. Pena grabbed a baseball bat. Using racial slurs, the housed man told Martinez and Pena that the neighborhood was a million-dollar

neighborhood and ordered them to get out. Another neighbor, whom Martinez believed may have been the man's son, intervened, and told Martinez and Pena they had 20 minutes to leave. They relocated.

Such experiences of violence or near-violence have been a constant for Martinez, who reported that his RV tires were slashed when he was parked in the Mission and that housed people everywhere he goes seem enraged by his very presence.

"I still don't know what it is about RVs that makes people so upset, but it hasn't changed," Martinez said. "These guys are angry. Angry, elderly, white suburban men. We've gotten used to it. We don't take it as seriously as we used to. It isn't just us. It is the whole country."

The San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (HSH) has intermittently established contact with Martinez

and his small community. While parked in the Bayview, Martinez said he and his friends were offered three spots in the Candlestick safe camping site. They accepted the spots, but a few days later, they were then told that only two would be available. Martinez said he felt that HSH would "promise the world" and then often forget about him, unable to follow through on the fast-tracked housing or other services he was offered.

Martinez said that HSH offered an apartment subsidy, but he does not want to leave his community. He feels that the other RV residents, many of whom have limited English, are not taken seriously without him. He won't go inside until they, too, have an opportunity to stop the endless cycle of moving their homes.

Police officers have been a more consistent presence than HSH, forcing Martinez, Pena and the Yucatecan couple to repeatedly move

their RVs. Martinez described that the RV residents were effectively "pushed around" the city, kept moving by threats from housed residents and police. There have been moments of mercy—a parking enforcement agent who left a blank ticket on his dashboard, park rangers who explained where he could and could not park with empathy and understanding.

Through it all, Martinez has maintained a sense of community, both with the other RV residents who once camped with him in Bernal Heights and with the conventionally housed Bernal residents who supported him when he lived there.

Martinez is hopeful that Pena and the Yucatecan couple will get spots in the Candlestick safe camping site. Only then, he said, will he go inside.

SWEEPING US TO A ROOFLESSRADIO W

“Do you know where the bus station is,” RoofLessRadioSOMA reporter Sr. Ascuncion, laughed nervously, throwing back his wavy black/silver hair as he uncrumpled a small piece of paper he held in his hand “And do you know where this town is?” Sr Asuncion, a houseless elder pushing a small granny cart filled with a few carefully folded clothes and one sleeping bag standing at the base of the on-ramp to the I-580 freeway, was one of the recipients of London Breed’s bizarre, elder abusive “Bus ticket anywhere” program instituted after Gov. Newsom called all houseless people dangerous and demanded we all be “cleared” off the sidewalks like a used paper cup . Sr Asuncion, who had just been swept from a little corner he was standing at by California Highway Patrol officers, had no idea where he was going, no money or resources or family in the town he was going to and not sure exactly why he even had a bus ticket



RoofLessRadioTL reporters, tiny and Eugene

SWEEPING, CLEARING, CLEANING, DISAPPEARING OUR BODIES LIKE WE ARE TRASH

Since the Grants Pass versus Johnson Ruling which was actively supported and promoted by London Breed and Newsom, all gloves are off for both of these desperate for votes politricksters, who have been waging an active war on our houseless bodies since they came into office.

“As your mayor I promise to clean up the homeless problem,” stated Gavin Newsom to potential San Francisco voters in the 90’s when he swooped into the mayoral office literally on the backs of houseless peoples, claiming to

San Francisco voters he was their best hope to “clean us up”. Me and most of us houseless/poor people at POOR Magazine at the time were knowing that an even more violent war than the one we were already struggling with, was on the horizon.

London Breed on the other hand (or the same hand) has promised more than a decade later to “get tough” with houseless people, spending thousands of dollars on kops and DPW to move us from one side of the streets to the other, from under bridges to in doorways.

As well, she has encouraged, contracted, enabled and paid for the private police force of Urban Alchemy whose sole job seems to be poLicing houseless bodies all across San Francisco and many other cities in California.

Both of these demiCON politricksters, spewing violent Krapitalism with every step they take, have pandered to all the worst elements in San Francisco, welcoming in tech with endless payouts and right offs, encouraging luxury CONdo devlopers and great and consistent love for the poLice, meanwhile crushing, clearing, cleaning, and disappearing so many poor people from San Francisco, it’s almost painful to mention, while re-allocating, repurposing and discouraging endless sources of money that was supposed to go to support poor peoples housing, and refusing to meet with Homefulness leaders about a Homefulness Healing Housing project in San Francisco.



