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Walters denies doing wrong in NCAA case

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ATLANTA New York sports agent Norby Walters said Friday he doesn't play by NCAA rules in recruiting potential clients but he has done nothing wrong. "I'm not playing by their rules, one way or the other," Walters said of NCAA rules which forbid college athletes to take money from or be represented by agents while eligible for college sports.

He called a Chicago grand jury probe of his activities "totally off base."

"The federal government has no business sticking its nose in my business," said Walters. His comments were reported in Saturday's combined editions of The Atlanta Journal and The Atlanta Constitution.

"I am not guilty of these so-called alleged possible charges. I have broken no laws. I will be proven innocent, and it is ridiculous that I have to go through this," he said.

The grand jury is looking into possible charges that include extortion, wire fraud, mail fraud and violation of the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act.

Approximately 60 athletes from 28 colleges across the nation have been or will be subpoenaed by the grand jury.

Some of these athletes have been threatened by U.S. attorneys with the possibility of one-year

imprisonment on **fraud** and tax-evasion charges, according to the athletes' attorneys.

The NCAA considers the case landmark action by the government.

U.S. Attorney Jim Voluca and Assistant U.S. Attorney Howard M. Pearl, both of Chicago, have told some athletes that they committed **fraud** when they accepted money from **Walters** or **Bloom**, the papers reported attorneys representing the athletes as saying.

The **fraud** was alleged because the athletes knowingly broke the terms of their scholarships, and the tax evasion was alleged because the athletes did not report money supposedly received from **Walters** as income, the attorneys said.

In his first interview since the grand jury investigation formally began Tuesday in Chicago, **Walters** strenuously defended himself and **Bloom** against allegations they have threatened athletes.

"Have we threatened anyone? The answer is a loud 'no, no, no.' I'm 55 years old. Wow."

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