

Croman Tenants at 159 Stanton Street Head Back to Court as Living Conditions Worsen

Posted on: February 22nd, 2017 at 5:00 am by Staff (<http://www.boweryboogie.com/author/staff/>)



While reviled landlord Steve Croman (<http://www.boweryboogie.com/tag/steve-croman/>) awaits judgement on charges of twenty felonies including grand larceny (<http://www.boweryboogie.com/2016/05/slumlord-steve-croman-arrested-faces-20-felony-charges-fraudulent-activity/>), falsifying business records, tax fraud, conspiring to defraud, and offering a false instrument, tenants at one of his Lower East Side properties are pressing ahead with their own lawsuit.

You'll recall that tenants at 159 Stanton Street collectively filed suit against Steve Croman back in December (<http://www.boweryboogie.com/2016/12/steve-croman-tenants-file-harassment-lawsuit/>) to force an end to "repair" work and alleged harassment. Indeed, under Croman's ownership, the laundry list of horrors is seemingly never-ending. Purported living conditions included ceiling collapses, rat and mold infestation, and cascading water flooding halls through a dilapidated roof and skylight. The building has reportedly been left unsecured while under construction, attracting burglars.

Tomorrow morning, tenants will have another hearing in Manhattan Housing Court, its second since legal proceedings began. They seek secure doors, safe work, and proper repairs to their apartments. Court-ordered repairs issued during the first hearing (January 13) apparently hit a snag when Croman allegedly blocked DOB inspectors from entering vacant apartments on January 23. When inspectors did finally gain access a month later, they discovered, according to a press release, "serious concerns and have indicated they will issue violations for failure to comply with the Tenant Protection Plan (one of Croman's criminal charges is for falsifying another such Tenant Protection Plan elsewhere) as well as failure to maintain fireproofing material with unsafe electrical wiring and debris throughout the vacant units."



Steve Croman inside 159 Stanton Street

In the meantime, local electeds penned a letter to Croman seeking an end to “deplorable living conditions” at 159 Stanton Street (full letter is below). “Our offices are familiar with the patterns of disrepair, neglect, and harassment your management company is known, and currently being investigated, for,” the letter states. It’s signed by Assemblymember Niou, Borough President Brewer, State Senators Squadron and Hoylman, and Councilmembers Chin and Mendez.



Croman shining light at a tenant to prevent filming

Here is more additional background from the media advisory:

Tenants want repairs to be done safely and legally, but even as their case progresses through the courts work continues to be done haphazardly and dangerously. Tenants allege that 9300 Realty has repeatedly conducted work dangerously and discourteously without giving tenants any notice, in addition to violating SWOs, and Croman himself has visited the building at least twice since the SWOs were issued. On January 24, when approached by a tenant asking when DOB would be granted access to make inspections of vacant units, Croman and associates shone bright lights from their phones to prevent the tenant from video recording the encounter. Despite the SWOs, on Saturday, February 4, workmen removed stairs to the roof [photos attached], which provides additional access to the fire escape and is considered emergency egress for tenants on the top floors of the building. The missing steps were covered with a plywood ramp.

DOB inspectors eventually arrived and ordered the work being done to the stairs to stop on Monday, but workmen returned soon after.

Most egregiously, 9300 Realty boarded up a fire escape window in an occupied apartment in September, but did not restore fire escape access despite repeated complaints and assurances in court that this would be addressed immediately. This particular apartment is occupied by a senior citizen who has lived in the building for over thirty years. After advocates contacted the City, HPD sent their Emergency Response Team to finally restore fire escape access and begin the process of installing a new window. On Monday, February 6, while 9300 Realty's workmen were on the roof stairs, HPD made an emergency repair and installed a temporary hinged plywood board on the window to allow access to the fire escape in case of emergency; but weeks went by before 9300 Realty installed a new window February 20. The tenant is still waiting for management to install a security gate.

In addition to all these issues, DOB recently uncovered that the building was stripped of fire retardant materials during the gut-renovations that occurred in July and August 2015. This demolition work has been left unfinished for 18 months. The resulting unfinished construction has left 159 Stanton Street a tinderbox virtually waiting to burst into flames if any building fire had occurred. After DOB uncovered this issue a 24-hour fireguard was mandated to the building until the necessary repairs can be made.

[Elected Officials Call on Steve Croman to End Harassment \(https://www.scribd.com/document/339971513/Elected-Officials-Call-on-Steve-Croman-to-End-Harassment#from_embed\)](https://www.scribd.com/document/339971513/Elected-Officials-Call-on-Steve-Croman-to-End-Harassment#from_embed) by [BoweryBoogie \(https://www.scribd.com/user/65951747/BoweryBoogie#from_embed\)](https://www.scribd.com/user/65951747/BoweryBoogie#from_embed) on Scribd



February 21, 2017

Mr. Steve Croman
9300 Realty
632 Broadway, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10012

Mr. Croman:

We write regarding the housing conditions at one of your properties, 159 Stanton Street, on the Lower East Side. We have been contacted about deplorable housing conditions at this building and we demand that you work to address all repairs and safety issues here right away.

Our offices have been contacted about several issues at 159 Stanton Street, which houses rent regulated tenants and seniors, such as: makeshift staircases made from plywood; broken windows; water leaks throughout the building; multiple break-ins due to lack of basic security measures; hazardous construction; and a general lack of repairs. These conditions are simply unacceptable, they translate to tenant harassment, and we urge you to address them quickly.

Our offices are familiar with the patterns of disrepair, neglect, and harassment your management company is known, and currently being investigated, for. For these reasons, we have advocated for the City to send out inspectors to 159 Stanton Street to survey conditions.

We look forward to continuing discussions with tenants, advocates and your management company to bring quick and safe repairs to 159 Stanton Street. Should you have any questions, you may contact us via Assemblymember Yuh-Line Niou at 212-312-1420 or niouy@nyassembly.gov.

Sincerely,

Yuh-Line Niou

Gale Brewer

Daniel Squadron

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