

BEWARE CROMAN (A.K.A. 9300) REALTY!!

A BLOG PROVIDING INFORMATION ABOUT MANHATTAN LANDLORD CROMAN REALTY, ALSO KNOWN AS 9300 REALTY INC. WRITTEN BY FORMER CROMAN TENANTS FOR PROSPECTIVE CROMAN TENANTS.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2009

Our Experience with Croman

In this post, I aim to convey aspects of our 4-year experience with Croman that prospective tenants may find useful in deciding whether to rent from Croman/9300. I encourage other tenants / past tenants to submit their own stories.

Erroneous Late Notices

Rent is due by the 5th of each month, and our payments were timely submitted (and deposited by Croman) each month for four years. Nevertheless, most months we received a statement from Croman alleging that we owed them more rent and late fees. On occasion, they even threatened legal action. These erroneous bills were especially horrible to deal with because the chance of actually getting a Croman employee on the line (other than the receptionist) is very low. Most months, we had to waste time making many phone calls and leaving multiple messages to set the record straight. Ultimately I sent an email to a Croman employee alerting him to this pattern of erroneous late notices and insisting that they cease immediately. Unsurprisingly, they did not.

The following is the April 2009 email:

**

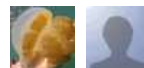
I am writing in regards to a late notice received for the apartment at []. The notice says we are delinquent for the payment due April 1st of this year for the amount of \$2.345.

This notice is in error. The rent due for that month cleared each tenant's bank account by the due date. Moreover, I have called the Accounting Office several times to deal with this matter in a timely fashion. **No one is ever available.** I understand that you are all very busy, but **we have received a similar letter almost every month despite the fact that we have never been delinquent with payment.**

We have advised you many times to stop sending erroneous late

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notices to our apartment. Yet despite our best efforts to notify you of this continuing problem, you have done nothing to make the problem go away. **This is unacceptable.**

Please let me know when you successfully remove this charge.

Thank you.

**

It's unclear whether these notices were merely the result of incompetence, or whether Croman actually intended to extract money from us that we didn't owe. We do know, however, that Croman sent similar notices to our neighbors (who also claimed they timely paid) on a regular basis. Needless to say, no landlord should harass its tenants in this manner.

Moving Out of the Apartment

When we moved out, we coordinated with Croman regarding their responsibilities to the new tenants. They informed us that they had to come clean and paint the apartment by a particular time. We vacated the apartment at a mutually agreed-upon time, 3:00 PM on the last day of our lease. However, when we returned to the apartment several hours later to see if anyone had come, we discovered it untouched.

This wouldn't be remarkable if not for what they told us later. In discussions about the return of our security deposit, a Croman employee alleged that we had vacated the apartment "late." This was plainly a lie, because we left before 3. In addition, the agent to whom we spoke told us that Croman's repair people had worked from "noon to 2 AM" on the last day of our lease. We know for a fact that the repairs did not start until some time after 5-6:00 PM, which is when we returned to the apartment and discovered that no one had yet come to perform repairs.

Croman's agent further claimed that because we had vacated late, they were forced to credit the new tenants with three day's rent (because workers had to come in to work for three days at the beginning of their lease). We contacted the new tenants to see whether they had heard they were being credited three days' rent. They had not. They also told us that they had no problem moving in on time.

We don't know why Croman brought up our "late" departure from the apartment, but their obvious lies / misrepresentations are something that no tenant should have to deal with.

Return of the Security Deposit - Interest Payments

When we received our security deposit, it reflected no interest. Under applicable law, if a building in New York has six or more units, the landlord must pay interest on the security deposit. If the building has five or fewer, the landlord must pay interest if the money was placed in an interest-bearing account (see <http://www.housingnyc.com/html/resources/attygenguide.html#6> under "Rent Security Deposits"). Our building contained fewer than six units.

While we have no proof of whether our security deposit was held in an interest-bearing account, we find it hard to believe that it wasn't, especially because we lived in our apartment for four years. It surely wouldn't be surprising if Croman did put the money in an interest-bearing account but never told us about it.

Unprofessional Employees

Croman's employees are shockingly unprofessional. As stated above, it is almost impossible to get them on the phone. For the most part, they simply ignore calls and emails. To receive a call back is a minor miracle. In the rare case in which you get a chance to talk to someone, they often apologize for their shortcomings (and complain about "overwork"), but then they do nothing to fix the problem. When we called to discuss erroneous late charges (see above), they were always (there were literally no exceptions) completely uninformed about their business records. They had absolutely no clue what money they had received from us and seemed not to care. While they were apparently quite eager to bill us for fake charges, there was not a single instance in which they possessed the ability to provide even a cursory explanation of the status of our account. After living in a Croman apartment for four years, my impression is that if Croman's employees keep records at all, such records are completely inaccurate.