RoofLessRadioSOMA reporter Sr Ascuncion with his bus ticket to Nowhere

THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS WASTED ON POLICING OUR HOMELESSNESS, BUT NEVER HOUSING US.

“There is no crime happening right here, no crime at all except having no place to sleep, all this mayor is doing is causing a problem for a vote,” RoofLessRadioTL reporter Eugene shouted out to all the 55 armed agents of the state who were lined up behind the DPW workers on Leavenworth in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco to oversee and poLice the “clearing” and cleaning ordered by Newsom and promoted by Breed.

“The money spent on all these armed poLice agencies could have gone to solutions like Homefulness, but rather these politricksters would rather arrest, harass and kill us than ever listen to us about our own solutions,” I screamed to the endless line of squad cars on Leavenworth

Every day since Newsoms slanderous order of abuse across so-called California,, SF Mayor Breed has added her own venom by trolling the streets of San Francisco with multiple poLice agencies. Most of the viscous sweeps include at least one (if not 15) CHP officers, SF PoLice and DPW workers.

SWEEPS AND NEVER SOLUTIONS FROM LA TO SACRAMENTO

“Homelessness is NOT comfortable,” another warrior elder RoofLessRadioTL reporter was responding to London Breed’s comment that the City is going to make it as uncomfortable as possible for homeless people in San Francisco. She was huddled up against the wall at Ellis street with a recycling can and a few belongings her and other sweeps

victims were able to hold onto before they were violently removed from the tenderloin streets and sidewalks they were sleeping on. This fierce sister went on to explain that the shelter system was oftentimes more uncomfortable than living on the street, explaining the disrespect and abuse she felt at the hands of 20 something anti-social workers telling her where to go, how to be. “They have stolen everything from me, yesterday they stole my purse” she added

“In LA from the first day of Newsom’s order, the cops took our communities tents and belongings and began to arrest people,” RoofLESSradioLA reporter Carla and member of Aetna Street Solidarity reported to Poor Peoples Radio. “We have lost so many of our folks from the lies of Mayor Karen Bass’ InsideSafe Program, she is no better than any of these mayors and is causing our folks to die.



RoofLessRadioSOMA reporter Demetrius

They are up here in the 110 degree heat, doing sweeps and arresting people, said Crystal Rose Sanchez from Sacramento Homeless Union and Camp Resolution.

“Where would I go?” RoofLessRadioSOMA reporter Demetrius K responded to the bus ticket to anywhere program, “I’m from San Francisco, I’m not going anywhere” Demetrus went on to explain that he has been asked to move multiple times but never was offered housing and how the money and resources of San Francisco continue to go for the rich. “They keep building all this housing for rich people, but hardly any for the poor, look at all these empty buildings,” he said pointing his hands to all the nearby towering empty office buildings, “ why can’t we build a Homefulness here?” he concluded.



RoofLessRadioTL reporter with Sweeps Report

NO NOWHERE RESEARCH PROJECT

BY TINY WITH LEAJAY HARPER, MOMII PALAPAZ, FRANKIE CARTER, ALEX DELEON, JAY PAULINO



RoofLessRadio reporters Leajay and JohnX (Not his real name)

cleanest, most organized spaces for homeless Sacramento residents, but the City of Sacramento just keeps trying to shut us down," said Crystal Rose Sanchez, leader and povertyskola from the Sacramento Homeless Union who fought with the City of Sacramento to create a space for houseless residents of Sacramento.



Mouse, houseless resident leader from Wood Street Commons speaking on the Mic at the Press conference on Wood Street Commons From Left Rear, Freeway Leajay, John Janasko and Monique with Wood Street Commons and Homefulness

HOMELESSNESS KILLS, HOMEFULNESS HEALS

"Homefulness is a real time example of #4 of the 10 point plan of the Black Panther Party, that demanded safe, clean, habitable housing. Homefulness is our solution to our problems, said Aunti Frances Moore, Black Panther and Poverty skola is a co-founder

of Homefulness and founder of the Self-Help Hunger Program in North Oakland

Homefulness currently has 21 houseless, homeful residents of a beautiful model of poor and houseless peoples self-determination, which was built with permission, spiritual and elder guidance from the Ohlone/Lisjan Nation, who are first peoples of this land and is dedicated to provigin rent-free, forever housing for poor, disabled, houseless elders, youth and families currently struggling with homelessness and its related trauma. This innovative project which works to spiritually and legally unsell Mama Earth as tiny says is financially made possible by conscious folks with different forms of race and class privilege who radically redistribute to poor peoples self-determination, learning and unlearning in a liberation education seminar we at POOR Magazine call PeopleSkool

