

[Recent stories](#)

[Slideshows](#)

[Sign up for free stuff, concert and dining info & more!](#)



[Log In](#) | [Help](#)

# the village VOICE

NYC Life



**OBIES AFTER-PARTY FEATURING ANTIBALAS WEBSTER HALL MAY 17TH \$15 PRESENTED BY BELLA ANTON VOICE**

## TOP news STORIES



**Features**  
[The NYPD Tapes, Part 2](#)

By Graham Rayman



**Columns**  
[Mass Transit Cuts Leave Passengers Stranded](#)

By Tom Robbins



**Columns**  
[Broadway Star Makes AIDS Funny?](#)

By Michael Musto



**Features**  
[The NYPD Tapes: Inside Bed-Stuy's 81st Precinct](#)

By Graham Rayman

# HUD

Text Size: **A A A**

'The No. 1 worst in the United States'

By [Jay Bachhuber](#) and [Samara Smith](#) Tuesday, Jun 27 2006

[Comments \(3\)](#)

"HUD is the No. 1 worst landlord, I believe, in the United States," says Michele Byrd, a man who resides in the decaying carcass of an SRO at 524 West 150th Street. His landlord is the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the federal agency mandated by law to improve the housing stock.

Byrd's building has mice crawling through gaping holes in its walls, bare plywood floors, and until recently, no working refrigerators or stoves. With its dim halls, leaking ceilings, and decrepit stairways, it looks like a crack house, and until the dealers left last June, it was one. HUD has owned Byrd's building since August 2004, and a simple tally of its 97 housing-code violations belies the extent of its wreckage.

His bathroom is overgrown with mold, and he didn't have running water for months. In the third-floor hallway a mouse has lain decaying on a chemical trap for weeks. Byrd says the management firm retained by HUD has made some improvements, such as recently providing him with a filthy refrigerator and a stove that belches smoke when a burner is turned on. But it's not just the traditional service failings of most bad landlords that have drawn the ire of tenant advocates about HUD. The federal agency has taken unprecedented actions to remove the people who live with these conditions: no-cause evictions.

In fact, it took a federal judge to dam the flood of these evictions, in a decision unnoticed by the local press. Hundreds of low-income tenants who had lived in buildings like Byrd's for years—and had depended on bargain-basement rents to survive—were simply told they had 30 days to get out. In court this spring, the tenants' lawyers argued that these eviction notices were unconstitutional and violated HUD's regulations.

"I'm telling you right now," Federal District Court Judge Frederic Block ruled in March, "that HUD will not go forward to seek to enforce the no-cause clause against anyone else, so I'm going to give you a formal order to take you off the hook. If they do that they will have to be subject to contempt proceedings. Does that make it clear?" Judge Block's home-saving injunction was only temporary, however. He's reviewing the legal issues and is expected to render a final decision in the coming months.

HUD spokesman Adam Glantz says the agency brought eviction proceedings against 262



photo: Jay Bachhuber

Stagnant water behind 306 Troutman Street in Brooklyn, where Nicholas Diaz's daughter Carmen Perez lives in a building owned by HUD

## Details

- See also:**
- [Apartments in Hell](#)  
Photos you won't see in the real estate brochures
  - [Your Turn: Got a Landlord Story to Tell?](#)
  - [Welcome to the 10 Worst Landlords](#)  
Scraped from the bottom of the barrel, tales of living hell
  - [Steven Kessner](#)  
'All I do is fix, and they damage'  
by Taina Borrero
  - [Mark Hersh](#)  
'Threatened tenants with a bat'  
by Adam F. Hutton
  - [David Melendez](#)  
'Horrible bedbugs coming from one of the walls'  
by Roger Peter D'Arceuil and Taina Borrero
  - [Fitos Neophytou](#)  
'We were greeted by blood in the elevator one morning'  
by Dana Eshghi
  - [John Kosman](#)  
Most of the bathrooms leak  
by Ruben Gonzalez
  - [Olufemi Falade](#)  
'When it rains, it rains inside the building.'  
by Olaf Bertram-Nothnagel
  - [Jacob Selechnik](#)  
'Sometimes they don't open the windows and let

[Sign up for free stuff, news info & more!](#)

enter email address

## Most ...

[Viewed](#) [Commented](#) [eMailed](#)

### When Hipsters Move in on Chinese: It's Ugly

A Delancey Street displacement drama, in which both sides—Chinese families and new tenants—seem pretty clueless about each other.

### Tom Six's Torture-Porn Game-Changer *The Human Centipede (First Sequence)*

#### BABIES!

Babies, babies, babies!

#### Babies Porn

Is *Babies* a good movie? of course not. But that's missing the point.

#### The NYPD Tapes: Inside Bed-Stuy's 81st Precinct

## Slideshows



The Last Metal Monday at the Slipper Room (NSFW)



Lucha VaVOOM: Wrestling, Burlesque, and Comedy



Deluxe Fluxx Arcade with Faile

[More Slideshows >>](#)

## Web Extras

[Savage Love](#)

## News Across the Nation

<a href="#">Broward/Palm Beach News</a>	<a href="#">Nashville News</a>
<a href="#">Dallas News</a>	<a href="#">Orange County News</a>
<a href="#">Denver News</a>	<a href="#">Phoenix News</a>
<a href="#">Houston News</a>	<a href="#">San Francisco News</a>
<a href="#">Kansas City News</a>	<a href="#">Seattle News</a>

[About Us](#) | [Work for Village Voice](#) | [Esubscribe](#) | [Free Classifieds](#) | [Village Voice Advertising](#) | [National Advertising](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Use](#) | [Problem With the Site?](#) | [RSS](#) | [Site Map](#) | [L.I. Voice](#)

© 2010 Village Voice, LLC, All rights reserved.