

Why You Should Not Rent to People You Know or Their Kids By Cliff Hockley

Tony and His Hole in the Floor

It was move out time. Tony, who was the son of my father-in-law's best friend, had rented a one bedroom unit with a garage in our triplex. We had rented it to him because his father had begged and because his father was a good friend.

It was lightly raining when we started our move-out inspection. I unlocked the door and as we expected for a 22 year old, the unit had papers and trash all over the floor. Then, as we opened the curtains, we saw a hole in the floor.

This particular unit was located over a garage that we had also rented to Tony. He had rigged up a ladder to the garage so he could grow marijuana in a cold, dry place with easy access to his unit. We were floored by the set-up and damage he created. His father had not cosigned on the lease, so we had to pay for the damage out of pocket and try to recoup costs by suing Tony in small claims court. This did not do us a lot of good since he fled to an adjoining state. As you can well imagine, this damaged the friendship in a permanent way.

George Exposes Himself

In another situation, George was a son of a friend of ours. He had some issues mentally and as a result, he was allowed to have a companion animal in his apartment. His mother, who owned lots of apartments, would not allow him to live in one of her properties, though she did pay rent for him.

In any case, George would allow his dog to go out of the patio door in the morning unleashed and unsupervised. Occasionally, the dog would run off and not immediately return to the apartment. George would wrap the curtain around himself and call the dog and sometimes he would stand in the courtyard totally naked and call for his dog. Of course this disturbed the other tenants. We did warn him in writing, but in the end we had to ask him to move. Another friendship down the drain.

Lisa, Her Boyfriend, the SWAT Team and Methamphetamines

Lisa was the adult daughter of some friends. We knew she had had some past problems in another state, but her parents begged us to rent to her. They even agreed to repair any damages caused by her. Being good friends, we gave in. The parents furnished the unit and it sat empty for six months. We were very happy because the rent was being paid and we thought, "This girl is never going to move in."

Well, we were mistaken. In month seven she did move in. Then a cat moved in. We sent her a letter asking her to remove the cat. She complied but traded the cat in for a boyfriend.

Then one morning we were phoned by the local police department. They had just completed a raid of the apartment with the SWAT team. The boyfriend had killed his father and they thought he might be staying in the apartment. The unit was destroyed and was uninhabitable due to the tear gas and pepper spray. We gave her notice to move.

Upon further inspection, we discovered that she and her boyfriend had been cooking meth in the unit. We ended up completely remediating the unit so a future tenant could move in. The cost exceeded \$7,000 for a small, one bedroom unit. Luckily, in this instance, her father had cosigned and paid for the clean up and repairs. The boyfriend, who had been in a meth funk when he killed his dad, turned himself in.

Conclusion

In conclusion, you cannot afford to treat your friends' kids any differently than you would treat any other tenant. You need to:

- Screen them, (credit, job, rental history, etc.)
- They probably need a larger security deposit
- If you bend the rules to let them in, then have the parents sign as cosigners and agree to repair all of the potential damages and rental loss.
- If the parents do not agree to cosign, they often have already had a bad experience, so why would you rent to their kids?
- As with all tenants, you need to inspect the property at least once a year, if not more often.
- Consider this – maybe you really don't want to rent to your friends or their kids.

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