

THE PRICE OF BEING POOR – PART 8

“The Moment the Room Saw It: Evidence, Exposure, and the Question the City Can No Longer Avoid”

A Malik Washington Investigation | Destination Freedom Media Group | The Davis Vanguard



What they don't want the public, City and County of San Francisco,
and States' Attorneys General to see



This includes their staff

Evelyn Catalan

Vice President Bay Area Region

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Management - San Francisco



Photo Credits:

https://www.reddit.com/r/geegees/comments/1n8sx32/marchand_elevators_broken/
(elevator)

<https://www.discoverwildlife.com/how-to/how-to-deal-with-rats-and-mice-in-your-house>
(rat on plate)

<https://pomteam.com/pest-library-rats/>
(rat near trash can)

Rat in window – still shot from Jarhonda Jones video (below – Alice Griffith Apartments)

The room changed the moment the video was shown. It wasn't loud. There was no chaos. No one needed to shout. Because once it appeared—once the image settled into view—there was no longer anything to debate.

**A rat.
Inside an apartment.
On the interior windowsill.
Not outside. Not theoretical. Not buried in a report. Inside.**

And in that moment, inside a Tenant Association meeting at Alice Griffith Apartments on May 4, 2026, the conversation shifted from claims to evidence—from disagreement to documentation—from denial to exposure.

THE ROOM WHERE EVERYONE WAS PRESENT

This was not a private grievance session.

Present in that room were residents, management, media—and the City itself. Investigator Melissa Millsaps of the San Francisco City Attorney’s Office, assigned under City Attorney David Chiu, was there to gather evidence as part of an ongoing investigation.

Her presence was not symbolic. It was documented. The City was not waiting for a report. The City was in the room while the evidence was presented.

Destination Freedom Media Group appreciates City Attorney David Chiu’s attention to this serious matter, which has negatively impacted District 10 residents for nearly a decade. It is our sincere hope that we will see some true accountability from these corporate property management companies that continue to target the most vulnerable members of our San Francisco community.

Also present was Adrian Tirtanadi, Executive Director of Open Door Legal, who introduced Maika Pinkston as a new team member tasked with helping process referrals and ensuring District 10 residents receive legal support.

Maika Pinkston is also the Executive Director and founder of the nonprofit “From the Heart,” an organization engaged in tenant counseling, support, and advocacy. The legal infrastructure is present. The question is whether it will meet the urgency of the conditions.

I interviewed Open Door Legal Executive Director Adrian Tirtanadi after the Tenant meeting, and he had this to say:

“At the meeting, we heard directly from residents about rodent infestations, mold, broken elevators, and broken promises from management. The fact that tenants stated they were better off in the old Alice Griffith housing project, as opposed to their new 8-year-old building, underscores how serious the conditions have become.

At Open Door Legal, we plan on responding to these concerns by ramping up our affirmative housing practice and partnering with From the Heart on tenant counseling and advocacy. It’s so important that all landlords, whether they rent to the

wealthy or to the vulnerable, follow the law and ensure safe, habitable homes for their tenants.”

His response does more than acknowledge the moment. It places the conditions at Alice Griffith within a legal framework—one where habitability is not optional, and where enforcement is not discretionary.

THE ADMISSION



Ron Bowen, Regional Property Manager Over Alice Griffith Apartments – John Stewart Company

Before the video, there was already acknowledgment. Ron Bowen confirmed what residents had been living through—a serious rodent infestation—and described conditions involving feces, urine, fur, and feathers.

But what emerged next removed any remaining distance between problem and reality. The on-site security office itself could not be occupied due to rat infestation, confirmed by Captain Delfis of Resolve Security and acknowledged by Bowen. The infestation is no longer peripheral. It has reached the spaces responsible for safety itself.

THE EVIDENCE

Then came the video.



Rat Video -
Jarhonda Jones - Ali

Tenant Jarhonda Jones presented footage appearing to show a rat on the interior windowsill of a residential unit. For residents, it was not shocking. It was confirmation. Because in Bayview–Hunters Point, truth is rarely hidden—it is endured.

THE SYSTEM OF WORKAROUNDS

When elevators fail, management described a system of “runners.” When the system fails, the solution is not repair. It is adaptation.

Packages delivered.
Medications carried.
Lives paused.

WHEN THE WORKAROUND BREAKS DOWN

Then the room spoke back.