"I'm going to go to this town, even though I'm afraid and don't know it, because I don't know where else to go and San Francisco is kicking me out," Sr Asuncion laughed nervously again

and added, "Do you know where the bus station is,"

Sweeps Don't House Us, Homelessness Kills us is a RoofLessRadio WeSearch Project RoofLessRadio and WeSearch is a poor people-led research project of POOR Magazine dedicated to listening, learning, hearing, and reclaiming the endless counting and shuffling of data, counts, surveys, reports created about us poor and houseless peoples without us poor and houseless peoples. WeSearch findings and results also integrates our own Poor Peoples Solutions

RoofLessRadio WeSearchers and poverty skolaz from POOR Magazine and Wood Street Commons and other organizations will be releasing our WeSearch findings and our solutions at a press conference on Saturday, BlackAugust 17th at 1pm which will also be a welcoming in ceremony and community celebration for the first two homes at Homefulness#2 at 7600 BlackArthur (MacArthur) in Deep East Huchiun (Oakland)

"I'm out here trying to make an honest living, but they fuking Black people over in this town, I had my humble little food giveaway going on, we werent bothering anyone, we were helping fellow houseless folks, i have an LLC and a sellers permit, all my paperwork in order, and these people from the City swooped down on us along with all the other folks they were messing with and seized all my tools, and haven't even given me a way to get it back," RoofLessRadioTL reporter John X concluded shaking his head walking.

"They said you can only take what you can carry with two hands, I asked them well can you hold it until I get some housing and they said no we can't keep anything," RoofLessRadioTL reporter Mark reported. "I don't know who they are giving this housing to, but I'm disabled and houseless and its not us, all they give us is these useless Navigation centers which don't help anyone."

"I lost my walker in this sweep, and they told me I couldn't stay where i was, the problem is I have nowhere else to go and without people i trust around me, i have been raped and attacked," RoofLessRadio reporter Alison whispered to me as she huddled in her wheelchair near the curb on Ellis street after being swept.

HOMELESSNESS KILLS AND WE HAVE SOLUTIONS

"Caltrans, the biggest landlord in California has so much vacant land, There is vacant land right here, owned by Caltrans that we could be living on but instead they just keep moving us onto the streets, putting us in danger," said John Janosko, resident leader of Wood Street Commons, a solution of healing and support and housing for houseless Oakland residents before the City and the State violently "swept" it and pushed everyone onto the streets.

"Camp Resolution is one of the



RoofLessRadioTL Reporters tiny, Momii Palapaz, Leajay Harper, (Behind) Youth RoofLessRadio Reporters Alex DeLeon and Jay Paulino (out of pic but in the Cru- Frankie Carter)



Formerly Houseless, Now Homeful residents of Homefulness with revolutionary lawyers from Sustainable Economies Law Center who are helping them with their UnSelling process in this stolen land.

COVID MASK BANS LEAVE DISABLED PEOPLE, PROTESTERS UNPROTECTED

Q. WATTS

This summer, wastewater data shows us that COVID-19 cases are surging, and COVID-related deaths and hospitalizations are increasing as well. Vaccination rates are abysmal. Approximately 17 million people nationally live with long COVID, and your risk of developing long term disabling symptoms increases with each COVID infection. Meanwhile, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have given up recommending any real mitigation strategies, prioritizing production and work over health and safety, and removing recommendations for masking and even for isolating when testing positive for COVID.

Although COVID-19 was the second leading cause of death globally in 2023, we've moved from a "we're all in this together" moment to a "you do you" ideology that leaves sick and disabled people, as well as many other marginalized groups, at high risk of infection. To make matters much worse, politicians are doubling down on their COVID denial by promoting new laws that would outlaw the wearing of masks in public, removing one of the few protections people can still rely on to stay safe in a world that wants to forget the ongoing pandemic.

