

Attorney Linked to Fugees Star Pras Michel Case to Plead Guilty in Contempt Charge



Renowned lawyer David Kenner, who previously represented Fugees hip hop star Prakazrel "Pras" Michel in a high-profile foreign influence prosecution, is set to plead guilty in a Washington, D.C. federal court. Court documents reveal that Kenner faces a misdemeanor contempt charge for allegedly leaking trial materials to reporters.

Legal Setback and Impending Plea

Kenner, who faced a setback in the defense of Pras Michel, will enter the plea on Friday before U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta. The legal ordeal has further intensified, with another federal judge, Colleen Kollar-Kotelly, contemplating whether to grant Michel a new trial, citing Kenner's mishandling of the defense.

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Conviction and Legal Criticism

Michel was convicted in April by a Washington jury for conspiring with Malaysian financier Jho Low in orchestrating foreign lobbying campaigns. The campaigns aimed to influence the U.S. government under two presidents. Michel's publicist, Erica Dumas, expressed disappointment in Kenner's representation, stating, "Former attorney David Kenner failed at every turn to competently represent Pras Michel throughout this lengthy legal battle."

Admission of Guilt and Retirement

In a court filing on Thursday, Kenner accepted responsibility for breaching a protective order and announced his retirement from law practice. At 82, Kenner revealed that his plea agreement with prosecutors includes an agreed sentence of unsupervised probation. Kenner's lawyers have refrained from commenting, and the U.S. attorney's office in Washington has yet to respond to requests for comment.

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Allegations of Misconduct and AI Dependency

Prosecutors allege that Kenner provided records, including confidential grand jury material, to Bloomberg reporters for news stories published in March 2023. The prosecutors assert that these materials were disclosed to "influence the jury pool." Furthermore, in his October request for a new trial, Michel and his new lawyers argue that Kenner improperly relied on an experimental generative AI program to draft closing arguments. This reliance led to frivolous arguments and a failure to address critical weaknesses in the government's case.

Conflicts of Interest and Evidentiary Hearing

Michel alleges that the contempt charge against Kenner created another conflict of interest, with Kenner prioritizing his interests over Michel's during crucial pretrial and trial phases. The recent three-day evidentiary hearing by Judge Kollar-Kotelly delved into Michel's request for a new trial, further complicating the legal landscape surrounding this high-profile case.

Don't be a silent ninja! Let us know your thoughts in the comment section below.

