

DA releases impoundment motion in O'Connell case

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The Patriot Ledger

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QUINCY — The Norfolk County district attorney's office has released documents that led to the impoundment of records in the drug-trafficking and underage-sex case of Quincy developer William O'Connell.

The Patriot Ledger contested the impoundment of search warrant materials related to the O'Connell case in district court. A judge ordered that redacted versions of the records be released. O'Connell's attorney and the district attorney appealed that ruling to the state Supreme Judicial Court.

As part of the case, an impoundment motion and State Police affidavit were released to The Patriot Ledger.

The affidavit, written by State Police Trooper Kathleen Prince, is dated April 5, five days after O'Connell's Marina Bay condominium was searched as part of the investigation. The search warrant was obtained from Norfolk County Superior Court Judge John Connor, according to the documents.

In the affidavit, Prince, a sexual assault investigator assigned to the Norfolk County district attorney's office, argues that the search warrant should be shielded from public view because it contains sensitive and little-known information that threatens to identify the underage victim in the case.

"The information contained in the warrant, the affidavit and return are pertinent to the investigation of this matter and much of it is not generally known," Prince writes. "The information contained in the warrant, affidavit and return include the name of the minor victim in this matter."

Prince writes that the victim "is a young girl who reports offenses occurring from the time she was 14 years old." The victim is 15 now.

O'Connell is charged with two counts of aggravated rape of a child under 16, two counts of paying a fee for sex and cocaine trafficking.

On April 5, Quincy District Court Judge Robert Ziemian agreed to allow the impoundment for six months.

Earlier this month, in response to a Patriot Ledger motion to remove the impoundment, Ziemian ruled that there was not good cause to keep the records sealed and that a law that restricts the public availability of police records in sexual assault cases does not apply to the materials in question in O'Connell's case. The district attorney's initial impoundment motion cited that law as well as privacy laws.

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