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## **Norman Mailer's Iconic Brooklyn Heights Home Hits Market for \$2.4M**



Long before Jonathan Safran Foer and Martin Amis made Brooklyn the borough of choice for big-name authors, Norman Mailer lived there. For more than 40 years, the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of “The Executioner’s Song” — known for his tremendous impact on the nonfiction genre, his pugnacious personality, and his nine children and nearly as many wives — made his home on the top floor of Brooklyn Heights brownstone at 142 Columbia Heights. Just this week, word broke that one of Mailer’s sons is selling the apartment for \$2.4 million.

To call it a just an apartment, however, would be tantamount to calling Norman Mailer just an author. Just like its larger-than-life owner, this property defies simple definition. I am keenly aware of this, because I used to live downstairs. A couple years after Norman Mailer bought the townhouse, in the 1970s, my parents moved into a unit on the second floor.

We lived there when Mailer was in his 60s and 70s, in the midst of his sixth and final marriage to Norris Church. His teenage son John Buffalo would come around from time to time, and authors would visit to attend the frequent PEN America dinners Mailer would host. My mom remembers a steady stream of authors and artists going up the stairs to

Mailer's top-floor unit. I more easily recall encounters with Mailer going downstairs. He never liked it when me and my brother would slide down the banister or sled down the stairs in a cardboard boxes. "These are my stairs!" I remember him bellowing.

Of course, technically, my parents were shareholders of the co-op, and the stairs were common space. But it goes without saying that the building *belonged* to Mailer. The author's apartment was carefully arranged, reflecting his maverick personality. Take a look in the image gallery below.















The 1,636-square-foot duplex penthouse was outfitted to resemble a ship's cabin, with a two-story glass and wood atrium cresting out over the roof and sloping wood ceilings. Mailer upset building codes by installing a series of ladders, catwalks and gangplanks that led to a private writing loft where it is said he wrote "The Executioner's Song" and "Ancient Evenings." (Those contraptions are all gone now.)

Although Mailer died in 2007, the property has remained in the family. Michael Mailer attempted to sell it back in 2011, but the deal fell through — that glassy captain’s lookout, as it turns out, was also not up to code. According to the Wall Street Journal, which broke the story, it will be difficult for the younger Mailer to part ways with the home. Although the fourth-floor apartment of 142 Columbia Heights will gain a new owner, “it will always be my Dad’s place,” Michael Mailer says.