Most recently, the University of California and California State University systems issued mask bans as part of a project to curtail pro-Palestine demonstrations. Campuses in both these systems released similar "time, place and manner" policies that include restricting the use of masks to conceal one's identity and requiring that students identify themselves if asked to do so by campus personnel. Given the broad language of the policies, many have decried them as not only targeting pro-Palestine activists but also restricting the ability of students to protect themselves in the midst of an ongoing pandemic.

California's academic institutions are not the first to implement widespread bans on face masks. In June, North Carolina signed into law a ban on face masks that was also explicitly meant to prevent the use of masks by pro-Palestinian demonstrators on college campuses, and that initially included no exemption for people wearing masks for medical reasons. After the state legislature overrode the governor's veto, the final version included an exemption with the caveat that anyone can be asked to temporarily remove their mask

by cops or property owners. New York's Nassau County also recently passed a similar law.

Disability Rights New York (DRNY) became the first to challenge this type of legislation in court this past week. The advocacy group filed a class-action lawsuit asking a judge to halt enforcement of this mask ban, claiming that it would be used to prevent chronically ill and disabled people, or anyone taking health precautions, from being able to safely join protests, therefore categorically denying them their right to protest under the U.S. and state constitutions.

Proponents of mask ban laws insist that these laws will not impact people who are wearing masks for medical reasons, but leaves it up to law enforcement to use discretion. Masking is a critical safety tool for activists as well as for those who cannot risk COVID infection,

and the discretionary enforcement essentially guarantees that intersectionally marginalized people will bear the brunt of the consequences of these bad laws. Disability advocates describe COVID as a mass disabling event because so many people are now living with debilitating symptoms—like brain fog and heart damage, among others—as a result of their infections.

The threat of mask bans to people who cannot risk being infected with COVID is clear, but these bans also threaten protesters speaking out against the ongoing genocide the United States is funding in Palestine. These protesters have also reported facing vigilante attacks, being fired from their jobs, and being hunted down and arrested for their political involvement, thus needing an extra layer of protection both against infection and criminalization.

Unhoused people are significantly more likely to live with disability or chronic illness, and therefore are more prone to long COVID, hospitalization, and death due to COVID infection. People without shelter are also much more likely to face criminalization for minor offenses, like drug use or simply living outside, because they lack private spaces to retreat to for safety and because of prejudices against unhoused people. Homeless people and advocates should watch out for existing or proposed laws that ban masks in public and afford discretion to the police in targeting and criminalizing homeless people for necessary, life-sustaining acts.

KEEPING SCORE: MY REVIEW OF THE COORDINATED ENTRY TEST

CJ ROSS

"Where am I taking you? Where are you gonna stay tonight?" It was 2016. I Googled "shelters in San Francisco" on my friend's phone from the passenger seat with about two hours left until we reached the city.

I never thought I'd return to the city where I was born and raised. As I searched, I expected to find lists of places to sleep in a pinch, but instead I came across lists of "criteria" used to "score" my life experiences, which were the new determinants of how easily I'd be granted shelter in my own hometown—thanks to what was then a newly implemented system. I felt overwhelmed, like I suddenly had an hour and a half to ace an exam—only the test questions were about my life. I may never have survived if I had needed to process my traumas before then.

With 15 minutes until the Sixth Street exit, we decided to skip the test and get margaritas at El Rio before the Bernie Sanders rally and just rent a U-Haul van for me to sleep in.

Eight years later, I was on the verge of finally being housed on my own in the city of my birth. I witnessed the inception of what it's now called the coordinated entry system, which attaches a numerical score to your priority based on your responses to questions about my experiences before and during my homelessness. I chose terrifying nights alone on the streets over having to answer the questions even though I knew that answering them would take me off the streets.

Just before COVID-19 hit San Francisco in 2020, I heard about a new place to go, down on the Embarcadero, which was "like a shelter, but better." My social worker friend called it a "navigation center," and said it was hard to get into but worth trying. She said to go hang out around the outside of the place and try to get the attention of a worker who may be able to tell me the way in. I did.

It must've been cold because I somehow found it in me to have a conversation with the worker about how long I've been homeless. The guy said I had a good chance of getting in and told me to go up the Embarcadero to a park across from the Ferry Building and to look for the Homeless Outreach Team van. The HOT team, as it's called, had no phone number at the time, but its members drove around looking for unsheltered people, and they had the authority to take me back there for bed. What an ordeal! The HOT team didn't "find" me—instead, it was a National Park Service ranger named Valdez, who went above and beyond the call of duty to get me there. As the fog rolled in and evening came, he called his boss, who called her boss, whose friend knew the navigation center's then-unlisted phone number. We called, and Valdez asked if he could take me there himself that night instead of waiting for the HOT team the following day. Yes, they said, but only with the female ranger on the phone with us in his car and our route called in beforehand. It was dark by the time we got there, where

the wall around the "nav center" stood one full story high. It was less than one mile from where we were. I got my bed.

