

# TENANT RELOCATION STALKERS ARE NYC'S NEW HOUSING PLAGUE

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A shabby new type of profession has emerged recently in the landscape of New York housing: they call themselves tenant relocation specialists, but more and more tenants are starting to complain about their use of intimidation and stalking tactics and tenant groups point out that they play an essential role in the steady disappearance of affordable housing.

Tenant relocation specialists are hired by landowners to try and convince tenants who are locked into below market-rate rents to accept a buyout, so that the apartment can then be rented out at an increase rate to other tenants.

However, even if they are supposed to offer tenants reasonable buyout offers, more reports surface each week of tenants who are bullied by such individuals, offered very low buyout offers, stalked in person or by telephone and even threatened with fictional law suits and jail time. Some of the more disturbing reports even claim that relocators are even pressurizing families of the tenants to convince them into accepting the buyouts.

Admittedly, this does not apply to all tenant relocation specialists, as some keep their inquiries within the limits of common sense and even try to work out advantageous offers for tenants. But others, such as former NYPD officer Anthony Falconite, use tactics for which they could easily be criminally prosecuted for harassment and threats.

Shawn Dahl, one of the tenants who complain about such intrusive negotiation tactics, described to Associated Press' Jennifer Peltz his experience with Falconite: apparently, the former law enforcement officer went as far as blocking her doorway when she wanted to close the door or waiting near her parked car when she departed for work. Unwanted buyout offers were also pushed after renovations scheduled by the landlord cracked her ceiling and cluttered her kitchen sewage.

Falconite officially works as a "private investigator" for 9300 Realty Inc, the landlord company which hosts Dahl as a tenant. Despite the fact that his lawyer denied any claims about his client using harassing tactics, NYC Attorney General Eric Schneiderman believes Dahl's claims and even contacted Falconite with regards to them.

A bill proposal posted in February by Councilman Daniel Garodnick proposed harsher regulation for tenant relocation specialists, by introducing the need for them to obtain a license from the city and require the tenant's consent to get in contact with them, with perpetrators being open to fines of \$10,000.