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New York City Story

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Journal

Streetnotes, 29(0)

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Publication Date

2022

DOI

10.5070/S529059362

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New York City Story

Seth Tobocman and Tamara “Tornado” Wyndhame

Abstract

This comic strip is my response to hearing that mayor Eric Adams has called for an 6% rent increase for New York Cities’ rent stabilized tenants. The rent stabilization laws protect a large number of NYC tenants by limiting the size of rent increases a landlord can charge on the renewal of a lease. In recent years those increases were about 1% or 2%, but the new mayor has proposed 6%, a significant escalation.

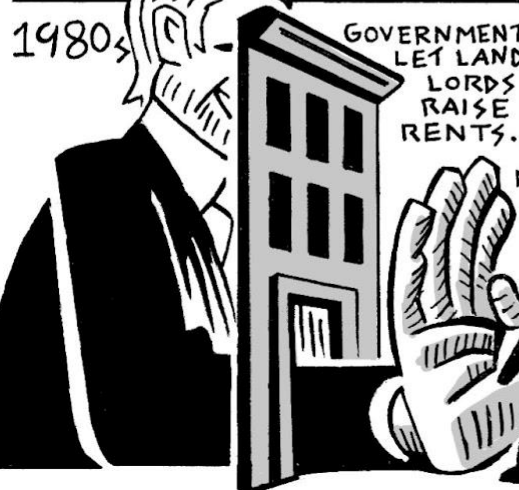
Many justifications have been advanced for this increase. The rising cost of gas. The fact that the previous administration kept rent increases to a minimum. The two-year moratorium on evictions during COVID. I felt that the only way to explain how devastating this reversal in policy was going to be, was to present the overall trajectory of the housing situation in NYC, not over years, but decades.

When I came to NYC in the 1970s it was pretty easy to find an affordable place to live, even if you were poor. It was a city where someone could start at the bottom and work their way up. This is not true anymore. Many longtime residents have been forced to leave, and many young people, starting out, are locked out of this city.

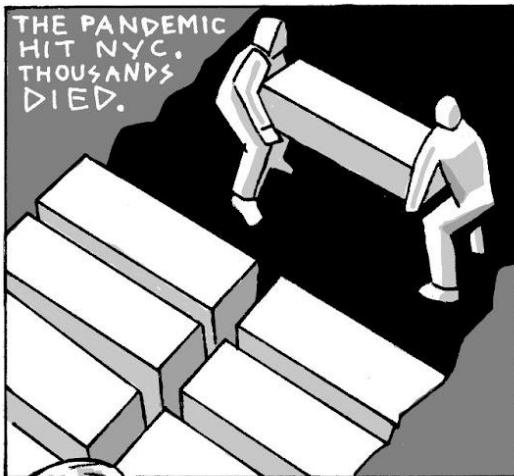
This transition did not happen easily. It involved violent clashes, evictions, demolitions and riots. I have often compared this to a war. This was a traumatic and injurious process. To increase rents further at the end of such a process, is to 'add insult to injury. to "pour salt in our wounds". At a time when people really need healing and compensation for their losses, they are instead suffering further abuse. I think that, when viewed in the proper historical context, the policies of the Adams administration appear to be quite reactionary and at odds with the lived experience of many New Yorkers. We should not stand for this. We deserve better.

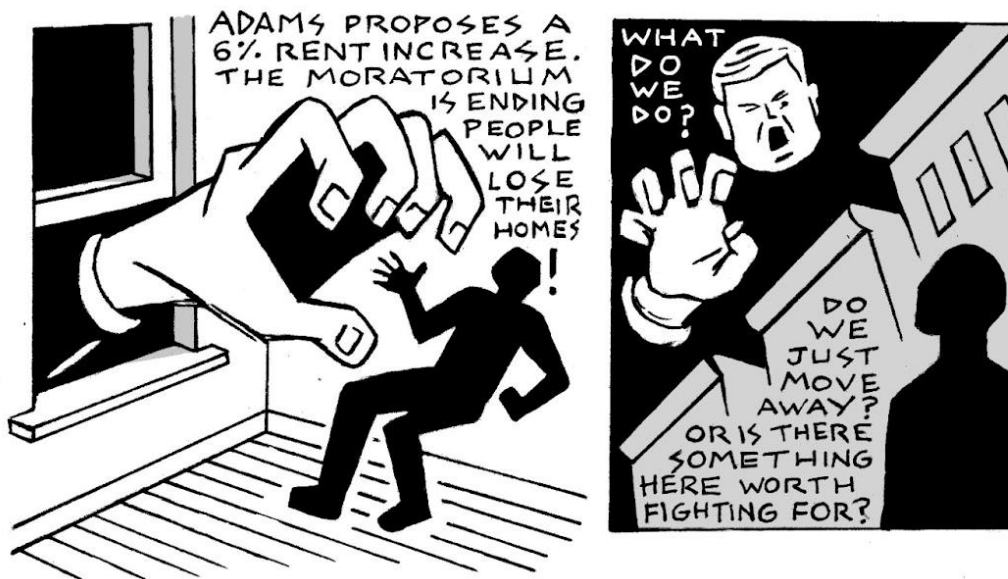
NYC STORY

BY SETH TOBOCMAN
AND TAMARA TORNADO









About the Artists

Seth Tobocman is a comic book artist whose work often deals with political issues from a radical and independent point of view. He founded the magazine *World War 3 Illustrated* with Peter Kuper in 1979 and has been part of the editorial collective ever since. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, *Heavy Metal* and many other magazines. He is author of a number of graphic books including:

YOU DON'T HAVE TO FUCK PEOPLE OVER TO SURVIVE
WAR IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD
PORTRAITS OF ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS
DISASTER AND RESISTANCE
UNDERSTANDING THE CRASH
LEN (a lawyer in history)
and
THE FACE OF STRUGGLE

Some of these books have been translated into French, Italian, Korean, Spanish and Greek. Tobocman's art has been shown at the Museum Of Modern Art, The New Museum Of Contemporary Art, The Museum Of The City Of Ravenna, Exit Art and Abcnorio.

His images have been used as posters, murals, banners and tattoos by peoples movements from Squatters in New York's Lower East Side to the African National Congress in South Africa.

Tamara "Tornado" Wyndham has been making art all her life, encouraged by her mother, an artist. Born and raised in Los Angeles, California, she studied traditional drawing and painting at California State University, Long Beach; and more experimental drawing, book works, and performance at the University of California at Irvine.

She is a good inker, and occasionally makes her own comics. But primarily is a painter and performance artist.