
Paul Stepnes,
Petitioner,
v.
Peter Ritschel, City of
Minneapolis, Minnesota,
Respondent.

Case No. _____

**EMERGENCY MOTION (TRO)
AND PETITION FOR RETURN OF
PROPERTY AND OTHER RELIEF**

BACKGROUND¹

2857irving.com is a website that allows the entrant to pay \$20 to state the number of screws/bolts in a chest. The prize? A newly-built dream house or one million dollars. (See screen shots at Clark Aff. **Exh. A** - “The Project”). This website allows someone who is not rich, to have a dream house. It is a creative way to deal with the blows that small real estate developers have been dealt in the housing crash. It is an imaginative way to weather the mortgage crisis. It was intended to put money in the hands of a non-profit and eventually help the homeless. It was a way for a “little guy” to take back some power. It may have angered rich and powerful people and corporations. But that does not make it criminal.

On May 24, 2008, the StarTribune ran an article on the house contest. (Clark Aff. **Exh. B**). The following Wednesday, May 28, 2008, Sgt. Ritschel of the Minneapolis Police Licensing Investigations unit, came into the dream house without consent to enter and without any warrant. Evidence of the lack of consent included a sign that said “ring bell to enter” (or similar).

Sgt. Ritschel confronted Stepnes with a conclusion – that he was engaged in unlawful gambling. He not interview Stepnes, but when Stepnes said something to the effect that he was doing nothing wrong, that he had discussed The Project with the head of the State Gambling Board, the head of the Senate Legal Department, and Senator Scott Dibble. Rather than calling

¹ Stepnes is prepared to put on all this evidence at an evidentiary hearing, but his counsel did not ask him to sign an affidavit for this motion. (Clark Aff. ¶2).