

# Ex-lawyer's gifts left recipients a little confused

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Until recently, Mr. Costanza had no inkling the lawyer was buying lottery tickets or otherwise spending the money.

"I don't know what he used it for," he said. "If he tells you he used it for lottery tickets, how are you going to check that out? It's worse than the needle in the haystack."

It's still not clear where the money went.

## The money

Peter Speyer, who prosecuted the criminal charges against Rogala, said this week the best "guesstimate" police could make was that he poured about \$600,000 into lottery tickets, invested about \$244,000 in the Power House restaurant in Stoney Creek and spent the remaining \$850,000 on "his own concupiscence of the flesh (sexual gratification)."

Mr. Speyer said there is no evidence that the disbarred lawyer squirreled the stolen money away in some off-shore haven.

But Mr. Wagenveld, at least, believes he would have salted a few dollars away.

"He has an elderly mother and he would have put something aside so she would be looked after while he was in jail," he said.

He also believes some of the missing funds were used to pay old debts, such as the money borrowed from George Sinclair Construction.

"He was digging one hole to fill another," he said.

Stoney Creek Realtor Dave Brown, who lost \$19,500 in the scam, also has trouble believing the money

was gambled away.

"I've known Albin for about 10 years. He was not only our lawyer but a personal friend. I could understand a high roller blowing \$50,000 to \$60,000 on gambling junkets to Las Vegas. But not Albin. If he was a high roller, he had to have Jekyll and Hyde personality," said Mr. Brown.

"The only gamble I've ever seen him take was investing in the Power House restaurant," he added.

Doug Brown (no relation), who is spearheading the Power House project, said he had to buy out Rogala's share of the business because the money had to be turned over to the creditors in the bankruptcy.

## Genius IQ

He said Rogala, whom he described as having a genius-level IQ, told him he had squandered \$1.1 million to \$1.2 million in lottery tickets, spreading his business among about 35 outlets and spending as much as \$11,000 in one week.

The police estimated he spent only about half that much on lottery tickets.

Mr. Speyer pointed out, however, that it is hard to determine how much people spend on the lotteries.

And, while some aspects of the case may always remain shrouded in mystery, Judge Anton Ziraw made one point perfectly clear when Rogala appeared before him in provincial court this week.

He told him to expect a long stint in jail when he returns for sentencing June 9.