



Photos by CHRISTINE COTTER / Los Angeles Times

Defense attorney Dennis O'Connell, left, and Joan Norton, who says she gave James Borzynski \$50,000.

## Defendant in Swindling Trial Won't Testify

■ **Courts:** Three O.C. women say James Borzynski promised love, marriage but made off with \$87,000 that was not repaid.

By SUSAN MARQUEZ OWEN  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

SANTA ANA—James Borzynski, the used-car salesman accused of becoming a Don Juan con artist, refused to take the stand Thursday to defend himself against charges he swindled three Orange County women out of \$87,000.

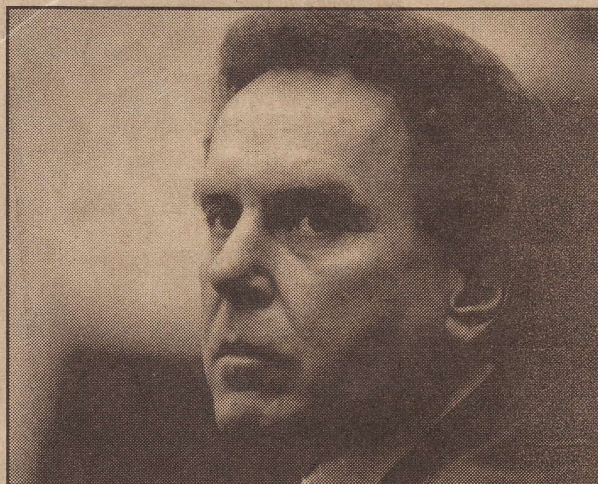
Borzynski's attorney said his client decided late Wednesday night that he did not need to testify.

"It's our belief that the present state of evidence is insufficient for a conviction," said defense attorney Dennis O'Connell. "The witnesses have all testified that they viewed him as a sympathetic person and felt sorry for him and gave him money because they wanted to help him. That's not false pretenses."

Borzynski, 45, a former Laguna Niguel resident, is charged with three counts of grand theft by false pretenses. He was arrested last November after 10 California women complained to authorities, and three Orange County women pressed charges.

Five women have testified in Superior Court this week that Borzynski promised them love and marriage, and to repay the loans promptly. Instead, they said, he disappeared with their money. Prosecutors say Borzynski used at least 12 aliases in his dealings with the women.

O'Connell said his client has done nothing wrong and that the testimony of at least one witness, Joan



James Borzynski is charged with grand theft.

Norton, 47, of Aliso Viejo, is suspect. O'Connell introduced bankruptcy forms into evidence Thursday that Norton allegedly filed in 1993, the year she was involved with Borzynski.

Several statements she allegedly made on the forms are inconsistent with testimony Norton gave during the trial, O'Connell said. Norton, who contends she gave Borzynski \$50,000, took the Fifth Amendment Thursday when pressed by O'Connell to answer questions about the forms.

O'Connell would not comment on what the forms contain, but said he will disclose the alleged inconsistencies publicly during closing arguments in the trial on Monday.