

NY judge sentences online poker worker to prison

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(AP) — A former Internet poker company employee who returned to the United States from Costa Rica to face charges he helped process illegal gambling proceeds has been sentenced to a year and two months in prison by a judge who says too many people in business are willing to break the law to get ahead.

Brent Beckley, formerly head of payment processing at Absolute Poker, was sentenced Monday in U.S. District Court in Manhattan, where Judge Lewis Kaplan said prison time was necessary to send a message to others that a casual attitude about breaking laws to help businesses has consequences.

"The sentence has to make clear that the government of the [United States](#) means business in these cases, and it has to afford adequate deterrence to other people who are tempted to behave in the manner in which you behaved," the judge told Beckley. "You tried to circumvent the laws to advance the business. ... And there is a whole lot of that going on in this country."

Beckley pleaded guilty to illegal gambling and fraud shortly after he returned to the United States last December. He surrendered eight months after prosecutors announced criminal charges in a case that shut down U.S. operations for the three largest Internet poker companies.

Beckley told the [judge](#) that he was "truly sorry" for thinking he could continue working in the online [poker](#) business after the United States

changed its gambling laws.

"I convinced myself that I was building something lasting and meaningful," he said. "I was young and immature, and I fooled myself into thinking what I was doing was OK."

In a presentencing memorandum, prosecutors credited Beckley for never disputing that lying to banks about what payments were for was wrong or that the gambling business was illegal.

"Rather than offer tortured explanations for such conduct or simply try to evade capture, Beckley simply owned up to it," prosecutors wrote. "Returning to the United States for this purpose, knowing that he faced the prospect of prison, suggests that Beckley seeks to draw a line under the past, accept the punishment that comes with it and move on with his life."

Beckley was permitted to wait to report to [prison](#) until Oct. 1. He must forfeit \$300,000 and pay a \$3,000 fine.

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