

EP43: Interesting Tenant & Family Stories

Welcome to the Landlord Logic Show, hosted by John Tiner. John is the owner and CEO of Tiner Property Management, a three-generation family business since 1976.

Tiner Property Management expertly manages over 1,000 properties in the greater Sacramento area to place quality tenants quickly while minimizing your risk. John stays up to date on all the new laws and regulations and shares his knowledge with do-it-yourself landlords each week.

The Landlord Logic Show with the Tiner Property Management Pros. Joining us now, John Tiner along with his wife and business partner Jenny Tiner.

Well, welcome to the Landlord Logic Show. We always enjoy this time with you each week, and in the studio with me today is my wife, Jenny Tiner. So glad to have Jenny.

Thank you. Thanks for listening.

So one of the things that we like to occasionally do is just tell one of those crazy tenant stories. We're a property management company and of course we've placed over 10,000 tenants in the Sacramento area. We manage 1,300 rental properties. And you can't do that much volume without having some funny stuff happen over the years. Been in the business almost 50 years. Some horrifying stuff, some great stuff, some funny stuff, and some crazies. We always have that.

But we had one story of a guy, this has been 10 years ago now. And he was an interesting man. Single guy in his 50s. He checked out really good when we did the screening on him because our claim to fame is that we're extraordinarily good at screening tenants. We're doing less than one eviction a year. So when we pick one—and it's been true for 30 years—we've been picking good tenants for a long time. But this guy had gotten through our system and he checked out. He had good rental history. He had good credit. He had no criminal history. And we put him in the property and immediately started having problems with the neighbors calling us.

And I don't mean one neighbor. I mean, all of the neighbors were calling. And our tenant had just kind of gone to war with them all. He fought about where they parked their car on the street. It's a public street. They can park anywhere they want.

So if it was over his property line a little bit on the main street, he would go out yelling at them and scaring their kids. And he was really a monster. And when I heard it from the first neighbor, I thought, well, maybe the neighbor is just kind of super hypersensitive and they're the problem. But then I heard from a second neighbor and a third neighbor, and I go, okay, we have a problem tenant here.

So he checked out good on paper, but it's hard to check for crazy. So we got a crazy one in, right?

And so I thought, well, I'll try to be the peacemaker. And I went over and tried to talk to him about it and see if I could make some peace between him and the neighbors.

And I could see that he was really not reasonable at all, and I really wasn't going to come to terms with anything that would make sense for him.

So he had already moved in on a lease, and we were kind of stuck with him until the end of the lease. And so we did our best. But when I was there, I noticed—for example—under the windows around the house, he had bear traps. Not coyote traps. Full-blown bear traps that could break a child's leg. And he had them loaded.

Like, if somebody comes and wants to peek through my windows, they're going to get the bear trap. And I'm like, this is really, really dangerous. So it was a problem. So we went through a time and we served him a few times. We served a notice to pay, perform covenant or quit—which means abide by the terms of the lease agreement—and asked him to remove the bear traps. And he begrudgingly did agree to that. That's probably the one thing I got out of him. But as soon as his lease was up, we gave him a notice to vacate. I wanted him out of the property. And as soon as I gave him a notice to vacate, he came storming into our office and he was hot, angry as could be. He said, "Trying to evict me is going to be the worst thing you ever did. I will fight you. I'll fight you in court. I'll hire the best attorneys I can. I'm going to call Curtis, the news media. I'll be filing ugly reviews for you." He had a whole list of all the ugly things he was going to do. And he said, "You don't have cause to make me leave." Which we did. There was no rent control or anything at this time. In his mind, we didn't have a reason to ask him to leave. But in my mind, we had lots of good reasons. And he said, "You don't have cause to make me leave." Which we did.

There was no rent control or anything at this time. In his mind, we didn't have a reason to ask him to leave. But in my mind, we had lots of good reasons. And so he was going to fight us and so forth. So he said, "I'll be moving out." He says, "But I want you to know that when I do, I'm going to destroy the house. I'm going to make it so you can't even re-rent it." And he said, "If you don't believe me, go out and look at my truck." And I thought, well, that's kind of a strange thing to say. So I went out into the parking lot and I looked at his pickup truck, and he had spray-painted on it in big letters, "I'm going to kill you all." And I thought, oh, wow. That's kind of a crazy thing to put on the side of your truck. But that was a good clue. That was a really good clue. So I went back into the office and I thought, well, I don't want him to be in the office anymore. He's kind of threatening.

And so I told him, "You have to leave the office. We're done here." So he went out and got in his truck and sat there for a while. And I called the police and I said, "This guy's sitting in our parking lot. He's threatening us. He's telling me he's going to destroy the house. He's spray-painted on his truck 'I'm going to kill you all.' Can you please come?" And they said, "Well, we'll send somebody out." And I said, "Okay, well, good. I'll wait for you." And about 30 minutes later, I called them again and I said, "Hey, this guy's still here in the parking lot. I'm really nervous about this. Can you please come?" And they said, "Well, we don't have anybody to

send right now.” And I said, “Okay, well, I’ll just keep waiting.” And after a couple of hours, he finally left on his own.

So then I went out and I got in my car and I drove home. And as I was driving down the freeway, I looked in my rearview mirror, and there he was, right on my tail. And I thought, oh, no, this is really bad. So I pulled off the freeway, and he pulled off behind me. And I pulled back on the freeway, and he pulled back on behind me. And so I’m thinking, okay, now I’m being stalked. So I called the police again, and I said, “I’ve got this guy following me. He’s threatened me. I need some help.” And they said, “Well, if you can get to a police station, that would be the best.” So I drove straight to the police station, and sure enough, he followed me right into the parking lot. And I got out of my car and went inside, and he got out of his car, too. And the police came out and they talked to him, and they said, “You need to leave this man alone. You need to stop threatening him.” And he said, “Okay, okay, I’ll stop.” And they let him go. And I thought, wow, that’s not much protection. But at least he knows I went to the police. So he went back to the house, and the day came when he was supposed to move out. And I thought, well, I better go check on the house and see what kind of damage he’s done. And sure enough, when I walked in, he had just destroyed the place. He had spray-painted on the walls. He had broken windows. He had torn out the cabinets. He had ripped up the carpet. He had done thousands and thousands of dollars’ worth of damage. And I thought, well, he told me he was going to do this. He warned me. And sure enough, he did it.

So we had to go in and do a complete rehab on the house. And it was one of the worst tenant damage cases I’ve ever seen. And the ironic thing is, he had checked out perfectly when we screened him. Good credit, good rental history, no criminal record. And yet he was one of the worst tenants we ever had. So the lesson I learned from that is that sometimes, no matter how good you are at screening, you can’t screen for crazy. And that’s why it’s so important to have a good property management company, because when things like this happen, you need somebody who knows how to handle it, who knows how to get the tenant out, who knows how to rehab the property, and who knows how to protect your investment.

And that’s what we do at Tiner Property Management. We take care of landlords. We take care of their properties. We minimize their risk. And we deal with the crazies so you don’t have to.

Thanks for listening to the Landlord Logic Show. We’ll be back next week with more stories, more tips, and more advice for landlords.