

Maggie Can Stay; Wins Fight with Village Landlords

By Dareh Gregorian



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A Manhattan judge has given a legal spanking to two Greenwich Village landlords who were trying to evict actress Maggie Gyllenhaal and her family.

The landlords started eviction proceedings against the “World Trade Center” star in February, contending she didn’t have a valid lease and, therefore, had to clear out of her full-floor, \$5,000-a-month home on Greenwich Street.

The timing was especially bad for the 29-year-old star because she was pregnant – but that didn’t stop her landlords, Mark Family Realty and the Selrob Limited Family Partnership, from pushing forward.

That’s because Gyllenhaal, who gave birth to a baby girl last week, was caught directly in the middle of a tug-of-war between the two companies and a third owner of the Greenwich Street building, Anton Sanko, who signed off on the actress’s lease.

Now Manhattan Civil Court Judge Marc Finkelstein has come to the rescue of the “World Trade Center” star – who last week became the proud mom of newborn daughter Ramona – ruling that her lease is valid and she doesn’t have to go anywhere.

Gyllenhaal’s lawyer, **Lorraine Nadel**, said she was “thrilled” with the decision.

“Maggie should never have been dragged into this,” **Nadel** said. “The owners of the building should have fought it out themselves and left her out of it.”

Sanko couldn’t be reached for comment.

Gyllenhaal moved into the building back in 2005 – right around the time Sanko’s relationship with co-owners Ira Mark and Selina and Robert Henry went south. Sanko filed suit against them in Manhattan Supreme Court last year, accusing Mark of having “mismanaged the property” and having “harassed sub-tenants of Sanko’s who were lawfully on the property.”

Mark and the Henrys claimed Sanko's claims were bogus, and they returned fire by seeking to evict Gyllenhaal and her "co-occupant John Doe" – Gyllenhaal's fiancé, "Shattered Glass" star Peter Sarsgaard.

The eviction suit charged her renewal lease wasn't valid because it was signed only by Sanko and should have been signed by all the owners, as the original lease was.

In an affidavit, Gyllenhaal said that wasn't her problem.

"I am residing in the subject premises pursuant to a lease duly executed by one of the owners of the subject premises," she said.

Finkelstein agreed, and noted that "she has paid and continues to pay all the rent under that lease directly to Sanko."

Outside the West Village abode yesterday, Mark declined to comment.

Nadel praised the judge's decision, saying the city "couldn't function if every tenant had to find all the owners of their building and get all their signatures to have a valid lease they could trust."

The lease included a renewal option for Gyllenhaal to stay in the apartment through the end of 2007, but the dispute has apparently soured her on Manhattan living.

She and Sarsgaard reportedly have signed a contract to buy a 3,600-square-foot brownstone in Brooklyn, although it's not clear if the deal has closed yet.

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