

Path of Lease Resistance

By Reg P. Wydeven
April 1, 2006

When I went to college at UW-Eau Claire, we lived in a great house, but we found out the insulation wasn't too hot. Winters get quite chilly on the Chippewa River, as my roommate discovered the hard way when the soda in his closet exploded after freezing.

When we complained to our landlord about the cold, she told us that when it gets cold at her house she lights a fire. We said that was all well and good, but our house didn't have a fireplace.

Lots of renters like us had crummy landlords, but just as many landlords have lousy tenants. Take Carlos Boozer, for example. Boozer, the former Duke standout and current Utah Jazz forward, owns a 10-bedroom, 11-bathroom home in West Hollywood. While he's spending the NBA season in Salt Lake City, Boozer rented out his home to Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Prince for a whopping \$70,000 a month.

In his 1993 hit 'My Name is Prince', the Artist proclaimed that he "is funky". As anyone familiar with pop music can attest, he is certainly eccentric. He changed his name to an androgynous symbol and used the moniker 'The Artist Formerly Known as Prince', he dresses only in purple and he is constantly surrounded by beautiful women. Apparently the colorful tendencies of his wardrobe carried over to his home designing.

Boozer recently sued Prince for an unauthorized extreme makeover of his house. According to the lawsuit, the Grammy-winning rocker painted purple stripes on the house and also adorned it with his Prince symbol and the numbers 3121. Coincidentally, 3121 is the name of Prince's latest album that was just released last week.

Prince allegedly also removed the carpet in the master bedroom and replaced it with purple monogrammed carpet and also installed plumbing, piping and excavated a large hole presumably for a beauty salon.

Another one of my roommates at Eau Claire was originally from Shakopee, Minnesota, a suburb of Minneapolis. When we went to his house for the weekend, he showed us Prince's mansion that was also in Shakopee. The entire house was purple, including the backboard of his six-foot-tall basketball hoop (Prince is about 5'2"). I guess solid colors are so '90s and pinstriping is the current trend.

Two months before filing his lawsuit, Boozer issued Prince a "three-day notice to cure or quit", meaning Prince had 72 hours to repair the unauthorized renovations or vacate the premises. In Wisconsin, landlords can issue a 5-day quit or pay rent notice for tenants behind in payment, or they can issue a 14-day eviction notice without an opportunity to cure for any default by a tenant.

Through his attorneys, Prince denied making any alterations to the home. Instead of kicking Prince out to fight in court and losing \$70,000 a month, Boozer withdrew his suit and will probably re-file in June after the lease runs out. That is, unless southern California gets hit with Purple Rain.

In an addendum to the lease, there is a special clause that allows Prince to cancel the rental agreement with 45 days notice "should the weather conditions of the Los Angeles rainy season...prohibit enjoyment of the property."

Even if Prince does get sued, at least he doesn't have to worry about his soda freezing in L.A.

This article originally appeared in the Appleton Post-Crescent newspaper and is reprinted with the permission of Gannett Co., Inc. © 2005 McCarty Curry Wydeven Peeters & Haak, LLP. All rights reserved.