



This copy is for your personal, noncommercial use only. You can order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers, please [click here](#) or use the "Reprints" tool that appears next to any article. Visit www.nytreprints.com for samples and additional information. [Order a reprint of this article now.](#) »



February 18, 2010

Kerik Is Sentenced in Corruption Case

By SAM DOLNICK

WHITE PLAINS — [Bernard B. Kerik](#), a former New York police commissioner who rose to national prominence, was sentenced to four years in prison on Thursday after [pleading guilty](#) to eight felony charges, including tax fraud and lying to White House officials.

Under the terms of a [plea agreement](#), the prosecution and the defense recommended that Judge Stephen C. Robinson sentence Mr. Kerik to 27 to 33 months in prison. But the judge departed from the sentencing recommendations, giving Mr. Kerik a longer sentence because he said he had betrayed the public's trust.

"I think it's fair to say that with great power comes great responsibility and great consequences," Judge Robinson said. "I think the damage caused by Mr. Kerik is in some ways immeasurable."

Federal prosecutors had denounced Mr. Kerik, a former police detective who rose to the upper echelons of power, as a corrupt official who sought to trade his authority for lavish benefits. He pleaded guilty on the eve of his trial in November.

Wearing a pinstriped navy-blue suit, Mr. Kerik was [thinner and clean-shaven](#) — without the mustache he was long identified with — as he entered the courtroom in United States District Court here. He surveyed the gallery, packed with friends and supporters, embracing some, nodding to others.

When Judge Robinson offered him a chance to speak before sentencing, Mr. Kerik rose from the defense table and spoke in a low and gravelly voice.

"I make no excuses," he said. "I take full responsibility for the grave mistakes I've made. Believe me when I say I have learned from this and I have become and will continue to become a better person. I know I must be punished. I only ask that you allow me to return to my wife and two little girls as soon as possible."

As the judge delivered the sentence, Mr. Kerik sat impassively at the defense table, flanked by his lawyers. Behind him, his supporters — including [Geraldo Rivera](#) and Steven McDonald, a former New York City police officer who was paralyzed from the neck down in 1986 — sat silently.

Mr. Kerik will begin serving his sentence on May 17. Prosecutors had requested that Mr. Kerik be sent to prison immediately, but Judge Robinson allowed him to surrender later to get his affairs in order in light of the length of the sentence. Mr. Kerik has awaited sentencing under strict house arrest at his home in Franklin Lakes, N.J.

The sentence follows a fall from a rarefied perch where he wielded power with a signature mix of brash confidence and tough-guy charm.

He was a close ally of former Mayor [Rudolph W. Giuliani](#), whom he served as a bodyguard and driver. Mr. Giuliani then tapped him for a senior position in the Correction Department, and he went on to become the agency's commissioner. As testament to his clout, Mr. Kerik had a jail named after him in downtown Manhattan. ([The name has since been changed.](#))

Mr. Kerik later served as police commissioner, and his performance after the 9/11 attacks turned him into a national figure, earning him the respect of President [George W. Bush](#), who nominated him to lead the [Department of Homeland Security](#). That bid quickly collapsed in scandal, marking the beginning of the end of Mr. Kerik's career.

The case against Mr. Kerik centered on charges that a New Jersey construction company, the Interstate Industrial Corporation, which was suspected of ties to organized crime, had paid for renovations at his home in the Riverdale section of the Bronx. Prosecutors said company officials had hoped Mr. Kerik would help them obtain a city license.

In June 2006, Mr. Kerik [pleaded guilty in State Supreme Court](#) in the Bronx to two misdemeanors tied to the renovation of his apartment. He paid \$221,000 in fines and penalties but avoided any jail time.

In the more recent federal case, Mr. Kerik pleaded guilty to two counts of tax fraud, one count of making a false statement on a loan application and five counts of making false statements to the federal government while being vetted for senior posts. Judge Robinson ordered him to pay restitution of \$187,931 to the [Internal Revenue Service](#).

Prosecutors had called for Judge Robinson to make an example out of Mr. Kerik, and to punish him for his ["egotism and hubris."](#)

During the hearing, Judge Robinson said he admired much about Mr. Kerik, particularly his leadership in the 9/11 aftermath. But, he said, "the fact that Mr. Kerik would use that event for personal gain and aggrandizement is a dark place in the soul for me."

Mr. Kerik's lawyer, Michael F. Bachner, asked the judge for leniency, citing his years of public service, and the dozens of letters of support written by family members, former colleagues in the Police Department and even strangers who said they admired Mr. Kerik's bravery.

When asked if Mr. Kerik intended to appeal the sentence, Mr. Bachner said, "No comment."

After the sentencing, Mr. Kerik paused outside the courthouse, where he read a statement before being driven off in a black sport utility vehicle.

“I’d like to apologize to the American people for the mistakes I’ve made and for which I have just accepted responsibility,” he said. “As history is written, I can only hope that I will be judged for the 30 years of service I have given to this country and the city of New York.”

[Copyright 2011 The New York Times Company](#) | [Home](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [XML](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#)
| [Back to Top](#)