

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK  
COUNTY OF KINGS

SUNDEEP SINGH SUCHDEV, LUCAS SHAPIRO,  
SHRUTI PAREKH, JESSICA TURNER, LILI  
SALMERON, and SANJEEVAN THARMARATNAM

Plaintiffs,

-against-

JUDITH GRUNBAUM, MOSHE DEUTSCH, SAMUEL  
GRUNBAUM, and YHT MANAGEMENT INC.

Defendants.

Index No. \_\_\_\_\_

**AFFIDAVIT OF LUCAS  
SHAPIRO**

STATE OF NEW YORK     }  
  }ss:  
COUNTY OF KINGS     }

LUCAS SHAPIRO, being duly sworn, deposes and says the following is true:

1. I am the tenant of record for 3rd Floor/Front with storage room at 70 South Elliott Place, Brooklyn, NY 11217 (“Subject House”)
2. I am a leader of the Tenant Association at the Subject House and am familiar with facts surrounding this proceeding and the history of the building.
3. I moved into the 3rd Floor/Back Room in or around September 2008.
4. Because of the layout of our house, we try to create a trusting and safe environment. For example, up until recently, no tenants had locks on their doors. We also have regular tenant meetings to talk out any issues.
5. My monthly rent was set by NYS Division of Homes and Community Renewal (“DHCR”) in 2017 at \$300.00 per month.
6. Because of ongoing litigation, the owner has not asked for or accepted rent. Accordingly, I put my money in escrow each month at the rate of \$300.00 per month.
7. I have been at home during the Covid-19 pandemic, quarantining at the Subject House.
8. I have been largely unemployed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
9. On March 16, 2020, on the day that New York State imposed an eviction moratorium, and only days after Governor Andrew Cuomo declared a State of Emergency due to

Covid-19, a man claiming to be the “owner of the building” let himself in with a key. Because it was the first day New York City went into lockdown, this was extremely startling. The man was not wearing a mask and he behaved aggressively calling himself “the boss” and threatening to throw away belongings due to an alleged New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (“HPD”) violation. When I asked for notice before his visits, he said he would not “announce” or “notify” anyone that he was coming even during the COVID-19 pandemic because this was his space. I later learned this man was Samuel Grunbaum (“Mr. Grunbaum”), who claims to be the son of the owner Judith Grunbaum.

10. During this conversation with Mr. Grunbaum on March 16, 2020, I told him that if his plan is to try to startle us with his unannounced visits, the residents of the Subject House are organized, know their rights, and are prepared to assert their rights.
11. Upon information and belief, Mr. Grunbaum returned to take photos of our mail in the living room area on or about April 17, 2020.
12. On April 29, 2020, Mr. Grunbaum returned to the Subject House and let himself in without notice.
13. On April 30, 2020, workers arrived at the Subject House and said they were with “HPD.” However, they were not wearing HPD uniforms and did not present any City-issued identifications. They worked in the basement.
14. On May 5, 2020, Mr. Grunbaum returned again to the Subject House, letting himself in without notice. We had the following exchange during which he became agitated and aggressive and stated the following:
  - a. He insisted he was the owner of the property that this was his “family house.”
  - b. He stated, “I am going to come whenever I want” or words to that effect.
  - c. He also stated he had come the other day and saw a woman he didn’t know (likely a guest of mine), stating, “I came the other day and there was a lady sitting over there...she was on my property” or words to that effect. He was threatening and implied I could not have a guest in my home.
15. On June 8, 2020 at 2:55pm, I received an email from YHT Management stating workers would do “minor work” at 8:00am that morning. We responded minutes later to ask about

what work would be performed and whether workers would wear masks. We received no response to our questions. See Exhibit N of the Complaint.

16. On June 9, 2020, starting before 8:30am until around 5:30pm, between six (6) and ten (10) workers entered the Subject House at various points with Mr. Grunbaum to begin installing surveillance equipment throughout the entire interior of the building. One worker had lunch in our living room without a mask on and we felt unsafe throughout the day. Around 11:40 am on June 9, 2020, workers also tried to enter the Garden Level/Rear room by force (this is the only room with a lock on it and the tenants was not home). Otherwise, they spent the day drilling holes in our floors and working throughout the building.
17. In June and early July, Mr. Grunbaum and/or agents came many times unannounced. Several times, Mr. Grunbaum came with workers likely to work on installing the cameras but other times he came himself. He often came after hours and even on Sunday. The dates and times were on or about:
  - a. June 11, 2020 for nearly the full day.
  - b. June 12, 2020 for several hours;
  - c. June 14, 2020 after 7:00pm
  - d. June 16, 2020
  - e. June 22, 2020 after 6:30pm
  - f. July 5, 2020 (Sunday) after 7:00pm
18. The Subject House is laid out as follows:
  - a. **On the first floor:** There is a common entrance hallway as one would find in a brownstone that leads to a communal living room and communal kitchen. On that floor, there is also a bathroom with a toilet only.
  - b. **On the garden level (one down from the first floor):** There is a front bedroom, a back bedroom, and a restroom with no toilet. Tenants and their occupants must go up to the first, second or third floor to use the toilet.
  - c. **On the second floor (one up from the entrance level):** There is a front bedroom and a back bedroom. There is a full bathroom.
  - d. **On the third floor (two level up from the entrance level):** There is a front bedroom and back bedroom. There is a full bathroom.

