



‘BAT MAN’ CAVES IN – HIS REALTY FIRM SETTLES SUIT ON INFESTED HOME

By Jeane MacIntosh | July 4, 2005

A ritzy realty firm that was sued for unloading a horror house crawling with 150 bats has cut a deal to settle the case after a nasty, decade-long battle, The Post has learned.

Robert McCaffrey, an exclusive agent for the real-estate arm of Christie’s auction house and owner of the Cold Spring, N.Y., company bearing his name, backed down two days into a jury trial that promised to explode in a public-relations nightmare.

“Everyone in town knew that house was full of bats when [McCaffrey] sold it – and I doubt it would have taken long for a jury to find that out,” said a rival agent.

Details of the settlement with homeowner Stephen Jablonski – a retired investment-management CEO who paid \$542,000 in 1993 for the house – are confidential.

But local real-estate agents say the deal will set McCaffrey – or someone associated with him – back at least \$1 million. And extermination experts have told The Post it would cost that much to bat-proof the house.

McCaffrey’s lawyer, Bill Florence, confirmed a deal, but declined further comment, citing a confidentiality clause. Jablonski’s lawyer, [Lorraine Nadel](#), did not return calls.

Jablonski sued for \$9 million in 1996, after two years of living with his pesky housemates.

In a 2003 interview with The Post at his home – which reeked of bat excrement – Jablonski recounted his living nightmare, replete with tales of the critters fluttering about the attic, reproducing in the rafters, flying into the living room and bedrooms and even biting him.

In his lawsuit, Jablonski claimed McCaffrey’s agency – told of the bat problem by the prior owners – used mothballs and bright lights to drive them away, swept telltale droppings from the attic and claimed excrement stains on the home’s exterior were from “birds.”

McCaffrey’s lawyer previously conceded to a reporter that a McCaffrey agent “bull- — — -ed” Jablonski.

McCaffrey tried to get the suit thrown out, using a “buyer beware” argument, but in January, an appeals court ruled there was enough evidence to suggest his firm actively tried to hide the problem and green-lighted a trial.