

THE REAL DEAL

NEW YORK CITY REAL ESTATE NEWS

“Baby Jane” sued over apartment building deal

Buyer claims Andy Warhol's muse is “extorting” them

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By [David Jones](#)

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Manhattan landlord Croman Real Estate is suing socialite and former Andy Warhol muse Jane Holzer, alleging that she is trying to extort millions from the buyer of four properties she owns.

According to the suit, filed Wednesday in Manhattan Supreme Court, Croman reached a deal with Holzer in December 2012 to buy four rental apartment buildings she owns — 60 Avenue B, 159-161 Stanton Street, 193-195 Stanton Street and 343 East 8th Street — for a total of \$40.1 million.

But Holzer is now threatening to rent out 18 empty rent-stabilized apartments in the buildings unless the buyers pay her an additional \$2.5 million, Croman claims.

“The seller’s actions are the functional equivalent of threatening to set the buildings on fire if the purchaser does not accede to the seller’s demands,” attorney Kevin Nash of Goldberg Weprin Finkel Goldstein, representing Croman, wrote in the complaint.

Holzer, nicknamed “Baby Jane,” was born Jane Bruckenfelf and married Leonard Holzer, heir to a large real estate fortune. She first met Warhol in the 1960s, and appeared in several of his films.

In Holzer’s deal with Croman, the original closing date was set for June 1, 2013, court papers said. But in March, Holzer’s lawyers approached Croman and asked that she be compensated for keeping the apartment empty, with a \$3,000 fee for each vacant rent-stabilized apartment in the buildings, plus per diem rent charges.

Holzer’s lawyers then contacted Croman and said she would rent out the vacant apartments unless additional payment was made in the deal, according to the complaint.

Holzer then met personally with Steve Croman, a vice president at Croman Real Estate, and demanded another \$2.5 million to close the sale, according to the complaint.

Lawyers for Croman claim Holzer’s actions constitute a breach of the contract. They are asking for an injunction to block the leasing of the vacant apartments, and an order compelling Holzer to sell the buildings at the agreed-upon price.

Croman, Holzer and their attorneys were unavailable for comment.

Earlier this year, real estate broker Joanna Cutler sued Holzer for allegedly failing to pay her a \$700,000 commission on the purchase of Holzer’s \$16 million Upper East Side townhouse.

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From left: 343 East 8th Street, 60 Avenue B and Jane Holzer