

Croman nabs a rent-free pad — on Rikers Island

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By The Villager



Landlord Steven Croman — holding a folder to cover his handcuffs — being walked into Manhattan Supreme Court this past May to be arraigned on a slew of charges brought against him by Attorney General Eric Schneiderman. This Tuesday Croman was sentenced to a year in jail on Rikers Island. Villager file photo by Jefferson Siegel

On Tuesday morning, a judge sentenced notorious Manhattan landlord Steve Croman to a year in jail on Rikers Island. While Croman has long been accused of using harassment to force out rent-regulated tenants so he could charge higher rents, what he was found guilty of was tax and mortgage fraud on many of his more than 100 buildings.

“Rikers ain’t the Ritz,” Justice Jill Konviser, told Croman at his sentencing, the Daily News reported. Last month, Konviser postponed Croman’s sentencing during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the Jewish High Holy Days.

“I hope that you spend your days thinking about the religious principles that this case was postponed for,” the judge chastised him, the News said.

The case is fairly unique since rarely do landlords get prison time on these type of charges.

Croman’s “secret weapon” to force out tenants was Anthony Falconite, a former police officer who entered tenants’ apartments without permission, checking their mail and following them, in an attempt to prove they weren’t rent-regulated.

In May 2016, Attorney General Eric Schneiderman brought numerous mortgage fraud and tax evasion charges against Croman. The landlord admitted to inflating the rental income he was collecting, in order to get \$45 million in loans under

false pretenses.

In pleading guilty this June, Croman conceded to paying a \$5 million settlement and serving prison time. He paid the first \$3 million of the settlement last month.

“Steven Croman thought he was above the law,” Schneiderman said. “But today, he begins a sentence in Rikers Island for perpetrating an elaborate scheme that was intended to push out rent-stabilized tenants. The measures Mr. Croman took to boost his own bottom line — while blatantly disregarding the well-being of his tenants — are shocking. A booming real estate market is no excuse for criminal activity aimed at displacing New Yorkers already struggling with high rents.”

A separate civil suit filed by Schneiderman against Croman regarding tenant harassment and other charges is pending.



Ex-cop Anthony Falconite was Steven Croman's "secret weapon" for trying to harass rent-regulated tenants out of their homes. The goon reportedly entered their apartments, snooped around through their mail and even followed them to work in efforts to prove they weren't deserving of their rent-regulated units.