19. Based on the make and model of the cameras, we believe they can pick up views 110 degrees from where they are situated and can use infrared technology to pick up images at night. The cameras are situated on each interior floor and surveil who uses what bathroom and where we each sleep. There is also a camera outside the building to surveil who comes in and out. *See* Exhibit O.
20. When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, I had a guest visiting from Turkey. My guest was sleeping in my room but, because of COVID-19, the Plaintiffs all agreed she could extend her stay and quarantine at the Subject House until it was safe to leave. I spoke with Shruti Parekh (“Shruti”), another Plaintiff in this case. For part of the pandemic, Shruti was out of state, and we agreed my guest could start sleeping in her room. We agreed that once Shruti was back, my guest would try to find safe alternative accommodations. When Shruti came back on August 10, 2020, my guest starting looking for another place to stay. She left on September 1, 2020 so that Shruti could sleep in her room again.
21. I was present on September 2, 2020 at about 5:05pm when Mr. Grunbaum entered the Subject House without notice to lock Shruti out of her room (2<sup>nd</sup> floor/Front). I was on a phone call in my room, and came out of my room once I heard the commotion. I was able to video record the moment Mr. Grunbaum and the worker locked the room. I also heard Shruti protest and ask them to stop. I saw them lock up the room and leave the lights on. They gave Shruti only a very short time to grab a few of her personal belongings, including a laptop she had been working on when the workers came.
22. When asked why he locked the room, Mr. Grunbaum claimed he saw a person who had been sleeping in that room leave with suitcases and therefore decided to secure the room. I believe that Mr. Grunbaum was referring to my guest from Turkey who had quarantined with us until that date.
23. I was also present on September 15, 2020 when, between the hours of 7:00pm -9:30pm, agents of Defendants, including Mr. Grunbaum, came to the Subject House again to try to lock Shruti out of her room.
24. The police came during this incident, and we had up to five (5) officers in Shurti’s room and in the hallways outside the room. I videotaped much of the exchange from the stairwell.

25. Around 8:30pm, when the officers told Mr. Grunbaum and his agents to leave or face arrest. I overheard Mr. Grunbaum say to the man in the red shirt that he and another agent should “make yourself comfortable” on the stoop. They waited on our neighbor’s stoop for up to two more hours, and, when they left, stated, they would be back shortly. They left after 9:00pm or so
26. Mr. Grunbaum has recently been visiting our home constantly, coming in without notice on weekends, weekdays and after business hours. Because of this, we always need to have a mask near us and we cannot let our guard down. Most of our interactions with Mr. Grunbaum are unpleasant and he behaves aggressively. The dates that he came to the building most recently include:
- a. August 27, 2020 (from 4pm-6:40pm);
  - b. Sunday August 30, 2020 (6:25pm-6:50pm)'
  - c. August 31, 2020 from 3:00pm-3:15pm;
  - d. September 2, 2020 at 5pm for the lock out.
  - e. September 3, 2020 at 11:10am
  - f. September 4, 2020 at 11:50am
  - g. Upon information and belief, on September 8, 2020 Max came by at 5:10pm but I was not present for this visit.
  - h. September 15, 2020 for the lock out.
27. Because of Mr. Grunbaum’s constant visits, I believe that Mr. Grunbaum has been sent by the landlord to harass me and the other Plaintiffs so that we will surrender our apartments.
28. I ask the Court to grant all relief Plaintiffs have requested so they can feel safe in their home.

WHEREFORE, I respectfully request that the Court grant Plaintiffs' Order to Show Cause, all the relief herein requested, and all the relief this Court deems just and proper.

  
LUCAS SHAPIRO

Sworn to before me on the  
16<sup>th</sup> day of September 2020

  
Notary Public

