LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR
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UNDER LAW

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Editorial Office
The Atlantic
The Watergate
600 New Hampshire Ave, N.W.
Washington, DC 20037

RE: "American Murder Mystery"

Dear Editorial Staff:

In her article, "American Murder Mystery," Hanna Rosin would indict 40 years of federal housing programs with a single case study. However, when stripped of Rosin's portentous gloss, the article's content is neither surprising nor significant: low-income families face challenges if they are involuntarily removed from familiar communities by public housing demolition and re-concentrated in isolated housing in moderately poor and predominantly segregated neighborhoods where schools are inadequate and employment opportunities are limited and difficult to access. Crime is certainly an issue facing poor communities, but what Ms. Rosin fails to point out is that most of these relocated families are potential victims of crime in these communities, not perpetrators.

This reality is precisely why organizations like the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law and the Poverty & Race Research Action Council advocate for housing opportunity programs that promote racial integration, provide mobility counseling, and offer low-income families the option to move to jurisdictions with high-performing schools and plentiful jobs (usually the suburbs in today's metropolitan landscapes). To the extent this unfortunate article has anything useful to say, it serves only to remind us that these kinds of programs are more important than ever.

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