

## CAUGHT IN THE ACT: AIRBNB ADMITS TO MANIPULATING NYC DATA IN ATTEMPT TO HIDE ILLEGAL HOTELS FROM POLICYMAKERS & THE PUBLIC

**AIRBNB SAYS:** “*We are 100 percent committed to being constructive partners with regulatory agencies and policymakers.*” – [The Airbnb Community Compact](#)

**BUT WHAT AIRBNB DOES TELLS A DIFFERENT STORY...**

- “***Airbnb Admits that it Purged 1,500 Unflattering Listings Right Before the Data Release***”  
– [Fusion](#), 2/24/16
- “***Airbnb Purged New York Listings to Paint a Rosier Portrait, Report Says***”  
– [The New York Times](#), 2/12/16
- “***We removed approximately 1,500 listings from our platform in New York City that were controlled by commercial operators***” Josh Meltzer, Airbnb’s New York director of public policy, wrote in a letter to state legislators on Wednesday (Feb. 24).  
– [Quartz](#), 2/24/16

**BACKGROUND:** In December 2015, after a lengthy legal battle with New York State regulators and much public pressure, Airbnb finally agreed to release data about its business in New York City to the public as part of a pledge to “build an open and transparent community.”

**Airbnb now admits that it scrubbed the numbers and deleted 1,500 illegal listings just before releasing the data to the public.<sup>1</sup>**

Airbnb initially tried to cover up their wrongdoing by blaming a “busy marathon and Halloween weekend”<sup>2</sup> for the anomaly.

**Even worse, just one day after Airbnb admitted to scrubbing the numbers, [Bloomberg reports that many of the purged listings are back on the site.](#)**

**THE FACTS:** A [recent study](#) by Penn State University reveals a troubling trend:

- Nearly 30% of Airbnb’s revenue in 12 of the nation’s largest cities came from users that listed properties for rent full-time (360 days or more each year).
- The number of people listing two or more residential properties for rent on Airbnb is rapidly growing, and 40% of the company’s revenue in 12 of the nation’s largest cities is generated by these “multi-unit operators,” to the tune of *half a billion* dollars a year.
- As Airbnb proposes what amounts to an “honor system” of tax policy and safety enforcement in states and municipalities around the country, lawmakers should require the company to release data about its operations. Airbnb has demonstrated it can’t be trusted to prevent commercial operators from abusing its platform – unless it’s about to get caught in the act.

AIRBNB NOW ADMITS THAT NEARLY 40 PERCENT OF ITS REVENUE FROM WHOLE-HOME LISTINGS IN NYC COMES FROM HOSTS LISTING MULTIPLE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES FOR SHORT-TERM RENTAL

**Closing the “illegal hotel loophole” is the only way for state and local governments to protect communities and ensure a fair and competitive travel marketplace.**

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-02-25/airbnb-says-it-removed-1-500-listings-in-new-york-before-data-release>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.businessinsider.com/airbnb-deleted-rentals-before-showing-data-2016-2>

<sup>3</sup> “Of hosts renting their entire homes in New York City, 38 percent of revenue came from those listing two or more homes on the website. Hosts with six or more homes on Airbnb generated 6 percent of revenue.” Bloomberg, 2/24/16