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October 10, 2011, 11:01 A.M.

'Evicted in Colorado' photographer

Photographer John Moore, who shot the photos for the [Evicted in Colorado](#) photo gallery, answered questions about the photos and their backstory.

The photos show officers from the Weld County sheriff's department Brandie Barbieri and her family from their home in Miliken, Colo. Barbieri said she had stopped making the mortgage payments 11 months before, after she lost more than half her home child care business due to the economy.

The Discussion

Oct 10, 2011

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John Moore :

Hello all, this is John Moore and I'm a Denver-based staff photographer for Getty Images. Last week I covered a foreclosure in a little northern Colorado town called Miliken, where the Barbieri family was evicted. This is part of a long term project I've been doing for Getty on the national housing crisis.

– October 10, 2011 10:57 AM

About the photos

[From a Post staffer]: John, can you tell us how you wound up at this house in [Miliken, Colo.](#), and how you got these photos?

– October 10, 2011 10:52 AM

JOHN MOORE :

In Colorado, evictions are all supervised by county sheriff's departments. In the last few years, I have worked through four or five different counties' sheriff's departments, going out with their deputies as they serve evictions and supervise the event. In this case, it was Weld County. The deputy had three evictions scheduled that morning. The first house was empty, so that went quick. The third one was cancelled. This second one was the Barbieres.

– October 10, 2011 11:00 AM

What's the back story?

A question from the comments on the photo gallery:

"I know there's a bigger story here, but there is something strange ... about the plight of the Barbieres, as shown in the pictures. I feel really sorry for the husband. His wife never told him she stopped making mortgage payments almost a year ago!?"

– October 10, 2011 10:49 AM

JOHN MOORE :

Every foreclosure has it's own particulars. Yes, in this case it was tough that she hadn't told her husband Dan. Her home day care business had lost most of its clients, and she couldn't bring herself to tell him she was failing. She told me she was embarrassed and ashamed, and as the months went on, it became harder for her to tell him. He was furious when he came home and found all the family's possessions in the yard.

– October 10, 2011 11:02 AM

What happened next

What happened to the family next? Where did they spend the night? Where are they now?

– October 10, 2011 10:51 AM

JOHN MOORE :

Brandie, the wife, called a few people, including her parents, to come over and help out. It took them a couple hours to get there, but her parents had a large flatbed truck, so they loaded it up to move all thier to a friend's house. The Barbieres stayed the night at her parents' house. Brandie told me that she had actually already lined up a rental house before, but had thought they would have another few days to clear out and misjudged it.

– October 10, 2011 11:06 AM

Photo of toddler at top of stairs

[From a Post staffer]: John, one commenter in the thread asked about [photo No. 8](#) in the gallery, the one of the toddler at the top of the stairs. How did you get that shot? The commenter (joking, we assume) said it was so good that it looked staged!

– October 10, 2011 11:03 AM

JOHN MOORE :

ha, staging pix is not my deal - especially putting a toddler at the top of the stairs! imagine. truth is, that little boy was crawling all around, and the daughter, 2 1/2, was running around so much as the eviction team was moving heavy furnature, i was a little worried one would get stepped on. while i was out on the driveway, i was trying to keep the girl from riding her bigwheel out into the street. the

deputy, mary, also made child control a priority. the mother brandie was frazzled and trying to pack up any sentimental items she could.

– October 10, 2011 11:10 AM

Eviction notices

Commenter **SilverSpring2** asked if the Barberies had received any other eviction notices earlier ...

– October 10, 2011 11:05 AM

JOHN MOORE :

yes, the sheriff's dept. always puts out a notice on the door at least a week beforehand. in this case, i believe the deputy Mary Schwartz had done it herself.

– October 10, 2011 11:11 AM

The kids in the photos

[From a Post staffer]: Many commenters on the gallery expressed concern for the children. How did they cope with the eviction after the initial shock?

– October 10, 2011 11:07 AM

JOHN MOORE :

the daughter, 2 1/2, saw it as something of an adventure. she and the toddler are just too young to know really what was happening. the older boy, in second grade, found out when his dad went to walk him home from school and explain the situation to him. still, he handled it fine, at least during the time i was there. my guess is that the parents had a lot more explaining to do later on, especially to the older child.

