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Brad Blair, High-Ranking OPP Officer, Threatens To Sue Doug Ford For Defamation

Lawyers for the deputy commissioner say the premier tried to intimidate him.

Canadian Press



CANADIAN PRESS

Ontario Premier Doug Ford is photographed during a session of the legislature on Sept. 17, 2018.

TORONTO — One of Ontario's highest-ranking police officers is threatening to sue Premier Doug Ford accusing him of defamation.

In a notice of intent to sue filed last month, lawyers for Ontario Provincial Police Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair allege that Ford damaged the officer's reputation when he

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intimidate his client, who publicly criticized Toronto police superintendent Ron Ravener's appointment as OPP commissioner.

"Specifically, it is alleged that you intentionally, deliberately, and maliciously made statements you knew or ought to have known to be false," Falconer said in a letter to Ford.



NATHAN DENETTE/CP

Ontario Premier Doug Ford speaks to the media during a press conference in Toronto on Dec. 18, 2018.

Falconer said Ford told media that Blair had allegedly violated the act, when there is no evidence the veteran officer did so at any time during his career.

"The preparation, distribution and publication of these defamatory words have caused extensive harm to Deputy Commissioner Blair's professional and personal reputation, as well as other damages to be specified at a later date," Falconer said.

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Blair, who was also in the running for the commissioner's job, also suggested that

Taverner's appointment be delayed until an investigation could be conducted by the province's ombudsman.

After the ombudsman declined to investigate, Blair launched a legal challenge in an attempt to force the watchdog to probe the hiring. Ontario's Divisional Court is expected to hear the case in April.

“

The preparation, distribution and publication of these defamatory words have caused extensive harm to Deputy Commissioner Blair's professional and personal reputation, as well as other damages to be specified at a later date.

—Julian Falconer, Blair's lawyer

The court documents filed in the case also contain more details about Blair's allegations that Ford's chief of staff asked the OPP to purchase a "larger camper type vehicle" and have it modified to the specifications of the premier's office, with the costs associated with the vehicle "kept off the books."

The documents show the cost to taxpayers for the van remodel would be over \$50,000, not including the cost of the vehicle itself. The custom features were to include a 32-inch television with Blu-Ray player, a mini-fridge, black leather captain's chairs and a reclining leather sofa bench, the documents said.

A spokesman for Ford said Monday that the premier asked the OPP to look into obtaining a "cost-effective used van" for him to work and travel in across the province.

"The emails sent to the OPP from a member of the premier's office staff are not an official procurement of a van, instead they are a cost estimate and reveal an effort to minimize expense," Simon Jefferies said in an email.

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Blair's lawyers said they filed the notice of intent to sue for defamation after the government failed to respond to four letters seeking to clarify if Blair was under a Police Services Act investigation.

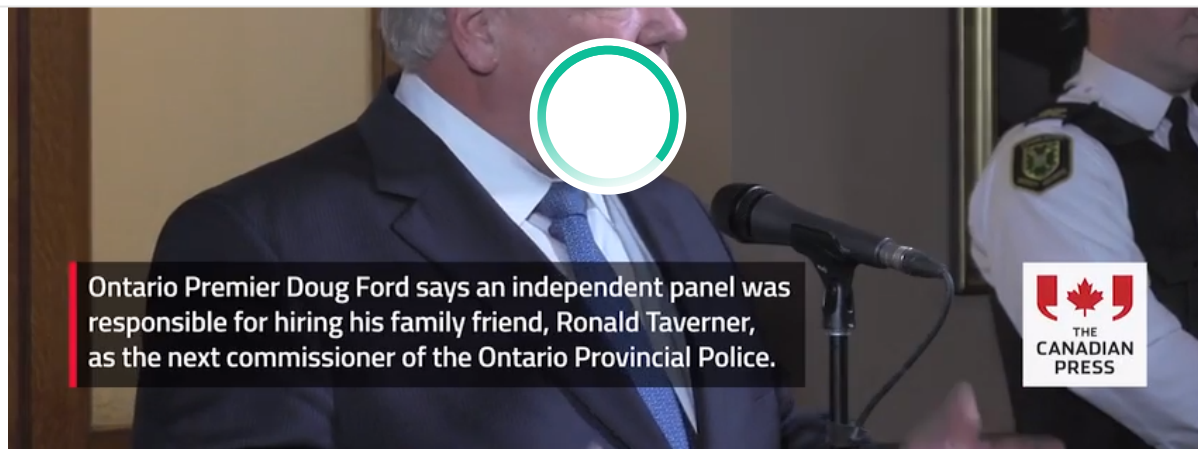
Jefferies denied Ford's statements were a reprisal against Blair.

"Mr. Blair is an unsuccessful candidate, and still appears to be clearly upset that he did not get the job," he said, adding that the premier would respond to any legal proceedings through his counsel if necessary.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath called Ford's actions "shameful" and said his comments were an attempt to intimidate Blair.

"I think it's another indicator of this government's desire to put a chill on anybody that's going to speak out against them," she said.

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Appears Blair is having a tantrum.

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Guess you have missed the number of friends Dougie boy has appointed to cushy Government Appointments with big fat cat salaries...like the failed Tory Candidate Cameron Montgomery who was appointed Chairman of the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) which before his appointment was a part time job with a salary of \$5,000...but under Ford it is now a Full Time Job with a salary of \$140,000 plus vacation, benefits and pension! Or Ian Todd, appointed Ontario's trade representative in Washington, D.C., at an annual salary of \$350,000. That's \$75,000 more than the previous occupant, former Liberal cabinet minister Monique Smith. Todd was the tour director on Ford's election campaign. Or how about Rueben Devlin, named special adviser to the premier on health care, a position that did not previously exist, at an annual rate of \$348,000. Devlin, a surgeon and longtime hospital CEO, is a former president of the Ontario PC Party and a member of Ford's transition team. These appointments and their salaries sure smack of entitlement to me! Maybe their salaries should have to come from the Ontario PC party instead of the taxpayers. The Ford Gravy Train has moved from Toronto city hall up University Avenue to Queens Park. You are correct though Dougie has got to GO!



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