

## NYC Landlord Sentenced to a Year in Fraud Case

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A prominent New York City landlord was sentenced Tuesday to a year in Rikers Island for tax and loan fraud, a rare prison term in such cases, according to the attorney general.

Steven Croman, 51 years old, who owns more than 140 apartment buildings in Manhattan, was arrested in May 2016 and accused of fraudulently obtaining loans and committing tax fraud.

He pleaded guilty in June to grand larceny, falsifying business records, and criminal tax fraud. In exchange, he received a year-long prison sentence Tuesday in Manhattan Supreme Court. Mr. Croman also has been ordered to pay \$5 million in fines.

The case against Mr. Croman stemmed from an investigation into allegations of tenant harassment, carried out by the state's Tenant Protection Unit. A civil suit alleging Mr. Croman sought to push rent-regulated tenants out of their apartments is pending.

"The measures Mr. Croman took to boost his own bottom line, while blatantly disregarding the well-being of his tenants, are shocking," Attorney General Eric Schneiderman said in a written statement. His office prosecuted the case.

Mr. Croman admitted in June to submitting bogus documents, including rent rolls, to secure mortgages and refinancing for his properties. He received more than \$45 million in fraudulent loans between 2012 and 2014, prosecutors said.

Mr. Croman also withheld state payroll taxes from payments to a former property manager, who earned bonuses for forcing rent-regulated tenants out of his apartment buildings, prosecutors said.

Mr. Croman arrived at court Tuesday wearing a blue button-down shirt, black jeans and sneakers. He declined to address the court.

"I will sentence you in accordance with our agreement," said Justice Jill Konviser. "Let's be clear: Rikers Island ain't the Ritz."

"I hope you spend your days thinking of those you've harmed," she said. "I wish you luck, sir."

As Mr. Croman was led out of the courtroom in handcuffs to begin serving his term, Carol Leland, 60, one of a dozen tenants who attended the sentencing, made an obscene gesture. She said conditions are still bad in her East 10th Street building, where Mr. Croman has refused to clean up construction dust and fix leaking windows.

"I wish it were more," tenant Cynthia Chaffee, 65, said of the one-year sentence. "I think the public needs to be protected from the likes of Croman forever."

A spokeswoman for Mr. Croman's company, 9300 Realty said, "These isolated claims from a few vocal tenants are either completely inaccurate or have been long resolved."

Mr. Croman's attorney, Benjamin Brafman said: "There were no surprises today." He noted that his client likely would be released in eight months if he behaves well in jail.

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