



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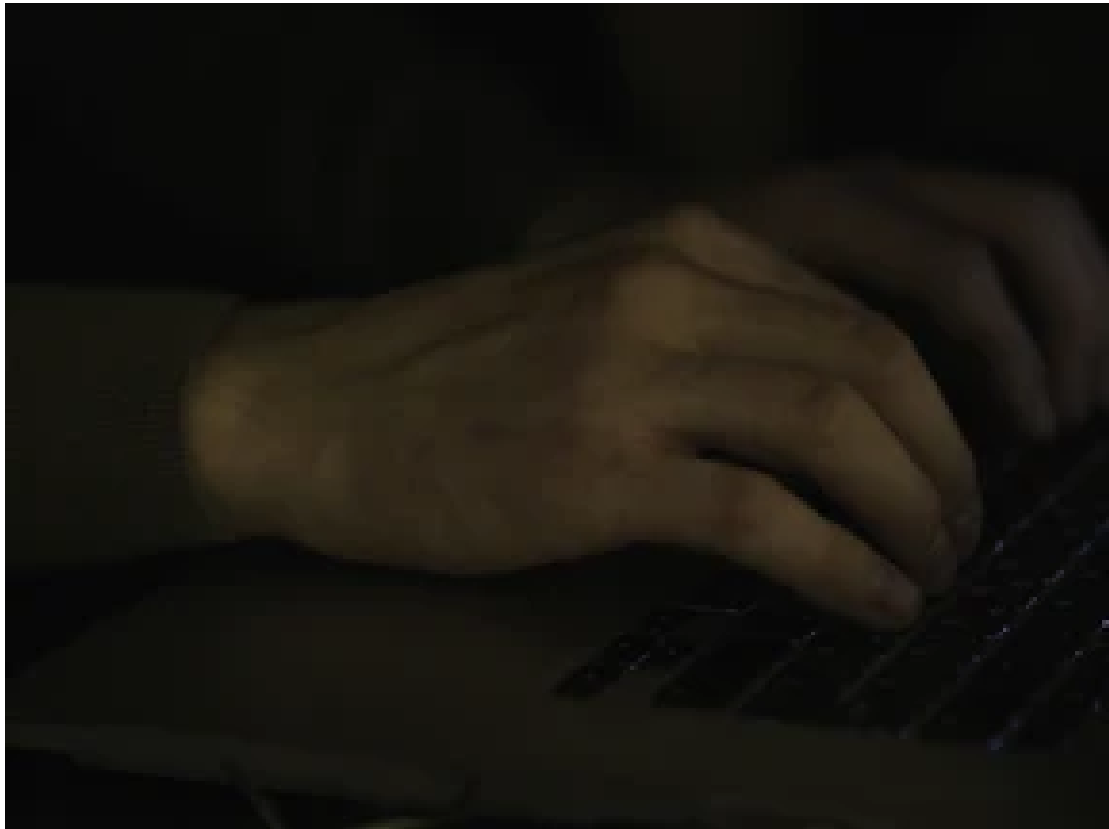
# Ontario man must pay \$5M for online smear jobs against recruiters who rejected him

*In Canada's largest defamation award ever, Tanvir Farid of Toronto was ordered to pay \$4.7M to 53 plaintiffs after decade-long campaign of online harassment*

Bryan Passifume

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The plaintiffs, who reside in Canada, the United States and Europe, were mostly executives or recruiters of information technology companies that declined to hire Tanvir Farid, except for two of them. PHOTO BY GETTY IMAGES


A single defendant is on the hook for Canada's largest defamation award ever, worth millions of dollars, awarded last week in Toronto to dozens of plaintiffs.

On June 27, Tanvir Farid of Toronto was ordered to pay \$4.7 million to 53 plaintiffs for a decade-long campaign of harassment and online defamation accusing multiple people who refused to hire him for an IT job of being sexual predators, frauds and criminals.

Superior Court Justice A.P. Ramsay had originally ruled last March in favour of the plaintiffs, but had reserved her decision on damages until last week.

Farid, who records state was also known as Tanvir Islam, began an anonymous campaign of cyberstalking and harassment in 2012 by publishing thousands of defamatory statements online against the defendants, the records say.

“Unified, they claim that Mr. Farid is an internet troll who has waged a campaign of cyber harassment, cyber stalking, and cyber defamation, ultimately resulting in tens of thousands of postings about them on the internet depicting them as sexual predators, fraudsters, and criminals among other things,” Ramsay wrote in her decision last March.

