

Big landlord hit with fraud charges, tenant-harassment suit

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NEW YORK (AP) -- A major New York City landlord is facing mortgage-fraud charges and a tenant-harassment lawsuit from the state attorney general, who says the landlord tried to bully tenants out of rent-regulated apartments.

Landlord Steven Croman pleaded not guilty Monday to grand larceny and other charges accusing him of overstating rent revenue to snag \$45 million in loans.

Meanwhile, Democratic Attorney General Eric Schneiderman (SHNEYE'-dur-muhn) also sued Croman and private investigator Anthony Falconite. Schneiderman says Falconite deceived, threatened and even stalked some Croman tenants, hoping to intimidate them into moving so the landlord could convert their apartments to market rate.

Croman's lawyer calls the criminal charges defensible and notes they're unrelated to any tenant-harassment claims.

Falconite's lawyer says Falconite acted professionally and legally.