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LOWER EAST SIDE TENANTS OF SAMY MAHFAR OWNED BUILDINGS APPLAUD AG INVESTIGATION INTO NOTORIOUS TENANT RELOCATOR

Tenants speak out against the extensive use of tenant relocators by LES landlord Samy Mahfar.

October 29, New York — Lower East Side tenants of 102 Norfolk St., 210 Rivington St., 22 Spring St., 143 Ludlow St., and 113 Stanton St. applaud the Attorney General’s investigation into “tenant relocators” Michel Pimienta. On Monday, October 27, 2014, AG Eric Schneiderman reached an agreement censuring his relocation efforts. The agreement requires Pimienta to cease all relocation efforts with his company, Misidor LLC, pay a \$40,000 fine, and acquire a real estate broker’s license.

This is a huge victory for tenants familiar with Pimienta’s efforts to push out rent-stabilized tenants so their units could be converted into luxury units. The common denominator between these tenants and Pimienta is LES landlord Samy Mahfar, who employed Pimienta extensively in the buildings he owns.

In addition to employing this unlicensed “tenant relocators” known to use unscrupulous tactics, Mahfar has recently caught the watchful eye of numerous elected officials for demolition work at 102 Norfolk St., exposing tenants there to jaw-dropping levels of toxic lead. Security staff preventing building access to City inspectors and collapsed ceilings in apartments are just a few of the extreme quality-of-life issues that have become commonplace in Mahfar-owned buildings during construction.

“Prior to the demolition work that began in our building, Michel Pimienta approached me on one of two occasions claiming to be a representative of the City of New York looking to update tenant records. He misrepresented himself to me in order to obtain sensitive information from me and other tenants. His actions were misleading, inappropriate, and invasive once we learned how he used this simple informational request obtained from other tenants against them,” **said a tenant from 102 Norfolk Street who wished to remain anonymous.**

Translated quote from Mr. Lam, Kwan Tai from 22 Spring St. Tenant Association, “This is great news. We welcome the Attorney General’s success with making Michel Pimienta pay a fine and give up his ‘relocation’ business. Being that he is no longer in business to harass us is good for tenants everywhere. People like Pimienta are only working for the profit of the landlord.”

“Affordability continues to be one of the Lower East Side’s greatest challenges -- unscrupulous ‘tenant relocators’ are a shameful and illegal part of the affordability picture,” **said State Senator Daniel Squadron.** “I thank Attorney General Schneiderman for pursuing this investigation, and commend the tenants and the Cooper Square Committee for confronting these unacceptable tactics. I look forward to continuing to work with tenants, advocates, and my elected colleagues to put an end to the pattern of tenant harassment.”

“The fact that Samy Mahfar actually celebrated his use of Michel Pimienta’s ‘invaluable’ relocation services just goes to show why we’re taking action to protect the tenants of 102 Norfolk Street and Mr. Mahfar’s other Lower East Side buildings,” **said Council Member Margaret Chin.** “I applaud Attorney General Schneiderman’s successful effort to put Mr. Pimienta out of business, and I will continue to work with my elected colleagues, Cooper Square Committee and CAAAV to stop Mr. Mahfar from further endangering the welfare of his tenants.”

The following is a quote from Samy Mahfar on Misidor’s recently-taken-offline website endorsing Pimienta and his success in removing rent-regulated tenants from their homes:

Samy Mahfar,
SMA Equities

“It is a pleasure to work with Mr. Pimienta and his company. The experience that his company has brought to our firm has helped us reposition our properties more than we anticipated, and his insight and intuition have been instrumental in our success. Mr. Pimienta is trustworthy and honest, and we have always had a positive experience working with him. I highly recommend his services to people I know in the industry.”

Source:

« http://web.archive.org/web/20131020175100/http://misidor.com/index.php?p=view_misidor_testimonial »

Quote from the Cooper Square Committee, “Samy Mahfar – who, as far as we know, hired and utilized the services of Michel Pimienta more than any other landlord in the Lower East Side – willingly subjected his tenants to Pimienta’s deceitful and unscrupulous practices, all in the name of maximizing his profits.”

Quote from CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities, “We thank Attorney General Eric Schneiderman for working with us to protect tenants from Michel Pimienta. CAAAV Organizing Asian Communities has been working with Chinatown tenants who live in fear because Pimienta and his Chinese-speaking colleague incessantly call and knock on their doors to drive them out of their homes. Predatory landlords such as SMA Equities and Silvershore Properties hire these ‘tenant relocators’ and have contributed to the loss of thousands of rent-stabilized units. We will continue working with tenants, Cooper Square Committee, and the Attorney General to challenge these landlords in their aggressive harassment and displacement of low-income tenants so that we can protect our critical affordable housing stock.”

The Attorney General’s investigation into Michel Pimienta sends a clear message that tenant relocators who harass tenants will be held accountable. The tenants of Mahfar-owned buildings are sending the message that landlords who hire these relocators will also be held accountable.

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