

Ex-police officer sentenced to prison for perjury

◆ **Brendon Bisbee:** Guilty of perjury in trial of ex-girlfriend Kristin Ruggiero.

By **JAMES A. KIMBLE**
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BRENTWOOD — A former Massachusetts police officer was sentenced two to four years in state prison for committing perjury while testifying to a grand jury and during the May 2010 trial of his ex-girlfriend.

Brendan Bisbee, 34, was taken into custody and held at the Rockingham County jail on Thursday afternoon.

But he may be soon freed pending appeal if he can post \$100,000 cash or surety bail.

His sentence closed another chapter in the Kristin Ruggiero case, which still has three more trials Rockingham County expected to begin early next year.

Bisbee was a 10-year veteran of the Barre, Mass., police department before getting romantically involved in 2007 with Ruggiero (a.k.a. Kristin McDonald), a woman who set up her ex-husband and had him briefly jailed on trumped up threats made on a disposable cell phone.

She is serving a 7- to 14-year state prison sentence for falsifying physical evidence. She reported to East Kingston police in May 2008 that she received a series of threatening text messages from her ex-husband while they went through a bitter divorce.

Bisbee was convicted Oct. 21 of five counts of perjury for testimony that prosecutors say was meant to derail efforts to prosecute Ruggiero, 35, and investigate further allegations that manipulated evidence and elicited false testimony from defense witnesses during her trial last spring.

Bisbee, who left his job as a police officer while dating Ruggiero, didn't just lie on the stand or in the grand jury room, Assistant County Attorney Jerome Blanchard said.

Bisbee also wrote letters suggesting to attorney generals in New Hampshire and Massachusetts, with one suggesting the man who unraveled Ruggiero's scheme — East Kingston Police Chief Richard Simpson — was somehow corrupt.

"The interesting thing is he went on the offensive for Ms. Ruggiero. He used his position and knowledge as a former police officer to try to influence law enforcement to — ironically — go after the people investigating his girlfriend," Blanchard said.

Defense lawyer Bruce Kenna said that Bisbee was a victim of Kristin Ruggiero's manipulation just like many others left in her wake.

After Ruggiero was convicted by a jury, she suggested to Bisbee during a phone call from state prison that they get married so he would not have to testify before a grand jury gearing up to probe into the latest round of allegations about her fabricating evidence.

Bisbee declined the offer of a jailhouse wedding.

"It is clear that Kristin Ruggiero is using him for her own means," Kenna said.

Judge Kenneth McHugh said he was troubled by Bisbee's claims that he had no memory of East Kingston police coming to Ruggiero's home when she first complained about the threatening text messages she was receiving on her cell phone.



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"The defense suggests love is blind, but it's not deaf and dumb," McHugh said. "This gentleman lied over a series of times. Timewise, the chain here is several years."

McHugh said Bisbee had enough common sense to stop lying for Ruggiero whenever he wanted.

"He may have been taken in initially by Ms. Ruggiero. I don't doubt that because apparently she has taken in a lot and lot of people in her life," McHugh said.

Kenna argued that Bisbee should be given a suspended jail sentence and a significant fine, arguing he had already lost a career and untold thousands he had saved up from his career as a police officer.

Prosecutors argued for a 3- to 6-year prison term, saying that Bisbee needed to be punished for his repeated lies under oath. Blanchard said Bisbee had multiple opportunities to stop, but decided to maintain his story line of lost memory or unawareness about his ex-girlfriend's activity. "He was going to ride this lie all the way to the bitter end," Blanchard said. "And he did. Right into the ground."

N.H. Union Leader Friday, 12/23/11, Page A3
James A Kimble.