How To Get Canned From Your Co-op

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Recently, we reported on a co-op board that voted to evict one of its shareholders, terminating the man's proprietary lease for alleged objectionable conduct.

So, what behavior, exactly, will get you the boot?

"It's never just one thing—it's always several," says Adam Leitman Bailey, a real estate lawyer whose firm is representing the above mentioned shareholder.

Drawing on the several dozen so-called "Pullman" cases his firm has handled over the years, Bailey ticked off some things to avoid if you're attached to your co-op:

1. A **letter writing campaign** to the city alleging violations that wind up costing your building hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines, legal fees and repairs.

2. **Fistfights**, name calling and poison-pen campaigns against members of the board.

3. **Urinating in the pool**, breaking glass in the lobby, smelling bad, breaking house rules.

4. **Suing** the board unnecessarily.

5. Hoarding junk and **critters**.

Um, who would do all these things?

"A lot of them are activists, **a lot have mental problems though they're not crazy,**" says Bailey. "The really rich ones are spoiled. They usually talk too much and they're people who like fighting. They don't really see reality like everyone else does."

Bailey notes that most cases settle out of court.

Typically, owners agree to sell within six months, and the board agrees to relax its approval process, rejecting a sale only if the financials aren't strong enough. If the

owner is unable to sell for a certain price, he or she might be allowed to rent the apartment to someone else for a period of time.

It usually costs around $5,000 to reach a mutually agreeable exit strategy, says Bailey. **When cases go to court, legal fees can range from $20,000 to $150,000.**

If the owner loses in court, he or she "always ends up paying my legal fees, which we collect at the closing," says Bailey. That prospect alone can help persuade an owner to turn in the keys and move right along.