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'Bernie Madoff of landlords' to cop plea deal

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Steve Croman — branded “the Bernie Madoff (<http://www.pagesix.com/tag/bernie-madoff>)^[1] of landlords” when he was charged with 20 felonies last year — is about to cop a plea that will have him serve eight months behind bars and pay a fine of \$5 million to \$10 million, sources say.

The owner of 140 apartment buildings, Croman is said to be thrilled he will get off so lightly, and so is his wife, Harriet, who is part of a wealthy clique of Upper East Side moms.

Croman faced up to 25 years in prison on charges of harassing rent-stabilized tenants so he could lease their units at market rates and inflating his rental receipts in order to fraudulently secure \$45 million in bank loans.

“These are the most serious set of criminal charges brought against a bad landlord in anyone’s living memory,” State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said last year.

But Croman, who has been free on \$500,000 bail, hired Ben Brafman (<http://www.pagesix.com/tag/ben-brafman>)^[2], whose clients have included “Jacob the Jeweler (<http://www.pagesix.com/tag/jacob-the-jeweler>)^[3]” Arabo, “Sammy the Bull” Gravano, Dominique Strauss-Kahn (<http://www.pagesix.com/tag/dominique-strauss-kahn>)^[4] and “pharma bro” Martin Shkreli (<http://www.pagesix.com/tag/martin-shkreli>)^[5].

Brafman declined to comment.

Sources said Croman might have to sell some pieces in his vast art collection, but not the palatial double townhouse he renovated on East 72nd Street with two swimming pools, nor his oceanfront Hamptons estate in Sagaponack.

Croman’s son Jake, a student at the University of Michigan, is also infamous — for a video that went viral last year in which the scholar called an Uber driver a “minimum-wage fa——t.”

“You’re working all day?” young Croman mocked. “Guess what? I’m going to go sit on my ass and watch TV. F—k you.”

Jake

Read more from Richard Johnson on PageSix (<http://tinyurl.com/kkfbm34>)

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