

RHIP

Meaning: Rank Has Its Privileges. One of which is avoiding jail time for crimes that would land the ordinary mortal behind bars. Today's shameful and shameless RHIP example is Bernard Kerik, former NYPD commissioner, former correction commissioner, former nominee for homeland security secretary, former occupant of a love nest overlooking Ground Zero, former person of high reputation brought low by his own ego and greed.

Kerik appears to be above the law. This morning, he is scheduled to appear in a Bronx courtroom, where he will admit to administrative violations and maybe a misdemeanor or two, in exchange for which he is expected to get a fine and, perhaps, a talking-to, but no jail time. Not even a day in the Bernard B. Kerik Complex, which is jail in Manhattan but could be the name of a criminal psychological syndrome.

An ordinary cop who accepted a free cup of java would find himself under investigation by Internal Affairs and then hanged, drawn and quartered at high noon in front of City Hall. But, under a plea bargain that seems to have been worked out between Kerik's fast-talking lawyer and Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson, Kerik will be set free after admitting that he accepted \$200,000 in home renovations from a mob-connected company. If so, Johnson will make Kerik the envy of the run-of-street defendants who parade through the criminal courts every day.

So, the law-abiding people of New York City await today's court session to see if justice will be done or if justice - and they - shall be mocked, and by someone who once swore to uphold the law, as police commissioner, no less. If Kerik gets this plea deal, District Attorney Johnson should have the decency to be honest with his constituents. Let him report to the steps of the courthouse and personally spit in the eye of the public.

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