

The Star-Ledger

Newark land deals | Letters



By [Letters to the Editor/The Star-Ledger](#)

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Marylou & Jerome Bongiorno, Newark

The authors are the filmmakers of PBS' Revolution '67, The Rule, and the upcoming Rust.

This letter is in response to Mark DiIonno's "\$1,000 and a dream in Newark" [column](#) published Saturday.

Historian Dr. Kenneth Jackson in our Revolution '67 documentary states:

"In the late '70s and '80s, there was a big, thick book of properties for auction in Newark. They'd been foreclosed, abandoned. And many, many of those houses were available for \$25 down and a total payment of \$100. Now, that's how bad things got. To think that somehow you could take over large swatches of the city for a pittance, it tells you something about where the city had sunk."

The "Valentine's Day Deal" is the current version of the Jackson defined "takeover of large swatches of the city for a pittance." It is not a sign of any renewal in Newark, but a sad testament to where our city has sunk.

What Newark needs is not some chaotic, willy-nilly, land grab deal; it needs a committed, dedicated program of poverty reduction. Until then, the city will not improve.

And, if anyone thinks Newark will keep tabs on whether buyers adhere to any pre-established rules of purchase, just look at how the city has enforced the illegal poster ordinance for the last elections: the posters still pollute the poles of our city today.

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