

## Larcenous Landlords Use the Law to Oust Tenants

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By *George Capsis*

Oh wow. On March 22nd the *Times* did a massive article (like 4 pages) on the emerging breed of amoral landlords that use rent regulations and an indifferent overworked bureaucracy to oust rent regulated tenants.

Most tenants get hooked by failing to pay their rent but a new breed of heartless, larcenous landlords, might simply not cash the tenant's rent check. Then they get slammed with a notice of eviction without the ability to pay for a lawyer or, in some cases, the language ability to find and then protest to the appropriate city agency before the Marshal bangs on the door.

The election promise of de Blasio was (and probably still is) to make 200,000 affordable apartments available, but the recent increase in population and affluence has accelerated the demand and has made rent regulated apartments into a vein of gold that can be easily mined with a few sheets of undecipherable legal papers and an out-to-lunch bureaucracy.

The *Times* cites youngish Meyer Orbach, who bought 22 tenements on 109th Street near Columbia, and in just seven years got rid of two thirds of the rent stabilized tenants. In their place, he put Columbia students with affluent parents.

As I started to write this, word came that our own legally larcenous landlord Steve Croman is getting out of the Tombs prison two months early, for good behavior, and his wife is planning a mega blowout in Greece to celebrate! He was sentenced to one year for offering the banks (as security for a loan) to buy yet another tenement.

Now, you or I would have served our time in hell-hole Rikers, but somehow, Croman walked a 100 yards to the Tombs on Centre street to serve his abbreviated sentence.

But, back to the *Times*: “Landlords rely on what amounts to an eviction machine. A cadre of lawyers handles tens of thousands of cases a year, making money off volume and sometimes manipulating gaps in enforcement to bring questionable cases. Punishable conduct is rarely punished.”

“What emerged were often-overlapping modes of harassment: by landlords’ fraudulent or exaggerated claims, by disrepair and by an overall court dysfunction.”

It’s funny, Shakespeare, who was often in court suing or being sued, complained about a lack of justice because of “the law’s delay.” Today, the laws are legal snares for those who can’t afford a lawyer.