

Attorney General Schneiderman Responds to Presentation on How to Evict Rent Stabilized Tenants

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Rally against Samy Mahfar, April 2015

One particular speech from one real estate attorney caused seismic outrage last week (<http://www.boweryboogie.com/2016/06/real-estate-attorneys-now-giving-speeches-best-evict-rent-regulated-tenants/>). Michelle Itkowitz had spoken at TerraCRG's "Only Brooklyn" summit about how to best evict rent regulated tenants from buildings. The presentation was called "Tenant Buyouts — The Next Generation." Timing of the discussion was appropriate, as slumlords around the city are under the microscope for harassment activities. (e.g. Croman, Mahfar, Shaoul, Singer, Toledano, Kushner.)

In her speech, Itkowitz noted that "demolition evictions" are a quick-and-dirty method to get rid of those pesky rent-regulated tenants. However, Attorney General Schneiderman wants everyone to know that this is flat-out "bogus legal advice." His spokesperson, Matt Mittenthal, reached out with the following response:

Contrary to Ms. Itkowitz's bogus legal advice, using 'demolition evictions' to de-tenant a building is illegal, and Attorney General Schneiderman has and will continue to use the full force of the law – including bringing criminal charges where appropriate – to crack down on unscrupulous landlords, including those attempting to use 'demolition evictions' to improperly force out tenants.



Inside 102 Norfolk during *Samy Mahfar's* luxury conversion, July 2014

Meanwhile, in defense of her presentation, Itkowitz essentially told Gothamist (http://gothamist.com/2016/06/02/de-landlording_nyc.php) last week that the speech was taken out of context:

I represent as many tenants as I do landlords. I always have. I have saved many people's homes. I currently represent a 75 year old couple in Stuy Town, being unfairly pushed out of their home after 40 years.

A major purpose and theme of my talk [last Wednesday] was to dissuade the development community from harassing tenants, in particular to dissuade them from bringing baseless, frivolous litigation. I encouraged landlords not to lie to tenants. And I was seeking to educate them on the methods that Albany has put in place for rebuilding buildings. Unfortunately, the landlord's bar isn't doing that. If you read the piece, you will see that it is VERY useful for tenants. Everything I write always has both "sides" in mind.

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