



Manhattan defense attorney endorses A-Rod's silence

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LAKELAND, Fla. - Alex Rodriguez has drawn some criticism in recent weeks for his refusal to answer a variety of questions in advance of his meeting with federal investigators, but his silence is hardly unusual for people in his position.

"As a defense attorney, any time I have a client - whether they're well-known or not that well-known - who federal agents or prosecutors want to talk to, I tell them to a.) keep a low profile and b.) not make any public comments," Manhattan-based defense attorney Joseph DiBenedetto said yesterday.

DiBenedetto has had several high-profile clients, including Peter Gotti in a much-publicized RICO case six years ago. He said nothing about Rodriguez's public stance in the case - one in which A-Rod's involvement at this point is solely as a witness - has struck him as out of the ordinary.

A-Rod said March 1 that authorities had contacted him regarding their investigation of Anthony Galea, a Canadian sports medicine doctor under investigation for the distribution of performance-enhancing drugs.

Rodriguez reportedly was scheduled to be interviewed Friday in Buffalo, but no meeting took place. He said one had not been scheduled, but there were reports Friday night that his representatives had postponed it because they didn't want it to turn into a media spectacle.

The Mets' Carlos Beltran and Jose Reyes also were interviewed as part of the investigation and talked to the media afterward.

Regardless of whether A-Rod was being forthright about whether a meeting had been scheduled, DiBenedetto said the length of time between the contact and the actual interview is somewhat immaterial.

"These cases have their own timeline," he said. "It's an active investigation, so agents and prosecutors are speaking to a lot of people. Don't read anything into the timeline."

Rodriguez, not on the travel team the Yankees took here yesterday, worked out at Steinbrenner Field. He said Friday his hope was to have his meetings with the Feds and with Major League Baseball - which also wants to discuss what, if any, relationship he had with Galea - done before Opening Day.

A-Rod has said he will address the media after his interview, a path DiBenedetto endorsed. "If it's a situation where there was no improper conduct on his part,

where he didn't get HGH or something, if he was treated and nothing more, I would make it known in order to put the issue to bed," he said. "If he has nothing to add beyond that he treated me for the hip, it doesn't hurt to issue a short statement saying that."