

Alleged plot could have been fantasy, court told

BY CARYS MILLS

The alleged murder plot involving a Toronto businessman, a dominatrix and a would-be hit man may have been part of a fantasy role-playing scenario, says a key witness for the Crown.

Kerry Anderson, the man allegedly hired to kill Alex Petraitis's wife, told a trial jury on Tuesday he was once unsure whether he was part of a scenario or being set up, or if the former media executive really wanted his wife dead.

"I didn't know what it was," Mr. Anderson said under cross-examination.

Mr. Petraitis, 68, and his alleged mistress and dominatrix, Sandra Rinella, 47, have pleaded not guilty to conspiracy to murder and counselling murder. The supposed hit man, Ms. Rinella's ex-boyfriend, has told Ontario Superior Court that he was hired by Mr. Petraitis to kill his wife in 2003 but never intended to follow through.

Ms. Rinella's lawyer, Joseph Neuberger, suggested during his cross-examination of Mr. Anderson on Tuesday that the whole plot may have been part of a "bizarre" role-playing scenario.

The lawyer pointed to inconsistencies in Mr. Anderson's re-

cent testimony, compared with pretrial statements and what he told police in 2004.

Mr. Neuberger noted that Mr. Anderson, 46, now recalls more than he did when he made other statements.

"My memory is coming back to me," Mr. Anderson said. He said his recall is improving because he's stopped using drugs.

Under cross-examination on Monday, Mr. Anderson said that during one meeting at Ms. Rinella's Scarborough apartment, Mr. Petraitis was wearing an outfit that looked like a toga or diaper and it appeared that he had walked in on the end of a role-playing scenario.

Mr. Anderson has testified that Mr. Petraitis, a former book and magazine distribution executive, wanted his wife of 40 years killed at the couple's cottage near Buckhorn, Ont., before Christmas in 2003 and told him a key was hidden under a rock by the garage. The jury has also heard audio from tapes Mr. Anderson said he made by hiding a recorder in his sock during meetings with Mr. Petraitis and Ms. Rinella.

When he was approached about being part of the plot, Mr. Anderson testified that he initially asked for \$25,000, but his price eventually rose to about \$120,000.