

Jackie Lacey
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NEWS RELEASE

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April 16, 2014

Rizzo Sentenced to 12 Years in State Prison

Robert Rizzo, Bell's former chief administrative officer and the leading conspirator in a massive public corruption scheme, was sentenced today to 12 years in state prison, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced.

Rizzo, 60, also was ordered to repay \$8.8 million in restitution to the city.

Last week co-conspirator Angela Spaccia was sentenced to 11 years, eight months in state prison. Together, they represent the longest prison terms for convicted public officials since the Public Integrity Division was established in 2001.

"Rizzo believed he was above the law. His greed and total disregard for the hard-working people of Bell have lasting consequences," District Attorney Jackie Lacey said in a statement. "Stealing public funds is a serious crime that destroys the public trust. We are sending a clear message that we are doing our part to restore confidence in government by vigorously prosecuting any public official who misuses his or her authority to steal from their constituents."

Deputy District Attorney Sean Hassett and former Deputy District Attorney Max Huntsman with the Public Integrity Division prosecuted the case.

At the height of the scandal, Rizzo and Spaccia, his assistant chief administrative officer, worked hand in glove to illegally boost their salaries and benefits to exorbitant levels.

Hired as Bell's chief administrative officer in September 1994, Rizzo went from earning a council-approved annual salary of \$300,000 in 2004 to taking home \$800,000 in illegal pay by the time he resigned in July 2010. He also paid himself an additional \$400,000 annually by cashing out unused sick and vacation time that was not council approved.

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In addition to writing his own employment contracts and creating a secret pension fund that would have given him \$8 million upon retirement, he lavished unauthorized loans on himself and city underlings, including Spaccia.

In all, Rizzo was charged with 69 felony counts that included one count of conspiracy to commit misappropriation, 46 counts of misappropriation of public funds, 10 counts of falsification of public records, six counts of perjury and six counts of conflict of interest.

In October, he pleaded no contest to all counts before Los Angeles County Superior Court Judge Kathleen Kennedy.

Five convicted former Bell council members return in June and July for sentencing. Former Mayor Oscar Hernandez, former Vice Mayor Teresa Jacobo and former Councilmembers George Mirabal, Victor Bello and George Cole are facing up to four years each in state prison.

The case was investigated by the District Attorney's Bureau of Investigation.

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About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to seeking justice for victims of crime and enhancing public safety. Last year, the [Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office](#) prosecuted more than 73,000 felony defendants and 113,000 misdemeanor defendants.