



## Selling New York: Grand Finale, Starring the \$20 Million Club

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*Last night was the FINAL episode of Selling New York, HGTV's reality show following brokerages CORE and Gumley Haft Kleier as they sell fabulous properties fabulously. Here, writer Mike Olson's recap of how the NYC real estate industry is portrayed to the world...*



Commitment was the name of the game on last night's season finale, as boss lady Michele Kleier was out to prove she deserves to be the exclusive broker for the swanky 995 Fifth Avenue, and two CORE agents joined forces to wrest an exclusive listing out of a Greece-loving, statue-collecting, tape-measure-toting Chelsea seller. It was an appropriate theme for what has been a rollercoaster relationship we've had with this debut season. At first we were reluctant to commit—we've been hurt before, but we soon learned that only by diving in headfirst could we truly appreciate all of the fabulousness it had to offer. Now it's the only HGTV show for us. (Though we may still have the occasional late-night tryst with *House Hunters International*.) So farewell, *Selling New York*. Until we meet again...

Is it getting dusty in here?

Subplot #1: If you party, they will come

The Player: GHK mama bear Michele Kleier

The Mission: It's only fitting that the *Selling New York* finale would feature its star as she battles market forces to sell a \$28.5 million, full-floor apartment in 995 Fifth Avenue, the luxury building that was once the Stanhope Hotel. Not only has Extell given Michele an exclusive on floor 16, but she's also handling the (slightly) cheaper apartment down on 15. Now she just has to sell them!

The Plan of Attack: The apartment is a beauty, but—and we're guessing the other half already knew this—8,360 empty square feet can be a little overwhelming. No worries. Michele tells Extell that she's going to hire interior designer Eric Cohler (she doesn't mention his \$300K price tag), who has less than two weeks to stage this behemoth's front rooms and master suite. Once he's done, she'll throw the best damn cocktail party the city has ever seen to help reposition this unit as “the most fabulous apartment in New York.”



The Problem: With only one day left, Michele checks in on Eric, who assures her that the chaos she's seeing is actually *controlled* chaos. Then, in a metaphor that still hurts our brain, he tells the camera that the apartment is a bride before a wedding and Michele is the groom.

(Translation: *Why the hell is she here?!*)

The Party! It's party time at 995 Fifth, where only the city's biggest movers and shakers (ahem!) have been invited. The place looks great!



The cocktail weenies flow like wine as Michele scoffs at people trying to get on her guest list at the last minute. Her husband Ian claims he fielded a call from Queen Noor, and her two daughters show people around like they've done any work at all.

The Decision: Michele's shindig was such a success that she found an all-cash buyer for the slightly cheaper floor 15! (Our sleuthing reveals the buyer to be insurance bigwig Joseph Plumeri, who dropped \$23.5 million for the place.) The 16th floor, meanwhile, is still available. Please buy the thing so the Kleiers can remodel their office. (That sound you hear is CORE agents snickering.)



Subplot #2: A little piece of ancient Greece in Chelsea

The Player: Baby-faced CORE agent Michael Graves and fidgety CORE agent Kirk Rundhaug.

The Mission: Mike has been trying like mad to get fun-loving textile designer Christopher Hyland to give CORE the listing for his 4,000-square-foot loft in the Chelsea Mercantile. This place is the gaudy realization of Hyland's 50-year dream to own a Greek revival apartment in the middle of Manhattan, to which we can only say mission accomplished!



The Problem: Not only is Chris reluctant to give CORE his business, he's not even sure he wants to sell?! To help nudge him off the fence, Mike calls in coworker Kirk to show off his design knowledge and, basically, kiss Chris' keister. Somehow their brainwashing works, and it's apartment hunting we go!

Stop #1: Kirk brings Chris to his first listing, a \$2.75 million loft with a wide open floorplan and million-dollar views of Midtown.



With a tape measure in hand and camera around his neck (we're starting to love this guy), Chris surveys the scene. And though he says the apartment is "pregnant with all sorts of possibilities" (gross!), it's not for him.

Stop #2: Kirk brings out the big guns, showing Chris the \$15.45 million penthouse triplex at 54 Bond, the old Bouwerie Lane Theater. Now we know why this sun-drenched space has caught the eye of romantics like Gerard Butler and Hugh Grant. It's gorgeous—plus, Kirk adds, it has plenty of room for antiques (hint hint).



A giddy Chris gives the elliptical machine a test drive before excitedly hopping in the tub! (Do we smell a spin-off for this scene stealer?)



But don't let his borderline psychotic behavior fool you: Chris still isn't sure about giving CORE the exclusive.

The Decision: Back at the Parthenon, Chris has done some soul searching and decides to sell. (We think he explained why in a monologue about "new possibilities bringing new adventures and a richer life," but we kind of zoned out.) He then gives CORE his exclusive \$22.45 million listing. For six months. (Um, should someone remind the guys that they only have two months left?) To be continued (we hope)...