“I am not your ‘runner,’” Walt said to Ron Bowen.
“I am not your ‘runner.’”

What was described as a system was, in reality, human compassion filling institutional gaps. One resident reported being trapped for over a month. One entire month. I want everyone reading this article to think about that. This was not an inconvenience. This was liken to confinement in a local jail.

At the same time, residents raised another concern—one that shadows every exposure. Retaliation. Reports that speaking up comes with consequence. In some cases, the risk is not just exposure—it is speaking about the exposure.

TWO REALITIES IN ONE ROOM

The meeting revealed something deeper.
One tenant spoke of an elevator that had not worked in eight years.
Management offered timelines.
Assurances.
Projections.
Two realities. One lived. One reported.
And only one of them requires endurance.

THE QUESTION OF NOTICE

There was a time when this could have been dismissed as complaint.
That time has passed.
The City has been told.
The City has heard.
The City was in the room.
The question is no longer whether the City knows. The question is what the City will do with what it knows.

THE PRICE OF BEING POOR—UPDATED

This series has traced the pattern.
Unsafe conditions.
Delayed response.
Voices raised—and too often unanswered.

But Part 8 forces a deeper truth into the light.

The price of being poor is not just exposure to risk. It is living in conditions that are documented—and still unresolved.

And for some, it is something even more dangerous:
Speaking—and wondering what comes next.

A DIRECT CALL TO ACTION

The threshold has been crossed.
The evidence exists.
The admissions exist.
The conditions persist.
Accountability must follow.
The San Francisco Department of Public Health must act.
The City Attorney's Office must act.
Oversight bodies must act.
Because presence is not protection.
Observation is not enforcement.

And sisters and brothers dare I ask: "*Where in the World are those 'Good Brothers and Good Sisters' from the Tabernacle Group???*" Excuse the pun but they have been as quiet as a **CHURCH HOUSE MOUSE!** This is definitely not the time for silence. This is the time to speak up for your people's rights.

THE BOTTOM LINE

At Alice Griffith Apartments:
The conditions have been described
The issues have been acknowledged
The evidence has been shown
The City has been present
There is no longer a question of awareness. Only a question of action.
And in Bayview–Hunters Point, that question is never abstract.
It is measured in health.
It is measured in dignity.
It is measured in time.
And for too many residents—time has already run out.

REST IN POWER DEWAYNE GAINES. GONE BUT DEFINITELY NOT
FORGOTTEN.....All Power to the People.

Our song/video for this article is:

The O'Jays - Back Stabbers

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gnm6EdMVllc&list=RDGnm6EdMVllc&start_radio=1

HISTORICAL SOURCE LIST

Evidence of Documented Conditions at Alice Griffith and Allegations of Neglect Against the John Stewart Company

This source list is organized into five evidentiary tiers: (A) Government/Official Records, (B) Investigative Journalism on Alice Griffith, (C) Civil Litigation and Enforcement Actions, (D) Pattern Evidence and Community Documentation, and (E) Primary Investigative Source.

A. GOVERNMENT AND OFFICIAL RECORDS

[Source 1] SF Board of Supervisors Press Release — "Mistreatment of Alice Griffith Residents" (April 9, 2025)

Office of Supervisor Shamann Walton, District 10. Documents the April 7, 2025 Rules Committee hearing at which executives from the John Stewart Company and McCormack Baron Salazar admitted that pest infestations, broken elevators, slow trash removal, and delayed maintenance remain unresolved, citing insufficient revenue. Confirms SFFD has been dispatched to extricate trapped residents.

 https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/2025_04_09_Press_Release_Mistreatment_Of_Alice_Griffith_Residents.pdf

[Source 2] SF Board of Supervisors — Hearing Item Assignment (Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee)

Formal legislative item: "Hearing — Mistreatment of Residents at the Alice Griffith Apartments."

 <https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/LI020425.pdf>

[Source 3] SF Board of Supervisors Transcript — April 22, 2025

Floor statements describing residents at Alice Griffith and HUD housing as "abused by thuggish management."

 https://sfgovernmentconnection.com/meetings/Board_of_Supervisors/2025-04-22/transcript.html

[Source 4] Full Hearing Video — April 7, 2025 Rules Committee

 <https://sanfrancisco.granicus.com/player/clip/49415>

[Source 5] SF Office of the Inspector General — Establishment and Appointment of Alexandra Shepard (October 28, 2025)

Confirms the IG's jurisdiction over fraud, public-corruption, and contracting investigations involving City-funded entities.

