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Thursday, June 30, 2005

To Whom It May Concern:

I was a resident of [...], Saint Petersburg, FL 33716 between June 13th 2004 and June 30th 2005. While the first eleven months of my stay at [Del Boca Vista] Apartments were relatively comfortable and trouble-free, the last five weeks were a series of disasters and quite frankly, extremely torturous. I write this letter to inform you of the grievances I experienced and request that you kindly make note of these in my renter/resident file. Before I go into the details of each incident, I would like to make it clear that I was an ideal renter, always paying my rent on time, never having a complaint filed against me, and not breaking any rules specified in my apartment contract. I also never complained about minor incidents and was very polite and patient during every incident.

At about 7:30am on May 22nd 2005, the exhaust fan in my apartment's bathroom caught fire. Noticing it was an electric fire I shut down the main electric supply in my apartment and called 911. The firefighters did a great job at containing and extinguishing the fire, however, much of the side-wall in the bathroom was badly burnt and so was the Linoleum floor. The exhaust fan had caught fire without a warning but I was informed by the fire department that it was very old and extremely clogged. I was told that the apartment complexes should regularly check for such conditions as they pose grave threats to the residents, their pets, and their belongings. [Del Boca Vista] has never asked me or sent qualified personnel to check the same.

Right after the 911 call, I informed the [Del Boca Vista] Emergency Maintenance and in about an hour, one of the [Del Boca Vista] Maintenance Personnel came over to my apartment to clean up the mess. Unfortunately, my entire apartment, along with all my electronic equipment and furniture was covered in a thick layer of ash/dust. One of my computers, worth \$950 was damaged beyond repair due to the airborne particles directly as a result of the fire. The Maintenance Personnel was very amicable and did a good job cleaning the bathroom.

However, even after letting the [Del Boca Vista] Office Department know about the fire in my bathroom, nobody came in for a week to fix the Linoleum floor that had melted due to the fire. When they did come, I was not informed that someone was going to be at my apartment that day. I returned from work to find all my dining area chairs strewed across the living room and so were a few items in my master bedroom. I panicked, thinking I was a victim of a break-in; however after a brief search of the apartment I realized that someone had, unbeknownst to me, entered my apartment and changed the Linoleum floor in the bathroom. While I appreciate the repairs, I certainly do not think it was appropriate to enter my apartment and move my furniture and belongings without notifying me.

The exhaust fan was replaced too, but there was a 2ft x 2ft hole in the surrounding wall as a result of which, my bathroom now became infested with flies and maggots. I informed the [Del Boca Vista] Office Department as soon as I could and asked someone to please come and close the wall opening, even if just to contain the flies temporarily. I was told Pest Control would come in and get rid of the problem. Three days and three sleepless nights killing flies later, I had to call again to make sure that someone came in to exterminate the flies. I was told someone will be there the next day. Personnel from Pest Control came in and presumably sprayed chemicals to kill the flies, however, three days later, I still had flies in every room in the apartment. I called up the [Del Boca Vista] Office and was told that it takes 24-48 hours for all the flies to die off. Six days after the spraying, I still had flies and now I noticed cockroaches in my bathroom, master bedroom, and kitchen. My apartment was always very clean and I don't leave foods strewn around in open. The pests were most definitely creeping into my apartment from the gaping hole in the bathroom wall that still wasn't fixed - three weeks after the fire!

On June 16th 2005, I was once again shocked to see my living room in disarray upon coming home from work. Somehow, while the roofers were renovating the building roof, the light globe under the dining area ceiling fan had fallen on my glass dining table and there were shards of broken glass all over my living room. Thankfully, my dining table did not break upon impact, however, the \$800 table's glass surface was scratched badly and tiny pieces of glass had penetrated the cloth material of all four of my \$230 chairs. Additionally, I noticed that my sofa, love seat, and coffee table were all covered in white foam-like material that had fallen from the ceiling. While it did not cost me anything to clean the furniture, I spent over 5 hours that night getting the debris and white spots off the sofa and love seat. [Del Boca Vista] Emergency Maintenance Personnel was once again quite friendly and helpful. He took photographs of the broken glass and proceeded to clean area. However, he was inefficient in removing pieces of glass from the carpet, despite the fact that I provided a vacuum cleaner and other equipment. I hurt my foot three times during the next week, two times bleeding profusely. I did my best to clean the carpet myself later.

