

Evicting evicter Steve Croman



EDITORIALS

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New digs (ALEC TABAK/FOR NEW YORK DAILY NEWS)

For decades, landlord Steve Croman made a lucrative career out of bullying tenants to vacate rent-stabilized apartments so he could hike up their price. If a judge accepts his plea deal, he will live for a year at the city's least desirable address, Rikers Island.

Not because of his alleged intimidation tactics against tenants, which remain the subject of a civil action by Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, but because Schneiderman mounted a criminal fraud case showing Croman lied to his bankers, convincing them to overlend, by claiming he was raking in sky-high market rents .

It goes to show just how tough it is to convict landlords for harassment, and how important that the attorney general, working hand in glove with Gov. Cuomo's Tenant Protection Unit at the state Department of Housing and Community Renewal, invested resources in investigating and prosecuting Croman's notorious abuses.

The fall of the mightiest of New York City's eviction-machine landlords sends a loud and clear signal to other property owners tempted to illegally rid their buildings of longtime residents:

The cops on the beat are watching. And they will not allow tenant harassment to pass unaddressed.

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