

THE REAL DEAL

Home-buying advice from a New York City legal eagle

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By Adam Pincus

Real estate attorney **Adam Leitman Bailey's** debut book, "Finding the Uncommon Deal," doles out advice on all stages of buying a house, condo or co-op. Yet the author's ambitions are broader than just a how-to guide to homeownership.

"My life, my business and my legal practice have been dedicated to real estate and attempting to make the United States a better place to live by advocating for better real estate decisions," **Bailey**, the energetic and frenetic founder of Manhattan-based residential and commercial law firm Adam Leitman **Bailey**, PC, writes in the preface.

The 230-page paperback from John Wiley & Sons was published in the middle of last month, and shot to No. 1 on the New York Times list of paperback advice and how-to books ...

Although **Bailey**, best known as the controversial and aggressive champion of unhappy condominium buyers, has seen financial losses sting owners during the downturn, he points to real estate as a path to financial security.

To that end, he cites renowned economist Robert Schiller, who charted the sale price of an average home over more than a century. Using Schiller's data, he writes that if a typical home sold in 1890 for \$100,000, that same home had appreciated in real value, even after removing the huge effects of inflation, to \$199,000 in 2006.

What **Bailey** does not mention is that Schiller has updated that chart since the market peaked in 2006, and the average price at the end of 2010 was about \$124,000.

Still, the book is chock-full of other good tips. Here are some of the best:

- On using inside information to get a deal:

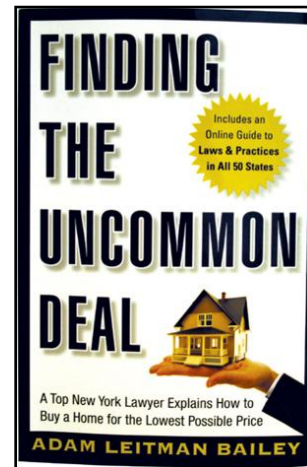
"While it is illegal to financially benefit from using inside information about a certain company's stock, in real estate, obtaining information hidden from the general public's view is championed and celebrated."

- On buying distressed homes:

"Many of the best deals are to be found once the seller enters panic mode but before the gavel lands with the word 'sold.'"

- How to negotiate with sellers:

"I like to provide the lowest counteroffer possible without being insulting. ... I then walk away from the



deal for at least 48 to 72 hours. ... You should not call the homeowner during this time, as you will appear weak, and your actions will reveal that your numbers could go higher."