

Man Bulldozes Home Without Telling Wife; Gets Arrested

A New York man is facing criminal charges after bulldozing the home owned by his wife in which the couple lived.

Tearing down your own house, though questionable, is not typically a crime. In this instance, however, police say that the man, 48-year-old James Rhein, never told his wife about his plans for destroying her home and everything in it, reports New York's WNBC-TV.

Now Rhein is facing both the legal and marital consequences for his rash decision.

Wife Reportedly 'Very Upset'

Fortunately for Rhein, he did take some precautions before demolishing the home. He reportedly notified utility companies of his plans so water, electric, and gas lines were all shut off, preventing any injuries, fires, or other mishaps from occurring.

Rhein did not, however, secure the proper permits from the city for the demolition because that office was closed for the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, he told WNBC.

More importantly, Rhein also failed to alert his wife to the demolition before renting the bulldozer and knocking the house to the ground. Although Rhein lived in the house with his wife, the home's deed is in his wife's name. Rhein said he tried to call his wife but that she didn't pick up her phone. A neighbor told WNBC that when the wife pulled up to the destroyed home, "She was very upset. She was in the middle of the road screaming."

Felony Criminal Mischief Alleged

Rhein was charged with felony criminal mischief, which typically can include vandalism and other crimes destructive to property. Under New York law, a person who intentionally damages the property of another person with no right to do so or any reasonable ground to believe that he has such right is guilty of a felony if the amount of damages exceeds \$1,500.

Rhein was released on \$300 bail and is due back in court January 30. As for his wife, Rhein told WNBC that although she was distraught initially, "now she's over it."

By Daniel Taylor, Esq.