

The Untouchable Billionaire Slumlord: Part 2

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WESTVIEW

By Deborah Privitello

The tragic building collapse in Florida prompted us to speak out. My family remains homeless, forced to vacate for years from the conditions in our apartment—living in fear, during a pandemic, silenced by our billionaire landlord Francis Greenberger, CEO and founder of Time Equities, Inc. His powerful influence has enabled his ongoing cover-up of the truth, which is that his two adjoining 100+ year-old-buildings on East 50th Street (that he converted to condos years ago but still manages) have been decaying from neglect the entire time.

We are the tenants of the ground floor duplex. There have been enumerable structural collapses, constant flooding under the foundation, roof leaks, cracks in archaic corroded pipes, proliferation of toxic mold, and vacate orders.

Greenberger's influence to use the courts and politicians to circumvent the law is unconscionable! He houses Governor Cuomo's office and the city's Empire State Development Corp. in his building at 633 Third Avenue. Cuomo benefits from reduced rent, and received large campaign contributions from Greenberger, as did Attorney General James, even though she won the election in 2018 by promising to punish landlords who were using the courts to harm tenants by constructively evicting them. Neither of these elected officials, nor any others, have done a thing to stop Greenberger's criminal harassment and abuse. There have been no investigations, and he was never placed on the "Worst Landlords" list.

Greenberger's empire was built by destabilizing buildings and dislodging rent-regulated tenants. We are the last non-evict rent-stabilized tenants in the buildings he managed to close on just four days after 9/11. We lived there in peace, for years, before his ownership.

Greenberger's modus operandi is to use the courts to harass and obscure the truth about harming us (his tenants, the victims). He litigates relentlessly, and fraudulently blames us for his failure to maintain the buildings. He uses unlicensed workers who cover up deadly conditions that threaten our health and safety and the other residents. His property manager continues to commit criminal harassment, colluding with his insurance company attorneys, litigating lies to frame us, and concealing evidence for years that the buildings are leaking and ceilings are collapsing from above.

No courts or agencies have put a stop to Greenberger's cruel charade of attributing blame to our family in the ground floor apartment on the bottom of the building. How can years of ceiling collapses, water raining into light fixtures, floors sagging and sinking, toxic mold, and water infiltrating the foundation be allowed?

His lawyers, experts, and agents lie to the courts, commit perjury in documents, falsify permits, self-certify their own violations, and tamper with vacate orders.



My beautiful husband was subjected to daily criminal harassment and toxic conditions, losing his life and tormented until his last breath by Greenberger's persecution and Greenberger's lawyers and agents since the 2001 purchase. He had to go to court pro se and plead to

protect his family from the lethal conditions and harassment while Greenberger's lawyers continued to blame and frame us. (Greenberger's friend and attorney, notorious landlord lawyer Joseph Burden, was suspended by the New York State Appellate Division for committing fraud, but reinstated on a technicality.) Greenberger immediately came after our family, a mom and three little kids, on the day my husband passed away. He even had a hidden surveillance camera installed into the light fixture that faced only our private entrance in order to spy on us. Also, on the day my husband died, while wading in another flooding from the building's waste line (full of fecal matter erupting into our home), the property manager sent a process server (instead of a plumber) to serve us with court papers against my deceased husband.

This is the real Francis Greenberger, a philanthropist for others, heartlessly and mercilessly causing my children and me, a widow, irrevocable trauma for no reason other than that we have been in his way of reaping profits all these years as the last remaining tenants of his only rent-stabilized apartment! We can never get back my beloved husband or all the time robbed from 20 years of harassment.