

## Payback! Croman has to give tenants \$8M for harassment

October 11, 2018 | Filed under: News,Community | Posted by: The Villager



Landlord Steve Croman, left, leaving Manhattan Supreme Court with his lawyer, Benjamin Brafman, in May 2017, just weeks before Croman would take a plea deal, agreeing to a one-year jail sentence. Photo by Jefferson Siegel

**BY SYDNEY PEREIRA** | Tenants of apartments owned by Steve Croman have until Nov. 4 to apply for restitution.

After the New York State Attorney General's Office secured an \$8 million settlement against notorious landlord Croman late last year, A.G. Barbara Underwood is encouraging tenants to file a claim if they lived in a Croman-owned building.

Eligible tenants must have lived in a rent-stabilized or rent-controlled apartment owned by Croman between July 1, 2011, and December 20, 2017. Former tenants who received a buyout for less than \$20,000 are also eligible.

"Again and again, Steve Croman acted as though he was above the law," Underwood said in a statement. "My office has secured an unprecedented \$8 million settlement for Croman's illegal tenant harassment, coercion and fraud — the largest-ever settlement with an individual landlord."

Tenants who believe they are eligible can file a claim by mail with the Croman Tenant Restitution Fund, c/o JND Legal Administration, P.O. Box 91349, Seattle, WA, 98111, or contact the fund at 1-833-898-4009 or by e-mail at [info@cromanrestitutionfund.com](mailto:info@cromanrestitutionfund.com). More information is available at [www.cromanrestitutionfund.com](http://www.cromanrestitutionfund.com).

The payment will be split evenly between eligible tenants, and checks will be sent out once the A.G.'s office knows how many claimants there are, according to a spokesperson. Money will be sent to tenants in installments over a period of 38 to 42 months, according to the A.G.'s office.

“I encourage eligible tenants to submit a claim by Nov. 4, so they can receive the restitution they deserve,” Underwood said. “We will continue to aggressively pursue predatory landlords to the fullest extent of the law.”

In addition to the tenants’ \$8 million restitution fund, according to the settlement, more than 100 of Croman’s properties will be run by new independent management for five years and be expected to report to the A.G.’s office for seven years — which, according to the A.G., is the longest-ever monitoring in a tenant-harassment case.

A second criminal case sentenced Croman to a year in jail and a \$5 million penalty.

Croman ultimately served eight months in Lower Manhattan’s jail, “The Tombs,” for fraudulently refinancing loans and tax fraud. He was released this past June.

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