

DOMINATRIX TRIAL

Defendant answered door in diaper, court told

BY CARYS MILLS

The would-be hit man at the centre of a murder conspiracy trial told the jury that accused businessman Alex Petraitis wore what looked to be a toga or a diaper at a meeting at the home of a Scarborough dominatrix.

Mr. Petraitis and his alleged mistress, Sandra Rinella, have both pleaded not guilty to conspiracy to murder and counselling murder. Kerry Anderson, Ms. Rinella's ex-boyfriend, has told the court that he was hired by the couple to kill Mr. Petraitis's wife in 2003.

On Monday, the 12-person jury heard audio excerpts from taped conversations that Mr. Anderson said he secretly collected by hiding a tape recorder in his sock. They also heard Mr. Anderson describe the details of one meeting where Mr. Petraitis, 68, answered the door wearing the unusual outfit.

Mr. Anderson, 46, said the businessman never attempted to change out of the costume, which resembled that of sumo wrestler, and under cross-examination he agreed he thought he'd walked in on a role-playing scenario.

Mr. Anderson, who said he never intended to murder Mr. Petraitis's wife, began his testimony before the Ontario Superior Court last week. "I was going to ignore the situation and hope it was going to go away," he testified.

Ms. Rinella's lawyer, Joseph Neuberger, began cross-examination of Mr. Anderson late Monday afternoon. The lawyer noted that Mr. Anderson, who has more than 20 previous convictions, doesn't "have a particularly good track record of honesty."

Under cross-examination, Mr. Anderson said he sometimes supplied cocaine to Ms. Rinella, whom he dated for five years and has a son with. "I sold it to her a few times," he said.

Ms. Rinella began to exhibit signs of an intense addiction,

he said, including a deteriorating appearance, speaking in foreign tongues while asleep, talking to herself and scratching herself naked against a wall like a snake.

Mr. Neuberger pointed out discrepancies in the evidence brought forward compared with a 2005 pretrial. Mr. Anderson then said that the trial was "crazy" because it involved three people who never intended to commit murder.

Mr. Anderson said neither Ms. Rinella, 47, nor Mr. Petraitis, a former book and magazine distribution executive, told him they didn't want him to go through with the plan.

He testified last week that Mr. Petraitis wanted his wife of 40 years, Kirsten, killed at the couple's cottage near Buckhorn, Ont., before Christmas and told him a key was hidden under a rock by the garage. Mr. Anderson said he originally wanted \$25,000 for the job, but the amount eventually rose to about \$120,000.

Mr. Anderson was convicted of attempted extortion against Mr. Petraitis in September of 2004 and was sentenced to 6 1/2 years.

On Monday, the court heard some of Mr. Anderson's secret tapes, which he said he made originally to either send to Ms. Petraitis or to extort Mr. Petraitis for \$1-million and a Hummer.

"You know we're, we're gonna try to really make it look like a kidnapping are we not?" said a man identified by the Crown as Mr. Petraitis.

"Right, critical," Mr. Anderson said.

Other conversations cover specific details of how the alleged plan could be carried out, including leaving a ransom note and timing.

The tapes, which were stored in his car, were discovered by police after Mr. Anderson was arrested while driving near where he lives in Innisfil.

The trial continues Tuesday.

With a report from
The Canadian Press