

Garrick faces more charges

By Dale Anne Freed
SPECIAL TO THE BEAVER

An Oakville man out on bail while facing accusations that he defrauded several Argos and their coach is back behind bars again – this time charged with trying to defraud a Connecticut real estate office handling a \$28 million estate.

Walter Garrick once told potential investors he ran an international dot-com company and was a billionaire surgeon. He also claimed to be owner of the Mississauga Ice Dogs and of the Argos.

Garrick, who turned 38 earlier this week, will be seeking bail in a Toronto court, facing a new charge of fraud over \$5,000 and two counts of failing to comply with his bail conditions.

He was arrested Wednesday morning as he reported to his probation officer in Scarborough.

Under the rules of his bail, Garrick was to refrain from involvement in any investment activities other than through his own name.

According to Det. Alex Gauthier of the Toronto police fraud squad, someone claiming to be a Google executive tried



Walter Garrick

to purchase a mansion on a nine-acre Lake Carrington estate in Greenwich, Conn.

It was Jennifer Boehlert, assistant in a Sotheby's International Realty office in Greenwich, who alerted Gauthier to suspicions about a man who had repeatedly called the office using different names and boasted about being "a big shot in Google."

"He was phoning a lot, wasting people's time," Boehlert said.

She called his bluff, using the Web search engine to check the names he gave while expressing interest in the sprawling Georgian-style house, reportedly once eyed by

New York Yankees star Alex Rodriguez.

As a result of the search, on reading a *Toronto Star* story published in October, Boehlert learned of the allegations of investment fraud and theft in a scheme against four Argos players, coach Pinball Clemons and three others, totalling about \$400,000.

The prospective buyer had made reference to being from Oakville, and "everything fell into place," Boehlert said.

Armed with his cellphone number and an email address, she called Gauthier.

She "did due diligence," said Gauthier.

As reported last October, victims alleged Garrick used props to buoy his credibility such as a private jet and a bogus prospectus to lure potential investors.

Last October, Garrick was charged with six counts of fraud over \$5,000, six counts of theft over \$5,000 and four counts of attempted fraud under \$5,000 by Toronto police.

A month later, Halton police charged him with five counts of fraud worth more than \$5,000 and one count of fraud worth less than \$5,000.

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