



9AM MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2020

CONTACT: REDHOUSEONMISSISSIPPI@GMAIL.COM

Kinney family clears up misrepresentations and pushes through successful demands as the world watches

While slander of Afro-Indigenous Kinney family continues, Kinney family successfully demands Mayor's office to promise law enforcement will not take action against Red House occupants in exchange for reopening of city street

[Portland, Ore.] We are grateful for the support that people across the country and beyond have brought to the Kinney family's battle against gentrification in real time—and we couldn't be more energized to see what it looks like for a community to truly come together to support an Afro-Indigenous family. As we celebrate these big strides, it's important to clarify the huge forces that the Kinney family continues to be up against. In the past week we've seen public officials, Portland Police, and Multnomah County Sheriffs brutalize the Kinney brothers and Red House land defenders, desecrate the Kinney family fourth-generation home, and publicly decry an Afro-Indigenous led grassroots movement to set a target on the backs of the Kinney family and their supporters.

Mainstream local and national press have only fueled the fire of defamation and misrepresentation against the Kinney family. In recent days, OPB published an article that claimed the Kinneys had a second home, grossly mischaracterizing the family as being wealthy and untrustworthy. The family is devastated, not devious. They do not own a second home. Rather, they've been staying with extended family, at the Kinney siblings' grandmother's house. Their belongings are being kept in three different places. It is by no means a permanent living situation for them. The wooden sign Portland-based OPB reporter took a picture of as "evidence" of their slanderous assertion reads "The Kinney's" because the house belongs to William Kinney Sr. and Pauline Kinney, the grandparents of Michele, William, and Michael Kinney, and the great-grandparents to William III and Michele's children. To imply that all four generations of Kinneys must all live in the same home or be "second-home" owners is an absurd and racist double-standard in a society where it's common for adult children to live separately from their parents.

In addition to strikes against the family's character, press have zeroed in on eldest son William X Nietzsche in attempt to depict him as incompetent and criminal. In reality, he survived the harsh conditions of the US prison system as a young Afro-Indigenous child, where he first engaged with philosophy, read the dictionary front-to-back multiple times, taught himself law, and wrote and performed music for others. This was nearly 20 years ago. Continuing to point to his past in order to draw the spotlight away from the subject at hand—predatory lending practices and systematic displacement—is traumatizing, disrespectful, and racist. This week, for Wednesday's press conference, he was advised to suit up and professionalize for a global audience. He instead decided to stay true to himself and appear in everyday clothes as encouragement to Afro-Indigenous people across the world that you can assert your rights, even with all the cards stacked against you, as simply yourself.

This week's headlines also attempted to discredit the family's defense by conflating their legal approach with the white supremacist "sovereign citizen" movement, which is completely absurd and has no connection to the family's fight for Indigenous rights. This Afro-Indigenous family is reclaiming the land—invoking their right to self-determination and ancestral right to inhabit the land. "We have an inherent right to be here, and you displaced us," Julie Metcalf Kinney explains.

While it's been rumored across media outlets that developer Roman Ozeruga of Urban Housing Development has made an offer for the Kinneys to buy back their house, the family has yet to be contacted by the developer or his counsel. So while the Kinneys haven't yet heard from Roman Ozeruga to begin negotiations, the fact that he's come forward to media outlets does promise one thing for sure—he's feeling the heat. And that just wasn't possible three months ago when he initially enforced the family's eviction, or even days ago during Tuesday's police raid when he showed up onsite to secure the home.

Finally, the Red House has made the city government's agenda. On Tuesday, Mayor Ted Wheeler tweeted that he would authorize the Portland Police to "use all lawful means to end the illegal occupation on North Mississippi Avenue," a threat that incited further violence and even death threats onto the Kinney family and their supporters. Wheeler's office reached out to the Kinney family to beg that the barricades come down. Through a series of meetings, the family and Black and Brown eviction defense organizers raised their concerns to members of Wheeler's team. By Saturday, Mayor Wheeler was forced to change his tune. The family demanded a public apology be made, and a guarantee issued to ensure police will not encroach upon property and inflict further abuse and brutality upon Red House supporters. Mayor Wheeler conceded, releasing a public letter to apologize for the harm they caused the Kinney family, and to acknowledge the emotional violence caused by evictions against Black and Indigenous families.

We have no choice but to continue occupying the land for the Kinney family. While our demands have been pushed through at the governmental level and the family's story has reached a global audience, our fight is not over. The Kinneys have not yet secured their home. Developer Roman Ozeruga has yet to initiate any negotiations. The family's cases remain in litigation.

Today, we announce that we've begun the process of deconstructing the barricades surrounding the perimeter of our community eviction blockade, opening up Mississippi Avenue, Albina Avenue, and Prescott Street for traffic to flow and commerce to resume.

###

To see past news releases and find a PDF of this release: redhouseonmississippi.com/press.

redhouseonmississippi.com • redhouseonmississippi@gmail.com

Instagram: [@redhouseonmississippi](https://www.instagram.com/redhouseonmississippi) • Twitter: [@RHonMississippi](https://twitter.com/RHonMississippi) • GoFundMe: [gf.me/u/yyjwna](https://www.gofundme.com/u/yyjwna)