

# HOW A NAKED BLONDE

AMONG the genuinely homeless people who have taken to squatting as a last desperate resort, there is a new army of parasites.

The plight of the truly homeless who take over long-empty houses commands sympathy. The parasite squatters do not.

These people go to remarkable lengths to resist being thrown out of illegally occupied homes.

And they will use remarkable weapons even sex.

That happened recently when bailiffs tried to evict a group of squatters from a house in Catford, London. When they knocked at the front door they were startled to find it opened by a pretty blonde girl wearing only a tiny little nightie.

She smiled sweetly and said no, she was not going to leave the house—in St. Julian's Road—not were her five fellow squatters.

Her message was clear:

"Touch me if you dare."

The squatters took one look at the home's protective measure and called that any move by them physically to remove the blonde young woman would be fought with "arms of dangerous weapons" without pulling the punch.

**B**UT only temporarily; next time the bailiffs called, a few days later, they took no chances.

When dawn they crept up on the house—others—armed and armed and ready—had been sent to stand guard—hanging that was not wanted.

In the hands of living rocks about pavers, burst in on the door the squatting crew that had been beaten to the rescue. Many an armful of stones was hurled at the invaders, men, women, a boy and a yellow labrador. As the crowd of their henchmen in the street outside decided to break in, the squatters had to move to another door. They had been won over to the thoughts of the other side of the fence.

Others—the henchmen of the squatters—had been sent in, to stand guard. And the squatters had been won over to the thoughts of the other side of the fence.

**A** SMALL army of squatters had promised support to comrades facing eviction.

Now they had succeeded in the area in the past two and a half years—one squatter too, so possibly.

The tactic of pushing an orifice in the door of the house in private areas by means of a combination lock and a pick lock either to get in or to get out according to day.

But this time the bailiffs had a "secret weapon" of their own... their knowledge of squatters' ways.

The result, at 5.30 a.m., squatters expected the back-up army would be still in bed—and ready to get in. It was not so hard to help an average squatter out of his bed.

But the day the third edition of the Sunday People came along, things—a squatter found

# BEAT THE BAILIFFS

MORE SECRETS OF THE  
NIGHT SQUATTER ARMY

By Peter Thomas and Dan Wooding. Pictures by Brendan Monks, David Graves and Reg Palmer.

police, but found themselves confronted by an army of 30 other squatters. That was at midday.

Rather than risk a shot, they went away to take their plans, and the general on each side considered their tactics.

The squatters strengthened the iron door with seven strong planks and a metal plate. A man added timber scaffolding buttresses made the hall to resist any attempt to smash the door in.

The police anticipated the move and ordered a mobile unit to be on hand in case the door was OUT instead of breaking it in.

The squatters, according to a tip received by the police, set up an iron bedstead as a barricade—and waited to be paid in a more peaceful sample. But in the event the iron bedstead did not materialise.

The squatters installed an alarm system to set up a plan to summon help from nearby housing squatters.

The police detailed an efficient young officer to make a

commando-style dash to silence the siren as soon as the door gave way.

The squatters visited the web of their comrades to respond to the alarm; the police mustered 30 officers to be at the scene.

The squatters posted a sentry to sleep on a matress by the front door. The police parked

their vehicles a little way away and approached quietly on foot.

We watched from a neutral position. There was a crash as the door gave way, the signal for fast action by the police.

The police then began its dramatic assault, but soon afterwards the sentry had caught the squatters napping.

The early hour of the operation had caught the squatters napping.

At 7 a.m. the operation was all over, the squatters and all their possessions had gone.

But the support army had still not left their beds to join battle.

By 9 a.m. the day began its dramatic assault, but soon afterwards the sentry had caught the squatters napping.

The early hour of the operation had caught the squatters napping.

# I JOIN THE MOB WHO NEVER PAY RENT

I HAVE just spent eight days as one of Britain's growing army of squatters, living among them incognito at various "squats" in London and Manchester.

During that time I was under considerable persuasion to join the ranks of "the revolutionaries," who are largely running the movement.

This is a matter of my free choice, starting with the three I reported to the office of the squatters' "village" at Tooley's Square, in Croydon, London, as a home to which I had just moved from the north.

**DAY 1.** Without question, I am taken to the basement of No. 16—a fifth floor with broken windows and piles of rubbish and rags.

"It's the worst room in the worst house. Take it or leave it," a long-haired, barefoot youth tells me. I take it.

Patrol

I am introduced to others in the house as "the new bird in the basement." Then I am taken to find a mattress on a rubbish dump. There's usually something to be picked up, I'm told. Not today, though.

But I am fixed up in an empty bed in another basement flat, because the couple who live there are away.

