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Outrage in city shelters

Homeless men put in condemned bldg.

EXCLUSIVE

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THE BLOOMBERG administration moved 26 formerly homeless men into an apartment building that was in such disrepair it later had to be condemned — forcing the men back into shelters and possibly onto the streets.

Contractors hired by the Department of Homeless Services moved the men to Brooklyn between July and September from the city's famous Camp LaGuardia as part of a push to close the sprawling upstate shelter.

But the Buildings Department slapped the Marcy Ave. apartment building with a vacate order on March 7. Inspectors deemed the building an "imminent danger to the life and safety of the occupants."

"The entire building, from basement to attic, is illegally converted into [single-room occupancy apartments] with a large number of bunk beds, without secondary means of egress," the order stated.

The home had 20 open housing code violations, and most

were classified as hazardous — including mice, unlawful conversions and no hot water. The building also has no kitchen.

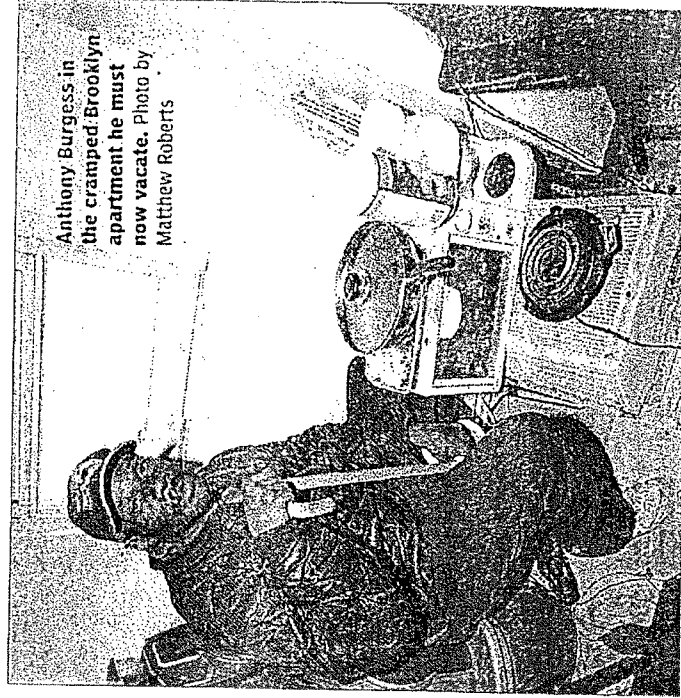
As of Friday, half of the 26 men who had been bused to the house from Camp LaGuardia between July and September had moved back into other city shelters. But the other half were no longer accounted for by the city, according to a statement from the Department of Homeless Services.

Patrick Markee, a senior policy analyst with the Coalition for the Homeless, said he feared the Marcy Ave. building wasn't the only unsafe building being used for housing men who had been cleared from shelters by the city.

City Hall has relocated about 400 of the men who were living at Camp LaGuardia in Chester and about 285 men remain there, said the Department of Homeless Services.

Markee said his organization has a list of 28 unlicensed homes where the agency has referred homeless adults. At least 20 men are likely to be living in each building, he said.

"These are places that homeless men have been sent to in



Anthony Burgess in the cramped Brooklyn apartment he must now vacate. Photo by Matthew Roberts

vans," he said. "They've been driven by the shelter to these unlicensed homes."

As a result of the Marcy Ave. incident, the Bloomberg administration changed its policy. Department of Homeless Services spokeswoman Tanya Valle-Batista said.

"We don't want any of our formerly homeless clients living in

potentially unsafe housing," Valle-Batista said in a statement noting that the Department of Health is responsible for inspecting and licensing adult homes.

"We're pleased oversight agencies were able to catch potential safety hazards. We are instructing our providers not to refer clients to unlicensed, adult group homes." tmoores@nydailynews.com