

He Didn't Jaywalk, But He Did Just About Everything Else!

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By *Mary Ann Miller & Cynthia Chaffee*

On June 6th of this year, when Judge Jill Konviser sentenced landlord Steve Croman to one year at Rikers Island, she added this admonishment, “If you so much as jaywalk, I’ll make sure this sentence is increased.”

The Croman tenants at the sentencing hearing that morning thought, “Finally, here is a judge who is not landlord-friendly.” We were wrong.

Will Croman’s very high-priced lawyers, Benjamin Brafman and Joel Cohen, keep getting him a stay of sentencing? On September 19th, Judge Jill, at the request of Croman’s lawyers, granted a stay of sentencing over the objections of the Attorney General’s prosecutors so that Croman could spend the Jewish High Holy Days at his temple instead of Rikers.

What’s next? Columbus Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years, Groundhog Day?

The judge also allowed Croman to pay his \$5 million fine in installments—a kind of lay away plan like when you buy a couch. Three million down, a million at the end of this year, and another million next year.

Let the punishment fit the crime.

We heard of a case where a young black man stole a tie from Macy’s. His sentence? You got it, a year in Rikers. What could a tie cost—\$5, \$10, \$20 maybe—if it’s silk? Steve Croman got, from his wheeling and dealing, \$45 million, and his fine is only \$5 million (in installments). That gives Croman a gain of \$40 million!

Or has this light sentencing come from seven floors below, from Criminal Court Judge Roger Hayes, uncle to Mrs. Steve Croman? Did Jolly Roger intervene? I'm sure we'll never know.

Steve Croman spent this past summer at his mansion in Sagaponack, Long Island and will most likely spend next summer there too, even though his tenants suffered with a lack of heat, hot water, gas, etc.

Stay tuned for the outcome of Croman's October 3rd sentencing (at the New York County Criminal Court) in the November issue of *Westview*.

Mary Ann Miller and Cynthia Chaffee are founders of the Stop Croman Coalition, which was established on Bastille Day, July 14, 2007.