



## Housing Headache

PLAINTIFF’S CONFIDENTIAL FACTS: Shannon

### **Shannon’s situation:**

Shannon is a single, working individual who rents out this house and one other as their only rental properties. Shannon relies on rental income to cover their own expenses and mortgage payments. They don’t charge a ton of fees and keep deposits reasonable (Kiran and Quinn’s was \$500). After paying for utilities and upkeep on the properties, they barely turn a profit on the houses and Shannon is not in a position to forgive tenant debts.

While Shannon is sympathetic to the difficult position Kiran is in, they are putting on a strong front to avoid being taken advantage of or losing money on this rental. Shannon has worked with past tenants in similar spots to create a payment plan but is hesitant to do so with a college student who lacks a steady income, and who might not be reliable. Shannon's primary concern is ensuring that the rent is paid in full, and can be flexible on the timing, but doesn’t want to get taken advantage of. Despite having empathy for Kiran, Shannon feels pressured to enforce the lease terms strictly to protect themselves.

### **Legal Concerns**

Legally, Shannon knows they are in a strong position because landlord-tenant laws typically hold each tenant jointly and severally liable for the full rent amount, and the lease agreement is clear on that front. However, Shannon is hesitant to take the dispute to court for several reasons. Litigation can be time-consuming, expensive, and stressful, which is particularly burdensome for a small-time landlord. Additionally, they have reservations about the collectability of a judgment against a college student with limited financial resources and no steady income, and they find the idea of suing a college kid morally problematic. That makes tracking down Quinn not really worthwhile either. Finally, taking Kiran to court could also damage Shannon’s reputation as a landlord within the college town community, making it harder to attract the college students they rely on as tenants in the future.

## **Shannon's "Tough Love" Advice**

Shannon genuinely wants to be a neighborly landlord and enjoys having SAU students live in the house. However, experience has taught them that student tenants often struggle with financial responsibilities and sometimes fail to properly care for the property. Quinn's sudden departure has reinforced Shannon's concerns about the reliability of student tenants. Shannon believes Kiran is a good kid, but thinks they need some "tough love" and need to take proactive steps to resolve the situation. In Shannon's view, this is a learning experience and might involve Kiran picking up a part-time job, making a tough call to their parents for help, or intensifying efforts to find a new roommate. While Shannon sympathizes with Kiran's predicament and wants to be reasonable, they also feel the need to ensure their own financial stability. Shannon tried to communicate these ideas to Kiran when they first discussed the situation, but Shannon didn't feel like Kiran was open to any of Shannon's solutions or advice.