

## Rage, Rage Against Croman

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**CROMAN EXITS PRISON AND BUYS WHITE HORSE BUILDING:** Cynthia Chaffee, spokesperson for the anti-Croman tenants organization, speaks in protest before the White Horse after the building and the lease to the White Horse bar were sold. *Photo by Maggie Berkvist.*

*By Cynthia Chaffee and Mary Ann Miller*

Whenever a New York restaurant closes, look under the nearest rock and you'll usually find **Steve Croman**, the notorious landlord who just spent several months in jail—not at Rikers where he was supposed to go, but at the Manhattan correctional center, a.k.a. “The Tombs.”

Add to the mix Eytan Sugarman and Anthony “The Mooch” Scaramucci, and this **toxic trio** may close the White Horse Tavern, the much beloved bar at Hudson and 11th streets in the far west Greenwich Village.

Welsh poet **Dylan Thomas**, probably it's most famous patron, wrote, “Do not go gentle into that good night...Rage, rage against the dying of the light.” He had his last drinks there and later died at St. Vincent's. The **White Horse Tavern**, with its rich cultural, political and social history, is where artists, poets, painters, writers and musicians gathered.

The late Norman Mailer held a Sunday writers' salon there years ago. Other notable regulars who frequented the White Horse Tavern were Bob Dylan, Jack Kerouac, the Clancy Brothers and Jim Morrison. This is where labor organizers, community activists, housing activists like Jane Jacobs and social activists from The Catholic Worker, including Dorothy Day, gathered. This is where the locals, laborers, longshoremen and other members of the working class came together and drank.

All this literary history might be replaced by a pizzeria. We're not sure about this yet, but one of the toxic three, Sugarman, is the owner of Made in New York Pizza, a knockoff pizza place that recently made the headlines when the **Pizza Wars** erupted between Sugarman and Prince Street Pizza as to who had the best pizza in New York. Enter The Mooch... Scaramucci and Sugarman are partners in the upscale Hunt & Fish Club. Scaramucci, it must be pointed out, is not a partner in the White Horse. Although Sugarman says that he's going to keep the White Horse Tavern as is, rumor has it it will definitely be a pizza place.

The White Horse Tavern opened in 1880 as a bar for the men who worked at the docks. The building is landmarked, but the tavern is not, so all that history might soon be reduced to “a slice with pepperoni please.”

The White Horse Tavern is the latest casualty to be “**Cromanated**,” that is, closed by Croman. The **Amato Opera** opened in 1948, and closed after 60 years when Croman bought the building in 2009. The fabled **Caffe Vivaldi** opened in 1983, but was forced to close after 35 years in business when Croman bought the building in 2011.

Local bars and restaurants throughout the city were forced to close when Croman doubled or tripled the rent. If Croman couldn't get them out by raising their rents, there was always the convenient fire, which is what recently happened to **Bruno Pizza** at 204 East 13th Street. The restaurant and all the apartments above it were destroyed, another business closed, and all the tenants were made homeless.

Croman's insatiable greed has led to the destruction of many lives, businesses, neighborhoods, history and culture, and for these reasons and more we urge you to rage, rage against Steve Croman.

*Cynthia Chaffee and Mary Ann Miller are co-founders of the Stop Croman Coalition.*