

Chris Christie Says Jared Kushner's Father Committed a 'Loathsome' Crime

By Daniel Victor

Jan. 30, 2019

Chris Christie, the former New Jersey governor who clashed with Jared Kushner during his brief stint running President Trump's transition team, issued a sharply personal attack on Mr. Kushner's father on Tuesday, saying he had committed a "loathsome" and "disgusting" crime.

The former governor's new memoir, released this week, depicts Mr. Kushner, the president's son-in-law and adviser, as being hellbent on retribution for Mr. Christie's prosecution of his father more than a decade ago, when Mr. Christie was a United States attorney. Mr. Christie says Stephen K. Bannon, the former Trump strategist, told him Mr. Kushner had directed his firing from the transition team, and he paints Mr. Kushner as a shadow campaign manager and chief of staff who offered questionable advice.

Mr. Kushner's father, Charles Kushner, a multimillionaire real estate executive, pleaded guilty in 2004 to 18 counts of tax evasion, witness tampering and making illegal campaign donations. He admitted hiring a prostitute to seduce his brother-in-law, who was cooperating in a federal campaign finance investigation, then videotaping the sexual encounter and sending it to the man's wife, Mr. Kushner's sister.

"Mr. Kushner pled guilty, he admitted the crimes. So what am I supposed to do as a prosecutor?" Mr. Christie said in an interview on "Firing Line With Margaret Hoover" on PBS. "If a guy hires a prostitute to seduce his brother-in-law, and

videotapes it, and then sends the videotape to his sister to attempt to intimidate her from testifying before a grand jury, do I really need any more justification than that?”

He continued: “It’s one of the most loathsome, disgusting crimes that I prosecuted when I was U.S. attorney. And I was U.S. attorney in New Jersey, Margaret, so we had some loathsome and disgusting crime going on there.”

Charles Kushner served 14 months of a two-year sentence in federal prison. It was the maximum sentence allowed under a plea agreement he had reached with Mr. Christie, but Mr. Christie sought a three-year sentence regardless, arguing that Mr. Kushner had violated the deal by failing to accept responsibility for his crimes.

“It shows that no matter how rich and powerful you are in this state, you will be prosecuted and punished for crimes you commit,” Mr. Christie said after the sentencing in 2005. “This sends a strong message that when you commit the vile and heinous acts that he has committed, you will be caught and punished.”

In his new book, “Let Me Finish,” Mr. Christie said that Jared Kushner had consistently tried to push him out. Mr. Bannon told him that Mr. Kushner was “obsessed with destroying me,” he wrote.

He said he watched in a meeting as Mr. Kushner denounced him to Mr. Trump, urging him to exclude Mr. Christie from the transition.

“He tried to destroy my father,” Mr. Kushner said, according to Mr. Christie.

Mr. Trump kept Mr. Christie at the time, and Mr. Kushner offered to put the episode behind them, Mr. Christie wrote. But he said he repeatedly heard from others that Mr. Kushner was working against him, and he was sidelined from the transition three days after Mr. Trump’s election.