

Report: Steve Croman will be Released from Prison Next Month

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Steve Croman on Mott Street, Feb. 2017

Controversial landlord Steve Croman pleaded guilty in June 2017 (<http://www.boweryboogie.com/2017/06/slumlord-steve-croman-is-headed-to-rikers-must-pay-5m-settlement/>) to three felonies and settled a civil case with embattled tenants. He was sentenced to one year in jail on Riker's Island for the criminal charges, and forced to pay a \$5 million tax settlement, plus an \$8 million restitution fund. In reality, though, Croman didn't serve in maximum-security prison (<https://www.boweryboogie.com/2017/10/time-tombs-steve-cromans-inmate-record/>), but in the **Manhattan Detention Center Complex** in Chinatown (aka The Tombs), according to the *New York Times* (<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/05/20/nyregion/affordable-housing-nyc.html>).

Croman will be released from custody next month, having done his time.

The news came through as a thread in an epic, interactive long-read by the so-called Paper of Record in its investigation of rent deregulation around the city. There is specific focus on many landlords, buildings, and neighborhoods, yet the tactics exposed are all the same. Textbook actions seen many times around the Lower East Side. *The Times* singles out Steve Croman as one of the worst offenders, and somewhat of a political scape-goat, noting that he was the "exception" when it came to punishing those landlords who harass.

The exception is Mr. Croman, accused in 2016 of intimidating tenants with a private investigator and turning buildings into hazardous construction sites. Those were civil charges, brought by the state attorney general. An accompanying criminal case charged him not with harassment but with 20 felonies, stemming, in part, from allegations that might have sprung from a developer's magical thinking: To secure loans, prosecutors charged, he claimed that stabilized apartments were actually renting at market rate.

Eventually, Mr. Croman pleaded guilty to three felonies and settled the civil case. He agreed to pay a \$5 million tax settlement and set up an \$8 million restitution fund. And while he was sentenced to only a year in jail — he had faced up to 25 — he was supposed to go to the crowded and dangerous Rikers Island jail complex.

Mr. Croman did not go to Rikers. Instead, he ended up at the Manhattan Detention Complex in Chinatown — more convenient for family and friends.

He is to be released next month. His company still owns its buildings, though the state monitors them, as part of his settlement. And his buildings and contractors have continued to rack up violations; as of April, they owed almost \$875,000, records show. Since his arrest, 123 of 139 permit applications identified by The Times were self-certified.

A spokesman for his company, Sam Spokony, declined to answer questions but said the company was “diligently implementing” the settlement, “in line with our ongoing focus on using best practices to provide quality housing for our residents.”

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