 <https://www.sf.gov/news-attorney-alexandra-shepard-named-san-franciscos-first-inspector-general>

 <https://www.sf.gov/alexandra-shepard>

[Source 6] Alice Griffith Redevelopment Project — Draft Environmental Impact Report (HOPE SF)

Establishes that the site required environmental study and mitigation prior to redevelopment — directly relevant to "Part 7" environmental-exposure context.

 <https://sfmohcd.org/sites/default/files/FileCenter/Documents/6091-Appendix%20A%20Scoping.pdf>

[Source 7] HOPE SF Neighborhood Analysis — Bayview / Hunters Point, Potrero Hill (2018)

Background on the redevelopment framework under which Alice Griffith was rebuilt.

 <https://www.hope-sf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/HOPE-SF-Neighborhood-Report-2018.pdf>

B. INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM — ALICE GRIFFITH

[Source 8] "Bayview's Alice Griffith failed more than 100 S.F. inspections in past year" — *Mission Local* (June 2025)

Critical document. Reports 129 SFHA inspection failures in a single year, including a Feb. 20, 2025 inspection noting mouse infestation and malfunctioning smoke detectors in sleeping areas. Details how each failure deepens the property's financial crisis.

 <https://missionlocal.org/2025/06/alice-griffith-failed-more-than-100-housing-authority-inspections-in-the-past-year-each-failure-sinks-the-complexs-finances-deeper-in-the-hole/>

[Source 9] "Bayview's Alice Griffith housing was built in 2017. It's already falling apart. Why?" — *Mission Local* (May 2025)

Documents structural decline less than a decade after construction, including pests and broken elevators.

 <https://missionlocal.org/2025/05/bayviews-alice-griffith-housing-was-built-in-2017-its-already-falling-apart-why/>

[Source 10] "Bayview residents, S.F. supervisor slam public housing conditions" — *Mission Local* (April 11, 2025)

Direct tenant testimony of vermin, filth, broken elevators, and ignored complaints. Walton announces hearings.

 <https://missionlocal.org/2025/04/bayview-residents-decry-neglect-in-public-housing-and-supervisor-walton-warns-of-consequences/>

[Source 11] "Only elevator at S.F. public housing building will be out for 19 days" — *Mission Local* (June 2025)

Documents a 19-day total outage at an Alice Griffith building with a single elevator.

 <https://missionlocal.org/2025/06/the-only-elevator-at-a-bayview-public-housing-building-will-be-out-for-weeks/>

[Source 12] "S.F. public housing tenants rally at City Hall, urge Mayor Lurie to step up"

— *Mission Local* (July 2025)

Tenants from federally subsidized complexes — including Alice Griffith — protest neglect by management.

 <https://missionlocal.org/2025/07/s-f-public-housing-tenants-rally-at-city-hall-urging-mayor-lurie-to-step-up/>

[Source 13] "Conditions at a Hunters Point housing project are disgraceful—and the private operators duck" — *48 Hills* (April 2025)

Reports for-profit operators failed to make basic repairs and were seeking a city bailout.

 <https://48hills.org/2025/04/conditions-at-a-hunters-point-housing-project-are-disgraceful-and-the-private-operators-duck/>

[Source 14] "Special Investigative Report: The Price of Being Poor" — *Davis Vanguard* (March 2026)

Malik Washington's foundational reporting documenting broken elevators, electrical hazards, pest infestations, and plumbing failures sending sewage backups into units; comparative analysis of corporate landlord neglect across Alice Griffith, Plaza East, and Hunters Point.

 <https://davisvanguard.org/2026/03/san-francisco-corporate-landlords-neglect/>

C. CIVIL LITIGATION AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

[Source 15] Plaza East Tenants v. John Stewart Company — Pending Lawsuit (Mission Local, July 2025)

28 tenants at Plaza East have sued the John Stewart Company alleging harassment and uninhabitable conditions. The Company is being removed as Plaza East's property manager.

 <https://missionlocal.org/2025/07/sf-plaza-east-public-housing-property-manager/>

[Source 16] "Months after federal officials demand action, not much has changed for tenants at Plaza East" — *48 Hills* (June 2024)

Documents that even after federal pressure and 200+ claimed repairs, conditions remained substandard at a JSC-managed property.

