

From: gmax <[REDACTED]>
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As former Circuit Judge William Berger resigned Friday from the law firm at the heart of an alleged massive investment scandal, he depicted Rothstein Rosenfeldt Adler's lead partner as a "financial serial killer" whose actions harmed not just investors but less well-heeled victims.

Asked about the at least \$1 billion Ponzi scheme federal authorities say partner Scott Rothstein operated, Berger spoke of a secretary at the embattled law firm who scraped together \$2,000 for a down payment on a home, put it in a firm account and now it's gone.

"When the public sees Scott (Rothstein) there on TV drinking martinis, they have to think of hundreds of thousands of lives that have been adversely affected by his acts," Berger said in his first public comments on the scandal.

"I think back to the law firm picnic with hundreds of employees, their families, little children, grandparents, spouses. Rothstein walked around like Santa Claus," Berger added. "He saw close up who he would be hurting."

Those people entrusted their lives to him, Berger said.

"He violated their trust in the most cold blooded, heartless way. He really does deserve to be shot like a rabid dog."

Berger, who worked primarily in the firm's satellite office in Boca Raton along with Palm Beach County Commissioner Steven Abrams, said he believes no one at the firm knew of Rothstein's alleged financial chicanery.

Yet this is the the question on many minds since the shocking fraud story broke: How could the flashy Lamborghini-driving Broward lawyer single-handedly have duped so many?

Federal investigtors are now addressing it.

"I do not believe that this was a one-man show," said John Gillies, head of the FBI in South Florida, which has launched a massive probe and set up a hotline for investors to call.

Berger said he has not been interviewed by any federal investigator, nor does he know any fellow attorney who has.

When asked whether he would cooperate and speak to federal investigators, Berger declined to comment, but later followed up with an answer: yes.

Rothstein's recent comment on WSVN-Fox 7 that he's made "a very, very serious mistake" and will pay every single penny back falls flat with Berger.

"What he's doing now is his next scam and the public is his target," Berger said. "This business about ... making everything right... I don't believe a word of it. In the words of another attorney, 'He's working down from a life sentence.' "

Berger, who had served as a judge for 5 years following a lengthy career as a lawyer, left the bench in March 2008 and joined the firm that June. He said he left to work with his friend of 10 years, named partner Stuart Rosenfeldt, and work at a firm he perceived as vibrant, exciting and successful.

"You have to go back to March 2008, I don't know what [Rothstein] owned at the time or how flashy he was. He had not bought Bova (restaurant) at the time. He had not bought the Versace mansion or the 87-foot yacht. And he had not designed a bunker in the office," Berger said. "We are not talking about the same outward appearances then as now."

Berger, one of many lawyers who have left Rothstein's firm in recent weeks, is mulling his options and "has a dialogue" with at least six different job prospects, he said. He is considering all size of firms, including perhaps starting his own.

Together with another lawyer at the firm, Brad Edwards, Berger worked on the cases of two alleged underage victims of billionaire Jeffery Epstein's sexual dalliances in his Palm Beach mansion. The women are currently suing Epstein, and the lawyers represent them on a contingency fee basis, Berger said.

Epstein's legal team is exploring accounts that Rothstein fraudulently peddled the potential millions in Epstein settlements to investors, two sources have told The Palm Beach Post. That possibly sets the stage for Epstein's attorneys to argue their lawsuits were scams to begin with.

Under Rothstein's alleged scheme, investors would pay to invest in the clients' court claims. A portion of any court wins or settlements would be paid to clients and the rest was gravy for investors.

When asked if the Epstein victims he represented had indeed had their interests sold, Berger said he is sure no one ever approached the women he and Edwards represented. And if they were sold, the women and the lawyers did not know it, he said.

"To me any possible connection that people may try to make with what Scott Rothstein did in secret with the claims of these young women is completely irrelevant," he said.

Among the allegations against Rothstein is that he forged signatures on federal court orders as he bamboozled auto magnate Ed Morse out of \$57 million. The Sun Sentinel reported it obtained copies of court orders with the forged signatures of U.S. District Judge Kenneth Marra and U.S. Appellate Court Judge Susan H. Black.

And Marra is presiding over many civil suits filed against Epstein in federal court, one of which is set for trial in February.

"These young women have already suffered and experienced a terrible personal trauma in their lives," Berger said. "I'm not sure what his acts will cause them. I'm not sure how it's going to play out."

Another article

Sources: Rothstein Kept Stripper at Ritz-Carlton

By Bob Norman

Thu., Nov. 12 2009 @ 7:58AM

I've heard rumours for some time that fallen lawyer, political player, and Scott Rothstein put an erotic dancer up in a suite at the Ritz-Carlton on Fort Lauderdale Beach. Now a source is going on the record with it.