– October 10, 2011 11:13 AM

Walking away

It is scenes like this that make me think it is "better" to walk away from a mortgage with some cash on hand to rent something, as opposed to spending every cent you have on a house, only to eventually lose it and ruin your credit as well. Credit ratings eventually heal. Children being traumatized by eviction, maybe not.

– October 10, 2011 11:06 AM

JOHN MOORE :

it's all very tricky. someone was telling me the other day of a lawyer-judge couple who had walked away from a \$750 thousand home, which was underwater, and moved into a \$ 1 million house, and done it before the first one was foreclosed on, so they traded up. then, in that position, they negotiated with the bank for a settlement on the first house. i can't confirm this story, but obviously, people who are educated on how to work the system have done so. others who don't know, well, we see what happens to them.

– October 10, 2011 11:17 AM

Family

Did you feel any bit exploitative at all, photographing such an embarrassing yet intimate moment for the family? How did they react to your presence?

– October 10, 2011 11:16 AM

JOHN MOORE :

I think that is a fair question. every time i go to a house eviction with a deputy, I always tell the owner/tenant who I am and that I am working on a long-term photo project on the housing crisis. I always ask them if it is ok for me to stay and photograph. I tell them i know it is a very difficult time, but i would appreciate it if i could stay, as lots of Americans are going through this and I think it's important to show that the best I can. Most people, believe it or not, have said yes. Most ask me for the links so they can see the photos later. All of them have been very generous to me and I'm thankful for that. Is it hard for me to stand there and watch what happens - absolutely.

– October 10, 2011 11:22 AM

What happens next?

After all their belongings are thrown into the front yard, what happens to anything they cannot take with them? Was there any apparent support from the neighbors?

– October 10, 2011 11:08 AM

JOHN MOORE :

In this case, her parents had a large flatbed truck, where they could haul things off to a friend's place, where there was storage space. They probably had to make two trips. A neighbor held the toddler towards the end of the eviction, after the bassinet was removed to the yard. In all these cases, someone needs to stay with the things outside, until they can move them to storage. Although the sheriff's dept. gives them 48 hours to get their things out of the yard, if no one is watching, scavengers will come and pick it clean. you see them driving around, slowing down.

– October 10, 2011 11:25 AM

Other related photo projects

[From a Post staffer]: John, you said you are working on a series about the national housing crisis. What other sorts of scenes have you been shooting, and which of them have been most interesting for you and/or readers?

– October 10, 2011 11:17 AM

JOHN MOORE :

I did a lot of this work back in 09', a little last year, and have started again in earnest in the last month. When i first started the project, i was stumped on how to get access to the actual evictions, but ultimately

found a way through the various sheriff's departments. In addition, I have photographed foreclosure workshops, usually put on by counties or sponsored by U.S. congressmen from Colorado. These events help educate people who are behind in their mortgage on how to avoid foreclosure. They sometimes also put the homeowners in face to face meetings with their lenders/bankers, and they work out a deal. I have also spent time in homeless shelters with families who have ended up there after losing their homes. I've also spent time in the wretched pay-per-week motels where some families end up. They end up paying much more this way, but the motels don't require deposits, so they can get in.

– October 10, 2011 11:32 AM

Was this fair?

[From a Post staffer]: John, commenter **yvondupuis** wrote:

"You should not put kids out on the street, if the parents did something wrong. The children need stability and reassurance that everything will be OK and that they will have a roof over their heads and food on the table. "

Do you agree based on what you have seen covering the housing crisis?

– October 10, 2011 11:21 AM

JOHN MOORE :

I think that it takes a cold-hearted person to say that any child deserves to be put on the street. We all know that government services exist in every state that can keep that from happening, although some states have better and more accessible services than others, either through the government or charity organizations. That said, children are the wards of their parents, and if the parents find themselves in a tough economic bind, they have to find out what services they can use to get by, until they get back on their feet, if you will. Problem is, it's hard for parents to think clearly when they are in an economic tailspin, and some have a hard time figuring out what help is out there. In this case, these kids were not going to end up on the street. They went to their grandparents' house.

– October 10, 2011 11:38 AM

Jon DeNunzio :

Lots of good questions out there. Nice to chat with all of you about a story that was tough and very saddening for me to cover.

– October 10, 2011 11:41 AM