

They Came for the Rally and Stayed for the Wake

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By Cynthia Chaffee and Mary Ann Miller

On a rainy, chilly, first full day of spring, a surprising number of people showed up at the White Horse Tavern on Hudson and 11th Streets—the reason? The sale of the building to the notorious landlord Steve Croman. The White Horse Tavern opened in 1880 and has been operating at the same location ever since.

Enter Steve Croman, recently released from prison for mortgage fraud and no friend to neighborhood restaurants. The [Stop Croman Coalition](#) sponsored the rally to call attention to the sale of the White Horse Tavern.



Many tenants from Croman-owned buildings in all parts of the city were in attendance. State Senator **Brad Hoylman** spoke, as did **Erik Bottcher**, Chief of Staff for City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, and **Harry Bubbins** from the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation (the outside of the White Horse is landmarked, however the Tavern is not). **Wasim Lone** of Good Old Lower East Side as well as Natalie Naculich, tenant organizer from Housing Conservation Coordinators, were also there. Jeremiah Moss came by to witness more of “**Vanishing New York.**”

There was lots of media coverage—CBS, NPR, NY1, WNYC radio, *Crain's*, *Gothamist*, *Curbed NY*—as well as this paper.

The talk on the street was that this iconic, historic tavern was going to be closed and reopened as a pizzeria. Eytan Sugarman is the new lease holder. He is the owner of Made in New York, a pizzeria on the Upper West Side.

“The Mooch”—Anthony Scaramucci, a partner with Sugarman in the very upscale Hunt & Fish Club—was to join Sugarman in this endeavor, but the Mooch said no! After interior renovations, the White Horse will reopen not as a pizzeria but as an upscale version of itself. The big difference is that instead of a local neighborhood bar, it will be a very expensive bar and restaurant. As one patron we spoke to said, “Instead of an eight-dollar hamburger, it will be a twenty-five-dollar hamburger and a drink fifteen dollars or more. It’s no longer for the locals.”

As the rally was winding down, Malachy McCourt, author and raconteur, arrived for the wake. The crowd outside the White Horse followed McCourt inside and a good old-fashioned Irish wake began.

Malachy McCourt **recited poetry, told stories, and sang beautiful old melancholic Irish songs**, and at his urging the crowd joined in. He recited “**Do not go gentle into that good night,**” written by the White Horse Tavern’s most famous patron, Dylan Thomas, and so ended the rally and the wake for the White Horse Tavern.