Also someone had come in that same day to fix the bathroom wall - almost a month after the fire! Additionally I noticed new black screws in the ceiling above the dining area, so it is entirely possible that the roofers did not cause the light globe to fall but the persons who put in the screws did. Once again, I am appalled that someone can enter my apartment without informing me beforehand. I am not sure if it breaks any rules of the contract but it is most definitely rude and insulting.

Next day I unfortunately found out in the shower that the roofers had quite possibly severed the wiring that provided my apartment with hot water. Thankfully, the same day, the [Del Boca Vista] Maintenance Personnel came over and temporarily fixed my hot water heater by stringing a thick wire across my apartment - from the electric circuit box to the water heater - in the lobby between the kitchen and bedrooms. Call me clumsy but I tripped on the wire twice and hurt my hand once on the wall.

It was a pretty thick wire that wasn't laid down on the floor, but rather curved up and down 3 to 6 inches above the carpet, making it quite easy to trip over.

I emptied the apartment on June 25th 2005 and on June 29th 2005 deposited my two apartment keys, a gym room key, two mailbox keys, and a car parking tag. The apartment is currently empty and does not have any trash, waste material, or boxes. However, I was not able to clean it as thoroughly as I hoped to because I felt completely exhausted from dealing with all of the above-mentioned incidents. After endangering my life due to an early morning fire, life of my two kittens, losing a \$950 computer, dealing with infestation of flies, maggots, and cockroaches, getting my \$800 glass table badly scratched, \$2000 sofa-set stained, bleeding due to broken glass, and tripping over wires that do not conform to safety regulations, I think I've had enough.

I am aware of the fact that I did not necessarily clean the apartment as thoroughly as I should have, however, as I detailed above, [Del Boca Vista] Apartments had failed to provide me with safe, clean, and healthy living conditions for the last five weeks of my rental term. I have not raised any complaints against [Del Boca Vista] as I understand the problems were not intentionally caused by [Del Boca Vista] (fire, broken water heater etc.) however I think [Del Boca Vista] Office and Maintenance Departments are not without blame as failing to take due steps to prevent further problems caused me to deal with flies and cockroaches after the fire and failure to thoroughly clean the broken glass caused me to suffer injuries to my feet.

I don't think anyone can argue that I have been extremely cooperative and quite prompt in informing the respective authorities on damages, problems, or any such incidents. Additionally, despite experiencing deplorable living conditions for over a month while still paying full rent on time, I still do not expect [Del Boca Vista] Apartments to compensate me in cash or kind. I am not the type of person who seeks to make a fortune by bringing lawsuits against large companies be the cause right or wrong. I have moved out of the apartment and moved on in life after dealing with what I can only call a month-long rental nightmare.

The only thing I expect from [Del Boca Vista] Apartments at this point is to kindly do the same for me. Please let me move on without being billed for every minor cleaning requirement in the book, from \$25 for not defrosting the fridge to \$2 for not cleaning the window sills! I am well aware of the fact that I signed a contract saying I would clean everything in the apartment before I left and since I did not have a refundable security deposit I know I would normally be billed as per the Cleaning Charge List. However, I signed that letter on May 10th 2005, two weeks before the first problem ever started and I feel a post-traumatic amendment to the contract is in order from [Del Boca Vista]'s end.

All I'm requesting is this: Please do not send me a bill for failing to clean the apartment adequately because [Del Boca Vista] failed to provide me with safe and healthy living conditions. Once I get a letter specifying that I do not owe [Del Boca Vista] Apartments anything, I will more than willingly

put this issue to rest forever. However, if I am invoiced even as much as \$1 for failing to clean the apartment, rest assured that I will do my utter best to take every legal recourse to fight the monetary charges, which may result in complaints to the Better Business Bureau, Florida Health/Pest Control Department, online Apartment Rental forums (Rent.com, ApartmentGuide.com etc.) Once again, if I am billed despite everything that I horribly experienced at [Del Boca Vista], then I would not think twice about taking the entire issue to court.

Kindly note that I have absolutely no intention or desire to pursue this matter any further and would be more than satisfied to receive a letter from [Del Boca Vista] saying \$0 owed. I leave the ball in your court now and patiently await your response.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chirag Mehta". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above two parallel diagonal lines that extend to the right.

Chirag Mehta