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What's Behind The Year's Biggest Spike in Mortgage Rates?

The term "**taper tantrum**" refers to the market movements that took place in mid-2013 as the Federal Reserve increasingly confirmed it would begin reducing the amount of bonds it was buying under its quantitative easing ("QE") program. Because QE targeted Treasuries and mortgage-backed-securities, it had a profound effect on mortgage rates, bringing them to all-time lows in the fall of 2012.

May and June of 2013 were the worst two months in modern economic history for mortgage rates in terms of the pace of movement. Ironically, it wasn't until the European Central Bank (ECB) began work on **its own QE plan** in April 2014 that rates finally began to make a meaningful recovery.

The connection between European policy and US interest rates may **seem** counterintuitive, but there is a strong correlation between the government bonds of the world's biggest economies. If there was to be a huge, guaranteed source of demand for European bonds, then US bonds would experience some of the benefit.

The remainder of 2014 consequently saw rates move progressively lower in anticipation of European QE. By the time ECB QE was officially approved in early 2015, rates were once **again approaching all-time lows**. The rest of 2015 would serve as the market's opportunity to catch its breath before continuing the trend in 2016.

The case of QE in the US taught us that rates could continue falling as long as central bank bond-buying was either steady or potentially expanding. As soon as the Fed indicated QE was "steady or potentially contracting," it marked a **sea-change** for the rate environment.

Investors are now **anxiously awaiting** a similar big-picture shift in European bond-buying. Even though European officials have denied having those conversations, an article from earlier this week cited anonymous officials as saying there was consensus on the need to consider reducing the pace of bond-buying.

Whether or not the sources were accurate, the **proverbial can of worms** has been opened. Markets are ready to pounce on even the smallest hint of confirmation out of Europe. To that end, the European Central Bank announcement on October 20th could be a focal point for volatility.

National Average Mortgage Rates



	Rate	Change	Points
Mortgage News Daily			
30 Yr. Fixed	7.07%	+0.02	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.45%	0.00	0.00
30 Yr. FHA	6.51%	+0.02	0.00
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.26%	0.00	0.00
5/1 ARM	7.02%	-0.01	0.00

Freddie Mac

30 Yr. Fixed	6.86%	-0.01	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.16%	+0.03	0.00

Rates as of: 6/28

Market Data

	Price / Yield	Change
MBS UMBS 6.0	99.98	-0.19
MBS GNMA 6.0	100.20	-0.13
10 YR Treasury	4.4737	+0.0757
30 YR Treasury	4.6393	+0.0753

Pricing as of: 7/1 10:46AM EST

Recent Housing Data

		Value	Change
Mortgage Apps	Jun 12	208.5	+15.58%
Building Permits	Mar	1.46M	-3.95%
Housing Starts	Mar	1.32M	-13.15%
New Home Sales	Mar	693K	+4.68%
Pending Home Sales	Feb	75.6	+1.75%
Existing Home Sales	Feb	3.97M	-0.75%
Builder Confidence	Mar	51	+6.25%

US Housing Market Weekly

Between now and then, the mood is definitely defensive. Even after the big jobs report came in weaker than expected this week, rates refused to come down from the highest levels in more than 3 months. If we look at 10yr Treasury yields (the best proxy for general momentum in longer-term rates like mortgages), we can see a new trend taking shape, and potentially breaking an important ceiling (roughly 1.73%).

10yr Treasury Yields



Despite the doom and gloom, **perspective** is easy to find in the bigger picture. After all, during almost any other time in history, today's mortgage rates would be all-time lows. It's only in relation to the "low 3's" in July that today's "mid 3's" seem anything other than stellar.

It's also worth keeping in mind that financial markets will **never** move in a straight line. Some say the lowest rates are behind us, but that's a premature conclusion as long as we continue to operate in the broader downtrend seen in the following chart. That said, **even if** rates go on to make new all-time lows in the future, periodic corrections toward higher rates are **inevitable**. The severity and duration of such corrections are the only uncertainties.

10yr Treasury Yields



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Real Talk

At The Rate Shop, we're not your average mortgage banker. We specialize in bringing you ridiculously low interest rates that will make you wonder what the other guys are doing. In fact the ONLY objection we ever hear is "your rates sound too good to be true". Well they're not, and here is why...

After 15 years in the retail banking world I was frustrated with the high interest rates that came from that business model. As I looked around at all the bloated layers of management and their expensive salaries and the overhead of running a larger company (think rent costs, employee health and benefit costs, payroll taxes, and on and on) it dawned on me that I was a part of the problem, and the solution, for me at least, was so easy to see.

Start my own mortgage brokerage shop. No expensive executive salaries, no expensive building to pay rent at, no unnecessary employees and all the costs that are associated with that. What happens when you cut out all the fat? You can provide lower rates and lower closing costs. It's simple. Now here is the best part, you still get great service from a local Kansas City Lender. My mission is to let everyone know that low rates and great customer service are NOT mutually exclusive.

Thanks for coming along on this journey where Low Rates meet Great Service. The two do NOT have to be mutually exclusive. It's just a lie that the big box mortgage companies have been telling you for years. Don't believe me? Give me a call or shoot me a text on my personal cell phone today and compare my rates and costs up against any other lender in the country, and be prepared to be blown away.

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