I had been there for some time when I learned about the coordinated entry system from the nav center guests in line for housing assistance. At the onset of COVID, we were relocated to shelter-in-place hotels. But instead of waiting for the pandemic to end to get my housing, I bought a truck and left town in an attempt to relocate. I've perpetually underestimated the vortex of forces that keeps a sixth-generation San Franciscan coming back. I try to leave for no real reason other than defiance, but always seem to end up back.

In 2022, I finally found the HOT team, literally by accident: I fell off of a curb backwards on Polk Street to avoid stepping in dog poop, dropping a bag of stuff, losing a flip-flop and bruising my ass on their van's open door. It was kind of a praise-God moment because the team's new phone number hadn't been working, and I'd been trying to get into a shelter for days. They said they could do my assessment right there in front of Walgreens, and I finally was confronted with the questions I read about in 2016. I was more traumatized by those seven minutes than by six terrifying years of sleeping doorways carpeted by cardboard boxes.

"Have you ever traded sex for a place to sleep? Have you ever been beaten, raped for abused by someone offering you shelter? What were the reasons you became homeless in the first place? Do you have any mental problems?" Umm... I do now.

In tears, with one shoe on, I accepted the shelter bed that I was offered, but declined the ride I was offered to the shelter. I told them that I needed to take care of a few things first, but "I'll be there by four—on the bus? Thanks, see you there..." No chance. I went to drink wine instead and recover.

As it turned out, my score for coordinated entry was just one point below what I needed to qualify for permanent supportive housing. I was only assigned "problem-solving" status, which doesn't give you housing. That kept me in the shelter system with the same unsolved problems until last year when a homeless advocate said that I could have what's called a "clinical review" of my housing assessment. As fortunate as I felt to have that opportunity, by the end of the hour-long review, I had drugged even deeper into past traumas. It was like hitting the windshield at 80 mph face-first, but I got three points!

In 2023, I finally made it into the line for permanent supportive housing. But it was only after I'd been waiting in line watching people who just knew the right things to say in their assessments sail past me into comfy digs of their own for free.

It's been a confusing, depressing and frustrating process, yet I forced myself to stay. I've traveled too many miles of hell toward housing just to tap out now.

IS THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO ABOUT TO WAGE A “WAR” ON THE HOMELESS?

MALIK WASHINGTON, DESTINATION FREEDOM MEDIA GROUP

A couple weeks ago, Mayor London Breed (San Francisco CA) appeared in a debate alongside a number of other potential mayoral candidates vying for public support. Mayor Breed made comments related to the removal of homeless people from city streets. I perceived her carefully chosen words as a clear warning aimed at the homeless population of San Francisco.

The month of August 2024 will usher in the beginning of a San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) operation which seeks to remove homeless people from areas deemed as public property and relocate them elsewhere. As I listened to Mayor Breed lay out her strategy (in video above), I heard her say that homeless human beings on the streets of San Francisco will be offered alternatives to their current living situations on public property. Mayor Breed's congenial and friendly tone seemed to change instantly when she began discussing what exactly would happen to homeless people if they refused the City's offer of “help.” All of a sudden the mention of criminal citations and potential jail time were introduced as “options” in order to coerce compliance. Last week, Governor Newsom issued an executive order on how state agencies are to remove homeless encampments. There appears to be a state-wide effort to key in on homeless people.

However, for right now, my attention is on the local effort in the City. I don't think many of the homeless people on the streets of San Francisco are aware of the potential trauma coming their way. I am pleading with community activists and activists for the homeless to not wait until the last minute to act. First, I believe we must come together and educate homeless people about this eviction operation that is about to hit the streets of San Francisco. Homeless people need to know their rights. A key issue that is often downplayed and ignored is the disregard and blatant disrespect that SFPD and the City's Public Works Department (Public Works) have for the personal property of homeless people.

