



## It's a Crime

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Does it matter? Somebody forces his way into your home and insists on hanging around. You can't eject him yourself, but you manage to contact the police. The police arrive. You prove you're the owner. The police arrest the intruder and you resume full use of your property.

Patti Peeples and Dawn Tiura want intruders to be treated this same way — as criminals to be thwarted immediately — if owners are away when intruders intrude.

The pair co-own a Jacksonville, Florida, house that they rent out. After the last tenant moved out, two squatters [moved in](#). They were discovered by a handyman.

To evict the squatters, Peeples and Tiura had to go to court to start justice's slow wheels turning. It took more than a month.

The squatters told police that they'd been conned by a

rental scam. But they had recently told the same story to explain their occupancy of another home in the neighborhood.

Also, they threw a brick and feces at the owners' car as the owners were driving past the house.

And after the squatters were finally evicted, the owners discovered massive damage: missing appliances, holes punched in walls.

So, not innocent. Much less sanitary.

"Squatters are nothing more than criminals who are breaking and entering into a house," Peeples says. "They should not be handled in civil court. They should be treated within the criminal court system."

There's certainly no reason to let them linger and wreak revenge for having suffered the inconvenience of being caught.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.