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News Brooklyn Abridged

"Celebrity Realtor" Now Trying to Capitalize on Philip Seymour Hoffman's Death

By Virginia K. Smith - March 28, 2014

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News broke yesterday that the West Village apartment where Philip Seymour Hoffman overdosed **was going back on the market for \$10,500/month**. It might have given you a bit of a twinge to read, but it was also an inevitability, and not a particularly blockbuster news story. Well, a few hours later, my coworker Henry forwarded an email from a publicist with the subject line, "Philip Seymour Hoffman's Apartment on the Market—Celebrity Realtor Available for Interviews." Um, just what we were hoping for?

In the PR pitch, "New York Real Estate Expert" Pej Barlavi (who is not personally involved with Hoffman's former apartment) offers "Five Tips on Being a Successful Realtor to the Stars," listing basic no-nos like asking for selfies or autographs, leaking information about their homes to the press, ~~using their deaths to drum up business~~, or "[presuming] because you've seen celebrity on TV that you know who they are what they want." Helpful things, need-to-know information. (He's **recorded an advice video**, too, if you're so inclined.)

A few fashion PR firms got called out for milking Hoffman's funeral for press last month (though some of that seemed to be a genuine accident), and you'd think that would have scared off anyone hoping to use a famous person's untimely death as an opportunity to "make lemonade out of lemons" and self-promote. Not so. The file of "gross things publicists send us" is only getting larger, and Barlavi could probably stand to lift some advice from his own tip sheet: "Lose lips will kill your reputation while silence will build your reputation as someone who can be trusted."

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