So many times their belongings are confiscated, destroyed, or trashed by those whose mandate is to “protect and serve.” The policy that governs how SFPD officers are supposed to treat a homeless person's property is “bag and tag.” “Bag and tag” instructs the employees to inventory and label

property belonging to homeless people who are being relocated. In order to ensure that SFPD and Public Works employees adhere to these practices, I strongly recommend that activists and advocates organize disciplined video and audio recording of these imminent street evictions. More than likely SFPD and Public Works will coordinate their homeless eviction street raids in the wee hours of the morning in order to evade public scrutiny. It is imperative that any video and audio recordings be shared with the public at large and with the media by any means necessary. Remember, the best antiseptic for injustice is sunlight.

I recently spoke with Del Seymour, the co-founder of Code Tenderloin and a long-time advocate for the homeless in San Francisco about the imminent street evictions. Del said, “We fully support the ‘bag and tag’ policy. No San Franciscan should lose their personal belongings just because they are unhoused. Many organizations in the City also support the relocation of homeless people from the street to alternative locations that are safe and clean living spaces.”

I also interviewed a long-time resident of the Tenderloin, Jay Bucy. Here's what he said about how SFPD and Public Works employees view the property of homeless people. Mr. Bucy said, “Homeless people can't get ahead in this city because SFPD and Public Works keeps throwing all their belongings away. My 56-year-old wife lived on the streets of the Tenderloin for two years. She could never get a place to live because she was constantly replacing the personal property taken from her and destroyed by the City of San Francisco.”

ENRICHING THE EVICTION POLICE

It is common knowledge that the SFPD is understaffed. However, recently the City has proposed a policy which

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I believe is a gross misallocation of taxpayer dollars. The proposed incentive which is directed toward SFPD employees nearing retirement promises salaries of \$400,000 to \$500,000 a year per senior officer. I want our readers to read that again and allow it to sink in. Think about the housing that could be built for the houseless in San Francisco with the salaries of just five of these retiring officers. Think about that for a moment.

Ironically, only one member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, Hillary Ronen, has spoken out about this wasteful fiscal policy. I want the public at large to take a deeper introspective look at what is unfolding in the City. I leave you with some food for thought.

We at Destination Freedom Media Group know that the State of California has at least a budget deficit of \$27.6 billion dollars. We are asking the people: Does it make ethical or fiscal sense to pay a retiring police officer \$500,000 per year while turning a blind eye to the mental health and homeless crisis facing our communities?

Ron Conway is a major political donor. The question that presents itself is whether Conway is using his money, influence, and power to set forth an agenda that makes homeless people INVISIBLE so that the City can become more “attractive” to tourists and business investors?

Lastly, I also leave you with two provocative quotes. The first is from California Attorney General Rob Bonta from an article published on June 11, 2024 in the Davis Vanguard entitled: AG Bonta Supports Biden Administration Efforts to Reduce Barriers to Affordable Housing for Justice-involved Individuals.

AG Bonta said, “Reducing barriers to affordable housing is critical, particularly for those in our communities who have experienced interactions with the criminal justice system. Current

research shows that these justice-involved individuals — who are disproportionately Californians of color — struggle to find housing, and too often, end up homeless.”

And finally, a quote Adolph Reed, Jr. who wrote an opinion piece in The Nation entitled: The Liberal Consensus on Homelessness Got Us Here.

This is what he said, “This demonization of homeless people is textbook scapegoating politics. We've seen it many times before, directed at other populations, and each time they're presented as posing a uniquely perilous threat—so no lessons are ever learned. As reprehensible as this assault on the most vulnerable people in our society is, what's even more disturbing is that it's now part of a campaign by Trumpists and other reactionary elements to create an appearance of chaos in society, setting the stage for the intended imposition of authoritarian rule and the elimination of all the social protections we've won in the past century. Our only hope for avoiding that nightmarish outcome is to expose this for what it is—a right-wing capitalist-class plot—and try to organize among the broad mass of working people to counter it.”

Please stay tuned. There will be more to discuss in our follow-up article which will flush out the pros, the cons, and complexities of Proposition 1. I encourage all independent thinkers to re-read that quote and I ask that you listen and enjoy these masterpieces by Stephen Marley entitled “Mind Control” and “Chase Dem.”

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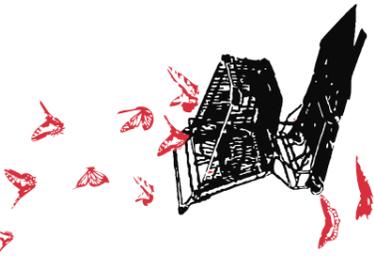
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