



The Developer's Lot

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If you're going to own things, don't own them in New York City.

This town is an epicenter of official looting, as, for instance, what the city's Parks Department is doing to "[perplexed plaintiff](#)" Theodore Trachtenberg.

Trachtenberg owns a lot in New York, on which he hopes to build housing. Before he could proceed, he had to remove a tree from the lot.

"Therefore," the city—the Parks Department, the city, it's all the same gang—is fining him \$230,000.

Why? Well, they want money is why. If you can invest in NYC housing, this means you have money.

If a little girl without money were to pluck a dandelion in her back yard, Parks would fine her only a quarter, maybe.

Trachtenberg is suing. The filing says: "Parks did not plant the tree, has never performed any work on, nor took care of the tree, nor has even registered it on its online resource called NYC Tree Map."

The insanity is slightly complicated by a claim that two small trees on a nearby sidewalk were damaged by the work.

"The ownership of those two trees is not being contested, but the damage is," says Mikhail Sheynker, Trachtenberg's lawyer. Sheynker says he hasn't observed the damage that the city describes.

But he has observed that in the 1990s, "the Parks Department didn't really issue fines over trees. But they figured out this is a moneymaker."

Trachtenberg should have developed a tract in some other burg.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.