If you choose to rent from Croman / 9300, here is the type of email you may find yourself writing often. From May 2009:

**

Email 1:

June is our last month at []. When we moved in four years ago, we paid first & last month's rent. Since 2005, however, our rent has increased. Thus, we were wondering how much we owe on June 1. Can you please let me know? I'm assuming it's the difference between the 2005 and 2009 monthly rents. I would appreciate if you could either confirm or let me know if that is not the case.

Email 2:

Hello,

I sent this message 12 days ago, and never received a response.
Please confirm.

Email 3:

This is the third time I have emailed you about this problem. We are required to bring Croman the keys to our apartment by tomorrow, so I am coming to your office today or tomorrow and will be dropping off the checks for our final month's rent at the same time. Please email me today to confirm. Sorry for the time pressure, but I hope you understand that I've been trying to finalize this for the past two weeks.

**

On a minor note, Croman at one point hired someone to clean the building who was manifestly incompetent for even the most menial job. We found this person walking the hallways at extremely unusual hours, right outside our apartment door. The employee additionally smoked cigarettes inside of the building, even though I asked her not to. The employee's odd and inconsiderate behavior made us feel somewhat uncomfortable whenever she was around.

While no one expects a landlord's employees to be perfect, Croman's unprofessionalism is truly outrageous.

Poor Conditions in the Building

No matter what our super did, our building always seemed hopelessly beyond repair. Most egregiously, we lacked hot water for days at a time on a regular basis. The super typically blamed this problem on a defective boiler. At one point they told us they put in a new boiler, but the problems remained. Croman didn't seem to care that we didn't have hot water, as they were unable to install a reliable boiler in four years of tenancy. In retrospect this was unsurprising- the fixtures in our apartment were unbelievably crappy.

Moreover, the physical building was simply in bad shape. There were simply too many problems to list in this post. We have lived in other Manhattan apartments (including in walk-up buildings), and we have never experienced anything nearly this bad.

Return of the Security Deposit - Refusal to Quantify Withholdings

Despite leaving the apartment in a clean condition (we have pictures to prove it), Croman withheld over \$700 from our security deposit. When we asked why, they provided a few reasons. Ultimately, though, (for

reasons I will not discuss here) it was very hard to believe that they needed to put all that money into repairing the apartment beyond ordinary wear and tear. Therefore, we asked Croman for a breakdown--where did the \$700 go? How much went to labor, how much to paint, how much to other things, etc.?

The answer we received was unsurprising. Croman absolutely refused to tell us how they had spent our money, asserting that we had "no right" to know. As a result, the reasons they withheld over \$700 from us remain mysterious.

In our opinion, our apartment had suffered at most 4 years worth of ordinary wear and tear, and certainly nothing beyond that. But regardless of the condition of the apartment when we left, it is inexcusable for Croman to refuse to disclose this information. The security deposit was our money, not their money. Why were they so afraid of telling us why they needed to spend hundreds of our dollars? Wouldn't Croman value transparency and accountability for the sake of their business reputation? Apparently not.

No tenant should have to tolerate a landlord who takes the tenant's security deposit and refuses to give it back without disclosing why. We have had other landlords in New York, and they have been accomodating and fair. Croman, on the other hand, seems to make decisions arbitrarily. In our experience, they are totally untrustworthy.

UPDATE: Interest on Security Deposit

We haggled with Croman for weeks over whether our security deposit collected any interest over the four years of our tenancy. They finally admitted to us that our money had been kept in an interest-bearing account. Of course, they didn't tell us that when they returned the principal on our deposit (minus about \$700, see above). Croman claimed, however, that our money had only earned interest at an average rate of 1.5%. While interest rates now (in late 2009) are lower than they used to be, we find it hard to believe that Croman accrued so little interest on our money over that time period, which began in 2005.

I hope my relationship with Croman Realty is now over for good. While I know that many landlords may not appear to have their tenants' best interests at heart, I firmly believe that Croman is the most dishonest and worst-run business I have ever encountered. I would never rent from them again, and I would urge anyone to seriously think twice about a tenancy in one of their properties. While it is possible that our experience with Croman was unusually bad, it is impossible that any company with any sense of ethics or professionalism could treat its

customers as badly as Croman treated us.

I also want to note that this blog is not intended to spite Croman Realty. Rather, it is meant to be a source of information for potential Croman tenants. When I moved to New York, the dearth of available information on rental agencies and landlords made it difficult to uncover the reputations of these companies. The purpose of sharing my story about my experience with Croman is to put potential Croman tenants on notice of potential issues they may encounter if they rent from Croman.

POSTED BY JDC AT [6:28 PM](#) 15 COMMENTS:

Beware Croman Realty

Recently I moved out of an apartment in Manhattan managed by Croman Realty ("Croman"), also known as 9300 Realty Inc. **Croman is the slimiest and most unprofessional company I have ever encountered.** The people who work there are shameless. The purpose of this blog is to shed light on Croman's deeply unethical business practices, so that those looking for apartments in New York can obtain information about their prospective landlord before signing a contract.

I encourage anyone to submit comments to the blog regarding your experiences with Croman.

POSTED BY JDC AT [3:50 PM](#) 6 COMMENTS:

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