

TWO ROGUE CHICAGO

ALVAREZ CONVICTS TWO ROGUE CHICAGO POLICE OFFICERS

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Cops get 12 years while lawyers go at it in court ; Convicted of bribery, home invasion, in apartment break-in

Esposito, Stefano

Earlier on in the case, defense attorneys for two Chicago cops charged in a 1998 shakedown accused prosecutors of a cover-up of "Watergate" proportions.

The snarling rhetoric continued Tuesday, on the day a Cook County judge sentenced the disgraced ex-police officers — Rodney Carriger and Ernest Hutchinson — to 12 years each in prison for breaking into a West Side apartment and demanding \$8,000 of the residents.

In September, a jury found the two men guilty of bribery, home invasion, official misconduct and armed violence.

Supporters pack courtroom

Playing before a courtroom packed mostly with Carriger and Hutchinson supporters — many of whom insisted on standing — Cook County Assistant State's Attorney Anita Alvarez told Judge Clayton Crane the defendants were worse than common criminals because they should have known better.

"They have fallen from grace and don't deserve any respect," said Alvarez, seeking a "substantial" prison term. Alvarez asked Crane to ignore defense witnesses who said the defendants were "upstanding" citizens.

A little later, a furious Lawrence Wolf Levin, Carriger's attorney, told Crane that Alvarez had gone too far.

"When someone comes before you and seeks a pound of flesh and vengeance, that's wrong," Levin barked.

A few moments later, he stormed up to where Alvarez was sitting, glared at her and sharply wagged a finger in her direction.

At times, the gallery applauded.

One man shouted, "Amen to that!" after one defense comment.

Carriger and Hutchinson faced a sentencing range of 6 to 30 years in prison. Both chose not to speak at Tuesday's hearing.

"It's clear to me that there is not a lot I can do to you that will be a bigger fall than what you already have been through," Crane said. "Both of you lost positions of respect."