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WHERE IS MY LAND HELPS THE POWERS FAMILY FIGHT AGAINST A WATER COMPANY TO GAIN ACCESS TO THEIR LAND

Jacques and Angeletta Powers are the owners of 2.5 acres of land uniquely located in the historic San Bernardino National Forest with ocean and mountain views overlooking San Bernardino, Los Angeles, and Catalina Island with water share rights. The Powers are partnering with Where Is My Land (WIML) to help them gain access to their land and stop the Water Company's theft of the water source that runs below it.

"America, how disheartened I am because we are still oppressed by white supremacy. I cannot live, but I cannot choose death. I must tell this tragic story of our experience," says Jacques Powers.

In 2003, the Powers purchased land from Roy Hill. Mr. Hill owned the property for 13 years and during the period of his ownership used the now-disputed road to access his property. Since 1979, the Water Company has erroneously claimed ownership of the disputed road. However, the Water Company recorded in its own board minutes, from 1997 that the right to the land was not exclusive because of Roy Hill's usage. The Water Company's board minutes also stated that Roy Hill "used the telephone company to get our gate open" and the "deputy refused to enforce our 'no trespassing signs.'"

In 2004, San Bernardino County vacated the southern portion of Waterman Canyon Road explaining that *"the general public and all other property owners along Waterman Canyon Road will continue to have legal access by utilizing the northern one-half of Waterman Canyon Road."*

Subsequently, the Water Company purchased the property in the same subdivision from other property owners, attempting to purchase all the land in the subdivision because of the abundant water rights. In 2006, the Water Company paid both property owners on the side of the Powers' property \$5,000 to create an easement (which grants an entity access to use a piece of property that belongs to another individual or entity) across the disputed road and erected a locked gate to block the entry point to the Powers' land. Before the creation of the easement, the road was already designated as public and was used by others.

After 20 years of legal battles, hostility, and being subjected to violence, the Powers' exhausted their legal avenues when their appeal to the California Supreme Court was denied. The Supreme Court granted the Water Company a permanent injunction declaring the Water Company as the legal owner of the (disputed road) easement and stopped the Powers from using the easement, consequently blocking any ability to use and access their own property. During the two decades of battle with the Water Company, Mr. Powers has been shot at, threatened with guns, called a 'n*gger,' and has had his equipment stolen and vandalized. The Powers are one of the few property owners who have not sold their land to the Water Company. Since the Water Company was emboldened by judicial corruption that barred the Powers from entry to the land, the Water Company has made obscenely low purchase offers to the Powers. Although the Powers rightfully owned the 2.5 acres of land, the Water Company has stolen thousands of dollars of the Powers' water and violated their water rights by the unauthorized rerouting of the water source beneath the Powers' land for the Water Company's use.

"Private companies have long taken advantage of individual landowners for their own capitalistic gains. The Powers Family deserves full access to their land and water rights and are owed exponentially for what they've endured over the last two decades", says Dreisen Heath, Advocacy and Policy Lead for WIML.

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