

# Face foreclosure to meet legal bill, judge rules

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*This article has been updated to correct what the judge ruled: Nicole Curtis' homes could face foreclosure to meet her legal bill.*

Pontiac — Nicole Curtis, “The Rehab Addict” of HGTV home renovation fame, is responsible for \$32,438 in delinquent attorney fees, which if not paid, could result in two of her properties in Lake Orion where she grew up and went to school being sold to meet the bill, a judge ruled Tuesday.

Judge Denise Langford Morris of Oakland County Circuit Court affirmed an order she issued in February that the properties could be foreclosed on to meet a default judgment on Curtis and to pay attorney fees owed to Kurt E. Schnelz, who had a lien placed on the homes.

“We have no comment,” said Curtis, 42, when reached Tuesday by The Detroit News.

Her attorney, James Rasor, said while he was disappointed at the ruling, he and his client would review their options, including whether to file an appeal, or simply pay off the bills.

“This is a very insubstantial amount and we aren’t worried about the (financial) repercussions,” said Rasor. “But there are some ethical concerns including the filing of these liens on property that is considerably more valuable. There was no reason to go after two of her properties, other than to harass her.

“I have found Nicole very trustworthy and she has a long track record of working with many contractors with great success,” Rasor said. “If not, she wouldn’t have the reputation she enjoys.”

According to court filings and Schnelz’s attorney, Curtis had sought to have the earlier default judgment set aside, claiming she had been overbilled by Schnelz three years earlier when he helped negotiate a settlement with her ex-boyfriend, Shane McGuire.

Curtis, who lists a Studio City, California, address in court filings, also lived at a house she was rehabbing on East Grand Boulevard in Detroit.

“At one point, she threatened to contact national tabloid magazines and ruin his (Schnelz) reputation if we didn’t dismiss the complaint,” Elliott said. “We have since learned she has had a history of not paying her legal bills.

“(Schnelz) is among the best of the best (lawyers) in Michigan and didn’t deserve this.”

Rasor said “there is no proof anything like that (threat) ever occurred.”

“I’m shocked and dismayed that Mr. Elliott would want to make this about her character,” said Rasor. “I found her to be upstanding. And I can tell you, my bills have always been paid.”

Langford Morris appointed attorney David Findling as a receiver on two addresses on Highland Avenue and Bellevue in Lake Orion, a northern Oakland County suburb where Curtis graduated from Lake Orion High School.

Rasor said he did not know who resides in the homes, which have both had major renovation work. Findling would oversee the sale of both at auction, Langford Morris ruled.

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