<http://blogs.browardpalmbeach.com/pulp/ritzcarlton.jpg>

The Ritz John Ciriello, an antiques dealer living in Pompano Beach, said he learned that Rothstein was keeping a dancer working at Solid Gold on Federal Highway in a room at the hotel in January. Ciriello, who was then working as a cabdriver, said that a Ritz-Carlton employee told him about Rothstein's arrangement and that they spoke about it often. He said he never gave the woman, a blond, a ride in his cab but once saw her exiting another taxi.

A manager at the Ritz-Carlton refused to comment.

"It happened, it's just the truth, and I'll swear to it in an affidavit if I have to," said Ciriello, who often gave cab rides at the Ritz-Carlton. "He kept a stripper from Solid Gold there, and she ran up

big liquor bills every night. I'm talking about \$2,000 at a time, and this bigwig lawyer Rothstein was paying for all of it. It was all done on a credit card. She'd party all night and sleep all day. At the same time, Rothstein was coming to the Ritz-Carlton with his wife and family for Sunday brunch. This guy makes me sick."

A longtime Fort Lauderdale businessman who was acquainted with Rothstein and asked that his name not be mentioned said he also learned firsthand from a former Ritz-Carlton bartender -- who was not Ciriello's contact -- that Rothstein had the dancer living in a suite at the hotel. The businessman's account of the story was remarkably similar to that of Ciriello's, whom he doesn't know. "I know it's true," said the businessman. "I've heard it from several different people."

He said he learned that Rothstein had rented a time-share suite in the hotel from a Canadian national for six months around the turn of the year. Ciriello said the woman would tip room service a couple of hundred dollars at a time.

Rothstein and his wife, Kimberly, were fixtures in the Fort Lauderdale social and charity circuit, where Rothstein threw around millions of stolen dollars. Ciriello said he it was only right that Rothstein's

financial empire -- based on a Ponzi scheme and theft from friends -- collapsed and he has been exposed as a total fraud. "This guy blew up like a nuclear bomb," he said.

State authorities have launched a criminal investigation into official misconduct and evidence tampering involving the Florida Division of Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco.

The Cheetah, a low end gentlemen's club, was raided following an undercover inquiry into sex-for-money and drugs there.

The state spent 19 months investigating the Cheetah with undercover officers (Roberts and Fisten) going into the club at least 18 times with dancers offering them sex in the private VIP rooms and/or drugs, according to state records.

(18 VISITS? ISN'T THAT A BIT MUCH?? ON TAXPAYER DOLLARS???)

Five days later, ABT executed a second search warrant, seizing the video recorders. State agents got the warrant after telling a judge that cameras were secretly recording people in the VIP rooms and bathrooms.

Authorities aren't saying what's on the recorders. Cheetah's attorney, Robert Buschel, has been demanding the devices back, arguing they were illegally seized.

The club's owner, Joe Rodriguez, reached an incredibly lenient settlement with the state (negotiated by lawyer WHEELER. Starting to smell really, really BAD???) to sell the Cheetah's liquor license and pay a \$15,000 fine. (IS THAT THE SAME JOE RODRIGUEZ WHO IS REPRESENTED BY ROTHSTEIN, ROSENFELDT AND ADLER???) YES! IT IS!! WHAT A "COINCIDENCE"!!)

On Monday, ABT filed a complaint about Wheeler with the Florida Commission on Ethics. Deputy General Counsel Michael Martinez wrote in the two-page complaint.

According to one complaint, Wheeler WAS JUST AN OUTRIGHT SLEAZY SCUMBAG.

As for Roberts and Fisten, they were not to share information "in reference to certain pending legal matters about which you have specialized knowledge as a result of your employment with ABT" cops, Buschel, speaking on the behalf of Roberts, Fisten and Wheeler, said Tuesday the state hasn't sent him a copy of the Florida Commission on Ethics complaint, which was supposed to be ruled on by the high-regarded Vice Chair, SCOTT ROTHSTEIN, so he could not comment. (Nod, Nod, Wink, Wink).

So what happened to these players, you're wondering?

In June, the three former ABT officials — Maj. Pat Roberts, Lt. Michael Fisten and Senior Attorney Michael Wheeler — have gone to work for the law firm that represents the Cheetah: Rothstein, Rosenfeldt and Adler. Roberts had supervised the Cheetah investigation. Fisten was one of the undercover officers. Wheeler negotiated the settlement agreement for the state.

(Just remember the names, folks. All you can do is drive these guys out of town out of embarrassment, at this point).

Posted On: Thursday, Nov. 12 2009 @ 7:13PM

http://blogs.browardpalmbeach.com/pulp/2009/11/scott_rothstein_ritz_carlton.php#comment-4897842>

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