 <https://48hills.org/2024/06/months-after-federal-officials-demand-action-no-much-has-changed-for-tenants-at-plaza-east/>

[Source 17] "Plaza East Repairs Behind Schedule, HUD Gives Failing Score" — *SF Public Press*

Federal HUD failing score documentation at JSC-managed property.

 <https://www.sfpublicpress.org/emergency-repairs-in-public-housing-complex-are-behind-schedule-as-owner-advances-redevelopment-plans/>

[Source 18] City Attorney v. San Francisco Landlord — Rodent Infestation Lawsuit (KRON4)

Establishes the City Attorney's enforcement precedent for filing suit over rodent-infested buildings — directly applicable threshold for Alice Griffith.

 <https://www.kron4.com/news/bay-area/city-san-francisco-landlord-slapped-with-lawsuit-over-rodent-infested-building/>

[Source 19] "SF company agrees to pay \$12K in housing discrimination settlement" — *CT Post*

HUD-mediated settlement against the John Stewart Company and Hunters Point East West, LP for denying a reasonable accommodation request — establishes a documented prior fair-housing violation by JSC in the Bayview footprint.

 <https://www.ctpost.com/news/article/SF-company-agrees-to-pay-12K-in-housing-12998530.php>

[Source 20] *John Stewart Company v. Stephen Wong et al.* — Trellis Law Case Record Example of JSC's litigation posture against tenants — relevant to allegations of retaliation and aggressive eviction practices.

 <https://trellis.law/case/cud05613436/john-stewart-company-a-california-corporation-vs-stephen-wong-et-al>

D. PATTERN EVIDENCE AND COMMUNITY DOCUMENTATION

[Source 21] Housing Rights Committee of San Francisco — Public Statements Documents that "at Alice Griffith, the elevators, which are often broken, strand seniors and [disabled residents]" — independent advocacy-organization corroboration.

 <https://www.facebook.com/housingrightsSF/posts/1202517715250623/>

[Source 22] Housing Rights Committee — "The conditions at Alice Griffith are not new and demand action"

 <https://www.facebook.com/housingrightsSF/posts/1153444546824607/>

[Source 23] Resident-Reported Mold, Plumbing, and Flooding (Community Reports) Persistent mold, faulty plumbing, frequent flooding reported by residents at Alice Griffith units built in 2017.

 <https://www.facebook.com/groups/490382528518800/posts/1675891786634529/>

[Source 24] Justia Legal Q&A — "John Stewart Company, how do they keep getting funded?"

Tenant-side legal discussion documenting the structural barriers to individual tenant litigation against JSC — relevant to Inspector General's review of why systemic abuses persist absent regulatory enforcement.

 <https://answers.justia.com/question/2024/04/19/john-stewart-company-how-do-they-keep-ge-1011087>

E. PRIMARY INVESTIGATIVE SOURCE — THE WASHINGTON SERIES

[Source 25] "The Price of Being Poor — Part 8: The Moment the Room Saw It" — Malik Washington (May 2026)

Destination Freedom Media Group / The Davis Vanguard. Documents the May 4, 2026

Tenant Association meeting; presence of Investigator Melissa Millsaps (SF City Attorney's Office, 1390 Market Street); management admission by Regional Property Manager Ron Bowen; video evidence by tenant Jarhonda Jones; testimony of maintenance worker "Walt" rejecting "runner" characterization; resident testimony of month-long third-floor confinement and 8-year elevator outage in Building 2700; allegations of retaliation against complainants.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Malik Washington is a San Francisco-based journalist and co-founder of Destination Freedom Media Group, an independent nonprofit newsroom dedicated to accountability reporting at the intersection of civil rights, public integrity, disability justice, structural accountability within American institutions, and community survival. He has been a published journalist for over 14 years.

His work—published in partnership with the Davis Vanguard—focuses on government power, criminal justice, environmental justice, and the human consequences of policy decisions too often insulated from public scrutiny. Washington’s reporting amplifies the voices of impacted communities while insisting on documentary evidence, transparency, and the unvarnished truth—especially when institutions demand silence.

His work appears on platforms such as Muck Rack and Black Voice News, examining the intersection of justice, governance, and community.

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