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Doug Ford raged over security detail as office sought custom van job, court documents say

By **ROB FERGUSON** Queen's Park Bureau
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Doug Ford went on a profane tirade about his rotating security detail and his office sought \$50,696 in custom modifications for a premier's police van, including a reclining leather sofa, mini-fridge, 32-inch TV, Blu-ray DVD player and wide swivel chairs, according to court documents.

The details are in documents filed by a lawyer for Ontario Provincial Police Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair, who was passed over for the OPP's top job in favour of **Ford's friend**, veteran Toronto police Supt. Ron Taverner.



Doug Ford went on a profane tirade about his rotating security detail, according to court documents filed by a lawyer for the OPP Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair. Blair was passed over for the OPP's top job in favour of Ford's friend, veteran Toronto police Supt. Ron Taverner. (ANDREW FRANCIS WALLACE/TORONTO STAR)

Blair's latest court filings are part of a push by lawyer Julian Falconer to force Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dubé to [probe](#) the controversial Taverner appointment, which is now on hold during an investigation by Ontario's integrity commissioner into whether there was political influence in the hiring.

"I've asked for my own detail of officers who I trust already," the documents say Ford grumbled to one of his OPP bodyguards in July as he was being picked up for a trip to the annual premiers' conference in Moncton.

"It feels like I'm not being heard, like I'm getting f---ed around by the OPP and I'm getting more pissed off," Ford added, according to dialogue reported in a July 18, 2018 email from Sgt. Terrance Murphy to a superior.

"I'm going to call the commissioner and sort this out. This is the last straw," the premier continued before directing his executive assistant, Nico Fidani, to book a call or meeting at police headquarters in Orillia with then-OPP commissioner Vince Hawkes, who subsequently retired last fall.

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"If I have to, I will drive up there to see him face-to-face so he can see how serious I am about this. If he can't sort this out then maybe a new commissioner can make it happen."

Asked about the allegations in the court filings, Ford spokesperson Simon Jefferies said the premier merely asked for bodyguards with whom he was comfortable.

"Requests for something as personal as full-time security details involving the premier and his family are hardly unusual. These types of requests are made by politicians of all stripes, at both the federal and provincial levels of government," Jefferies wrote in an emailed statement that also raised concerns about Blair's release of the OPP email.

"It is extremely troubling that Mr. Blair is apparently using his office to obtain confidential information and documentation and then filing such documents in a public court record to further his own personal agenda," Jefferies wrote.

The documents also include layout drawings and a detailed estimate for a customized Ford Transit passenger van to replace the traditional large SUV in which Ontario premiers are chauffeured from home to work and events. They are part of a court filing from earlier this month in which Falconer served notice on Ford of Blair's intent to sue him for defamation.

At issue are accusations made by Ford after the Taverner hiring that Blair, who was acting commissioner following the Hawkes retirement, contravened the [Police Services Act](#) by revealing confidential information in other documents filed in the ombudsman case.

"You intentionally, deliberately and maliciously made statements you knew or ought to have known were false," Falconer wrote to Ford. "There have not been any findings that Deputy Commissioner Blair has in any way breached any provision of the Police Services Act."



Lawyers for OPP Deputy Commissioner Brad Blair allege that Premier Doug Ford defamed him by publicly accusing him of breaking the Police Services Act, a law that governs the conduct of officers. (TORONTO STAR FILE PHOTO)

Falconer charged Ford's comments were "an act of reprisal" and an attempt to "intimidate" Blair from pursuing his complaint.

Ford's spokesman noted Blair was an unsuccessful candidate for the OPP commissioner's job, and "still appears to be clearly upset that he did not get the job."

"The premier will respond to any legal proceedings through his counsel, if and when necessary," Jefferies said, adding Ford requested the OPP "look into the possibility of obtaining a cost-effective used van for purposes of working and travelling the province.

"Mr. Blair's allegations that anyone in the premier's office requested a van be kept 'off the books' are a complete fabrication ... and are categorically false," Jefferies continued.

"Mr. Blair's own affidavit provides absolutely no evidence ... the greater concern is the disclosure and publication of what appear to be confidential internal police communications by Mr. Blair and the use of his status as a police officer to advance his personal interests in a court proceeding he himself has initiated."

New Democrat MPP Taras Natyshak (Essex) said Ford has a “double standard” when it comes to his promised \$6 billion a year in government spending cuts.

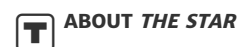
“It is absolutely shameful that Doug Ford is telling Ontarians to tighten their belts and accept deep cuts to the services families depend on, while he is spending their money on a swanky customized personal pleasure wagon,” Natyshak said in a statement.

Jefferies said the van estimate provided to the premier’s office, from A1 Mobility on Dixie Rd in Mississauga, was not an “official procurement.” The estimate specifies the modifications totalling \$50,696.21 are “excluding the price of the van.”

The base price for a Ford Transit passenger van — the model cited in the estimate — is about \$42,000, which would push the total cost of the conversion to the \$100,000 range, including tax.

With files from Robert Benzie

Rob Ferguson is a Toronto-based reporter covering Ontario politics. Follow him on Twitter: [@robferguson1](https://twitter.com/robferguson1)



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