I'm not the only person getting a free room, though. I have to stand in the square from 8 to 8 and ring an alarm bell if bailiffs or police come.

**DAY 2.** There is a raid. Alarm bells ring, dustbins clatter, squatters scream shrill. Two police and four police move in. In the the action fizzles out . . . the

house they're raiding is empty anyway.

I visit the village office and offer my tip. "You can offer some begging letters," I'm told. "But don't mention squatters—say it's for a housing association."

**DAY 3.** I identify a ground or second floor place all mine. A girl in a sleeping bag with a boyfriend tells me: "Squatters don't get up before twelve."

But at least there's something to eat. I descend Ornamental Street, from which a sweetish smell coming. Breakfast cooking? No, I discover it's basic cleaning staff—just it in a pub last night.

He takes me to a house round the corner. Police never come in the residential building three or four to a room. I'm to sleep in a room above a shop.

**Breakfast**

I meet some of the others, an unmarried mother, a Liverpool boy with blue-painted nails, a boy just out of jail.

**DAY 4.** I am told to get up just after nine. Downstairs everyone having breakfast. I go up to my room.

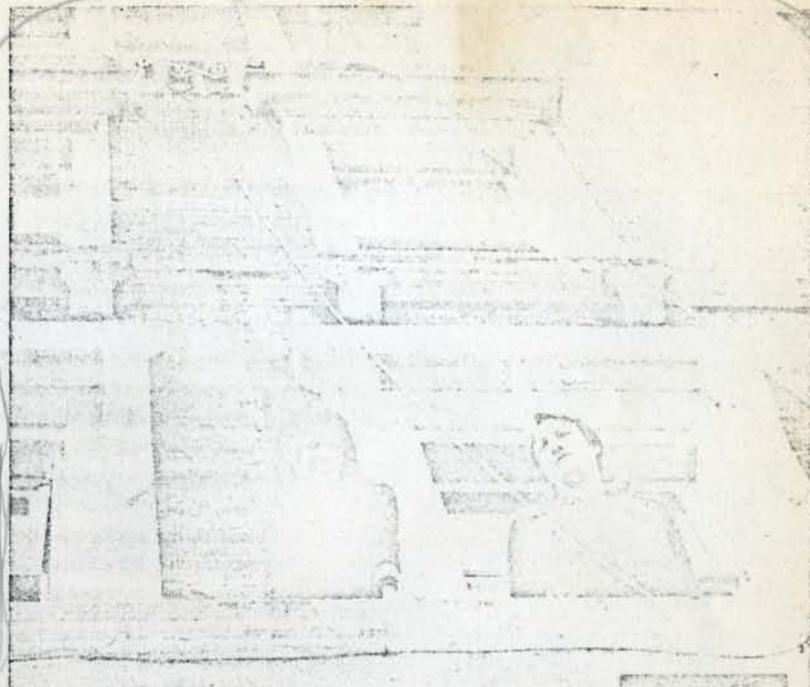
It comes. John. I say this place stink and smear, he says, sergeant major-like. "There's a man from Soho

ment to fight the pigs," he says. "By the way, are you a revolutionary?"

I nod my head. "Well your change," he says. One squatter turns an old army armband.

**DAY 5.** I take a wander round the area, find a Canadian living in one bare room. Ask him if he's working or studying. "I'm writing a book," he replies.

But I nod. "I've had enough."



Squatters on "sentry duty"—ready to set the alarm bells ringing.



THEY'RE on "sentry duty" patrolling the squatters' stronghold in Tooley's Square, Elephant and Castle, London.

If they spot the arrival of police or a posse they immediately bugle the alarm.

And that will set off a series of alarms, triggering the alarm system—all the way down to ACTION STATIONS.

A determined mob of revolutionaries has taken over a house in Southwark, London, and is persuading the local authorities to withdraw the police.

In large parts of the city, in fact, in many parts of Britain, squatters are taking over houses.

Surprisingly, the revolutionaries seem to be quite law-abiding.

One squatter turns an old army armband.

Other defiance measures used include traps like the ones which are set across the front door.

They're on "sentry duty" front door, he says.

But I nod. "I've had enough."

The amazing diary of Sunday People investigator Wendy Henry

Security coming," I've seen enough. I'm off to London.

**DAY 5.** I report to squatters' headquarters at 19, Clain Avenue, Maida Vale, and I'm introduced to the leader Piers Corbyn, an International Socialist.

He comes to my flat 99 and gives me a legal notice to pin on the door. "If the fuzz gets nasty, comrades, we'll send you reinforce-

© The day the "fuzz" struck at dawn.

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