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# What Happened To Protect and Serve?

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Friday, January 29, 2010

## Former Officer Robert Kennedy Convicted of Sexual Assault Gets Early Release

A former city police lieutenant convicted of sexually assaulting a 15-year-old boy won an early release from a parole board Thursday.

Robert Kennedy, who served 12 years as a lieutenant with the city's police department, is scheduled to be released on July 9 after serving 18 months in prison — exactly half his sentence. He was convicted of second-degree sexual assault, risk of injury to a minor, illegal sexual contact and third-degree possession of child pornography after a teenager said he and Kennedy engaged in oral sex.

Kennedy was one of seven men, including a judicial marshal and a city businessman, with whom the boy said he had sex in 2007, sometimes for money.

Although Kennedy, 48, didn't comment in January 2009 when he was sentenced to three years in prison, he gave the parole board detailed answers and explanations over the course of 45 minutes as he pleaded for his release on Thursday morning.

"Why I did that single incident is open for exploration," Kennedy said. "This person was really flattering me in exponential terms. You know, everything, from my teeth to my hair to the way I was built and here I was 45 years old and here was this very young, attractive, good-looking guy paying me all sorts of compliments. I can only equate it as a type of gay, mid-life crisis, Achilles' heel that I succumbed to."

The board conducted the parole review using a video conferencing system. Kennedy was in a small room in Cheshire Correctional Institution looking up at a camera, while the board watched him on an old Sony television in a conference room on the fifth floor of a state building on West Main Street in Waterbury.

Kennedy, who seemed calm through the review, could see and hear the board. Kennedy's family members, including his mother, two sisters and brother, filled a room in New Haven where they also watched the hearing via a video feed.

Kennedy is openly gay, and said he had long-term relationships with men, but the oral sex he had with the teen was the result of "unflattering urges."

He told the board his routine was to "tour the city" in his police SUV, then head to Hamilton Park to prepare himself for the day with a cup of coffee. He told the board he saw the boy on a grassy knoll in the park. Although it was a sunny day in March, the boy, who was 15 at the time, caught his attention because he was wearing a T-shirt and "inappropriate" clothing.

Kennedy said he struck up a conversation with the boy, finding he was a student in a city school.

The boy said Kennedy gave him a ride home in his police SUV and the two exchanged cell phone numbers. After his shift ended, Kennedy picked the boy up at his house and the two returned to Kennedy's home, where they had sex.

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### Quotes:

"Any time a law enforcement officer is accused of tarnishing the badge, it is an embarrassment to all the honest, hard-working members of this profession who work day in and day out to protect and serve with integrity."

"I'm sickened by this officer's betrayal of the badge. We cannot let one single act by one officer overshadow the brave work by men and women who wear the uniform and put themselves in harm's way everyday to protect our families and our neighborhoods."

"We have to be held accountable for our actions," said Police Chief John Ewing. "Just because we wear a badge, it doesn't mean we can break the law. We need to treat our police officers like someone who was walking down the street who may commit the same crime."

"We take these allegations very seriously and have placed Corporal Porras on administrative leave until we can determine