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Tenants Accuse 'Worst' Landlord of Harrassment

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By KECIAH BAILEY

A group of faith leaders and disgruntled tenants congregated in front of landlord Steven Croman's office on Thursday to personally deliver a message to him that they "will not be pushed out" of their homes – but instead were met by an angry building manager and the police.

The group had hoped to go up to their landlord's Midtown office to read him letters of appeal to end what they charge were intimidation tactics against tenants – written and signed by 31 clergy members from many denominations across the city. However, security officers refused to allow the group to go to the seventh floor to see Croman.

Undeterred, they gathered in the building lobby but were quickly interrupted by the building manager, Eric Joza, who told the group they were trespassing and that the police were on the way to arrest them if they refused to leave.

Within minutes, six officers arrived and the group left the building. But neither the presence of police nor the pouring rain outside would dissuade the group from delivering their message.

Once outside the group continued the protest, holding signs that read "Stop Croman" and "Stop tenant harassment."

"As people of faith we call on you to stop this abuse at once and treat your tenants with respect that all people deserve, Hazzan Ayelet Porzecanski, of West End Synagogue, read from one of the letters. "Your tactics are resulting in a loss of critical rent regulated housing which has a devastating impact on our communities by destroying the ethnic diversity and character of them."

Tenants say Croman's tactics to remove long standing tenants from their rent stabilized apartments include: pressuring them to accept buyouts, refusing to complete repairs, creating hazardous renovations and demolitions in neighboring apartments and filing baseless lawsuits against them.

"Since Croman bought our building he is sending letters to us telling us that we must leave and he continues to offer us buy outs so we can leave our apartment," tenant Bernarda Flores said.

Another tenant, George Tzannes, said he has been living without cooking gas in his building since December 2014 and has been taken to court several times by Croman on allegedly trumped-up charges of non-payment of rent.

Croman, owner of 9300 Realty, is no stranger to controversy. He was named twice by the Village Voice as one of the "Top 10 Worst Landlord's in New York." He's also the subject of dozens of news reports over the last two years accusing him of different aggression tactics to push tenants out of their homes and is also under investigation by the State Attorney General for allegedly sending "one of his goons" to threaten tenants to leave their apartment.

Attempts to reach Croman at 9300 realty were unsuccessful. A representative stated he was out of the office and calls were not immediately returned.

"We made them nervous today," said Marc Greenberg, executive director of Interfaith Assembly of

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