

# Boston Herald Archives

## Quincy developer pleads not guilty to rape, drug rap

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An elderly Quincy developer posted \$150,000 cash bail and sped away from the courthouse yesterday after he pleaded not guilty to sordid charges of raping a teenager and trafficking cocaine. William O'Connell, 71, dodged reporters' questions after he was led out of a back door of Quincy District Court.

He is charged with two counts of aggravated statutory rape, two counts of soliciting sex for a fee and one count of cocaine trafficking.

"The charges speak for themselves," said Andrew DiCarlo Berman, the special prosecutor appointed by Norfolk District Attorney Michael Morrissey. "They're some of the most serious charges that I think can be lodged against a defendant, and it's something that we take very seriously."

The alleged offenses took place in the spring and summer of 2009 and on various dates until March, Berman said. The alleged victim is not a prostitute, the prosecutor said. He noted the aggravated statutory rape statute applies to victims who are 14 to 16 years old.

O'Connell's spokesman, George Regan, issued a statement last night, but refused to answer questions.

"This is going to be resolved in a judicial process," he said. "At first blush, this may not be what it appears to be."

Following the hearing, a court officer escorted a handcuffed O'Connell into the clerk's office to take care of administrative matters after Judge Mark Coven told the defense he was not going to treat the developer differently than any other defendant.

"I'm going to treat him the same way we treat every other person," Coven said.

Coven impounded a police report, and details of the accusations against O'Connell were not revealed during his arraignment. Berman said he requested the report be impounded to protect the alleged victim's identity.

O'Connell and his brother, Peter, are major Quincy developers who started their business

with \$450 in 1958 and went on to build many of the city's landmark developments. They're perhaps best known for Marina Bay, a massive, upscale condo-and-retail complex whose residents over the years have ranged from New England Patriots star Tom Brady to television newscaster Chet Curtis.

"They helped build Quincy," said Peter Forman, president and CEO of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce.

Forman said the family is "very much part of the community. They're very much liked and respected."

Yesterday, O'Connell was ordered to stay away from the alleged victim and witnesses, surrender his passport, have no unsupervised contact with anyone younger than 16 and not leave the state without permission.

It's not the first time O'Connell has faced a judge. In 2003, he was sentenced to six months probation on charges of negligent motor boat homicide after an accident resulted in the death of his best friend.

The current investigation is ongoing, Berman said.

Berman also is prosecuting O'Connell's nephew, Robert, who is free on \$500,000 bail on an attempted murder charge. He is accused of shooting Milton firefighter Joseph A. Fasano.

Jerry Kronenberg contributed to this report.

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