

## VIDEO: Wealthy Quincy developer William O'Connell pleads innocent to child rape, cocaine trafficking

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The Patriot Ledger

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QUINCY — He rose from blue-collar roots to become a development mogul in his hometown. On Monday, William S. O'Connell rose in a Quincy courtroom to answer charges that he raped a child, paid for sex and had enough cocaine in his condominium to warrant a trafficking charge.

After pleading innocent, O'Connell, 71, tanned and wearing a well-tailored suit with an open shirt collar, was handcuffed while paperwork concerning his release was completed.

O'Connell's attorney, Stephen Neyman, asked Judge Mark Coven if his client could forgo the handcuffs while bail was posted.

"I never do that," Coven responded. "I'm going to treat him the way we treat every other person."

It was a dramatic change of scenery for the jet-setting developer, who along with his brother built some of Quincy's most upscale properties, including the Marina Bay complex and Granite Links Golf Club.

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. The charges stem from a March 31 State Police raid of O'Connell's Marina Bay condominium.

Nineteen grams of cocaine were found inside, said Andrew DiCarlo Berman, a special prosecutor assigned to the case by Norfolk County District Attorney Michael Morrissey.

O'Connell entered the courthouse Monday flanked by five suited associates who declined to identify themselves. One of them was Neyman, who declined repeated requests for comment.

Neyman, a Boston lawyer, is an unfamiliar face in Quincy court circles. His [website](#) emphasizes his experience in cases involving sex for fee and drug-distribution charges. The website cites a sex-for-a-fee charge that will be dismissed against one of his clients, a Lexington businessman.

"There's probably no crime more difficult to defend than a sex crime," Neyman says in a video posted on his site. "... Oftentimes there is no DNA, there are no eyewitnesses; it's just one person saying that it happened and another person saying it never happened. We handle a lot of those in this office."

O'Connell remained mum in the face of the media, holding one of his associate's hands as he was guided through a throng of television cameras into the courtroom. He exited through a back door.

"Obviously, this saga will play out in a court of law," said public relations specialist and Marina Bay resident George Regan. "But remember one thing: at first blush, things may not be what they appear to be." Regan said he is a spokesman for the O'Connell family.

O'Connell posted \$150,000 bail, paying by check, and was released with several conditions.

He was required to surrender his passport, to stay in Massachusetts unless otherwise allowed by his probation officer, have no contact with the alleged victim or witnesses, refrain from any unsupervised contact with any child younger than 16 and submit to random drug testing.

A probable cause hearing was set for July 14 in Quincy District Court. Berman said O'Connell is likely to be indicted by a grand jury before then, which would move the case to Superior Court in Dedham.

If convicted, O'Connell faces a 10-year minimum prison sentence on the rape charge and a minimum of three years in prison on the trafficking charge. Possessing more than 14 grams of cocaine is considered trafficking under state law.

Few details of the alleged incidents were disclosed at the arraignment. Berman, who prior to the arraignment had moved to impound records that explain the basis for the charges, said he sought to shield the child's identity from the public and O'Connell's lawyers.

Berman said O'Connell had several involvements with the child, beginning in the spring and summer of 2009 until March 2011.

The rape charges against O'Connell indicate the alleged victim is 14 to 16 years of age. If the child were younger than 14, a different section of the sexual conduct for a fee statute would apply.

The accusations are not William O'Connell's first brush with the law. In 2003, he was sentenced to six months of probation after being charged with negligent homicide while operating a motorboat. O'Connell's best friend, William Sanderson, was

killed when he was struck by the propellers of a boat. O'Connell was at the boat's helm off Chappaquiddick Island, where he has a home, when Sanderson was killed. A charge of drunken operation of a boat was dismissed.

In 1987, O'Connell's son, Matthew "Ky" O'Connell, was convicted of second-degree murder in the stabbing death of 22-year-old Julie Hamilton, who knew Matthew through her boyfriend. Matthew O'Connell is being held at Bridgewater State Hospital, a medium-security facility for inmates deemed in need of psychiatric care.

O'Connell's nephew, Robert O'Connell, is currently facing an attempted murder charge in the December 2009 shooting of former Milton firefighter Joseph Fasano in Quincy. Berman was also hired to prosecute Robert O'Connell.

"The two cases are unrelated as far as we know at this point," Berman said.

Robert O'Connell's attorney has acknowledged that Fasano's girlfriend, who was with him at the time of the shooting, once dated William O'Connell. She was living in a condominium O'Connell owns.

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*Editor's note: Comments are no longer allowed on stories involving sex charges. To discuss this case, go to our **[Front Page blog](#)**, where posts will be reviewed before they appear on the site. Click **[Ledger](#)** or **[Enterprise](#)** to e-mail a letter to the editor. Include your name, town and a telephone number for verification.*

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