



A Christmas Story For Our Time



(from and by [Bill Bayliss](#))

Email
Date 23rd Dec.
From Housing Call Centre
To Central Housing Team Leader
Subject Possible Squat at 21, Balaclava Rd, Walthamstow

Susan,

One of my staff took a call pm today from an anonymous 'concerned' person. She said that an empty house next door to her had been squatted by what she called 'a bunch of terrorists'. One of them was a very obviously pregnant woman. She was worried because the house is very run down and doesn't have any electricity. She knows that they are using candles and is frightened that they may cause a fire. I asked if she had contacted the police and she had but apparently they told her to contact the Council Housing Office because squatting is a civil matter.

Pat James (Housing Call Centre Supervisor)

Email
Date 29th Dec
From Housing Officer - Ron Flinders
To Central Housing Team Leader - Susan Gaithers
Subject Home Visit - 21, Balaclava Rd, Walthamstow.

Susan,

Just to let you know that I did manage to make a visit to the above address today. As you know it's one of our properties and is a long-term 'void' property that has had the services disconnected and was boarded up. Because the squatters don't speak much English, communication was quite difficult but this is the situation as far as I could make it out.

The occupants are Palestinian Arab asylum seekers who don't have anywhere else to go. As far as I could figure out there are only two people and their baby actually living in the property but other people seem to come and go. The occupants are Miryam & Yosef Bar Yacob and their few days old baby boy. I would guess that Miryam was about 18 years old and Yosef is probably in his 40's. Miryam seemed to be saying that Yosef was her husband but not the father of the baby!. While I was there, three elderly Arab men came with presents for the baby. I told Miram and Yosef that they should contact the Homeless Family Unit and that I would be preparing a 'Squatting Report' so that we can take legal action to recover the property. Conditions in the house are very primitive and I would suggest that we need to contact Social Services to advise them of the situation as the baby may be 'at risk' and they might want to consider taking out an Emergency Protection Order. I'll send the completed Squatting Report on to Legal Dept and copy you in.

Ron Flinders (Housing Officer)

“And she brought forth her first born son and laid him in the manger because there was no room in the inn.” (Luke 2:7)