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“The plaintiffs have been the subject of a targeted campaign with postings on websites for some ending up on websites devoted to posting salacious content.”

The nearly \$5-million award is nearly double that of the previous record award of \$2.5 million levied in 2019 against Kevin J. Johnston for defaming Paramount Fine Foods founder Mohamad Fakih, after Johnston falsely accused him of funding terrorism.

Lawyer Maanit Zemel with Toronto law firm Zemel van Kampen LLP represented the plaintiffs against Farid, assisted by Lee Brenner, a lawyer with Los Angeles-based law firm Venable LLP, who had been contacted by some of Farid’s U.S. victims.

“This was not about money, this was about restoring people’s reputations,” Brenner said.

“These were real harms — being called by your family and friends, or your children’s family and friends, saying that it’s all over the internet that you’re a sexual predator, or a criminal, or a racist, and what that’s like for people,” he said.

The plaintiffs, who reside in Canada, the U.S. and Europe, were mostly executives or recruiters of information technology companies that declined to hire Farid, except for two of them. One had formerly been Farid’s supervisor, and another was a woman who had turned him down on an online dating service.

With the exception of the former supervisor, none of the dozens of plaintiffs had ever met Farid in person.

“Counsel for the plaintiffs submit that the common denominator which unites all the plaintiffs is ‘rejection’; that is, each one of them had rejected Mr. Farid,” wrote Ramsay.

For years, Farid’s victims tried in vain to uncover who was behind the slander, as the posts were made anonymously using a variety of devices and public internet access points.

While Zemel was fielding complaints from people harassed by Farid, American victims were contacting Brenner.

The two lawyers’ paths eventually crossed and they teamed up.

“One of the key issues in a case like this, with an anonymous defamer, is figuring out who they are,” Brenner told National Post.

“Once you figure out who they are, you realize that’s really just step one in the process.”

It took a private forensic identification firm to identify Farid as a culprit, and a court-ordered civil search-and-seizure warrant — referred to in Canadian law as an Anton Piller Order — to link physical evidence to the slander.

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That search warrant was executed at Farid’s apartment in December 2017, where solicitors seized several electronic devices. That gave investigators enough evidence to determine he was responsible for the harassment, “which included the plaintiffs’ names, photographs, particular words and phrases that appear in the postings, and internet-based activity related to visiting the websites where the defamatory postings appear,” Ramsay wrote in her judgement.

As well, analysis determined that Farid's laptop had previously used IP addresses matching the location previously identified by investigators where some of the derogatory posts were made, including local coffee shops and Toronto Public Library branches.

During the two-and-a-half hours the solicitors were searching his apartment, Farid managed to delete 9,521 digital files from his devices.

“While the ISS was in his apartment executing the Anton Piller Order, and he was presumably in his bedroom to consult with a lawyer, Mr. Farid googled ‘How to permanently delete records from my device?’, then he proceeded to delete numerous records from his electronic devices,” Ramsay wrote in her judgement.

On June 27, Farid was ordered by the court to pay damages ranging from \$50,000 to \$110,000 per plaintiff, totalling \$4,773,000.

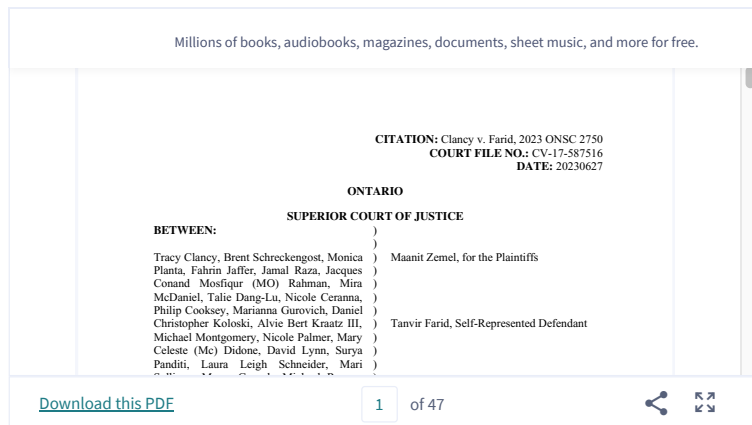
“The plaintiffs argue that not only has the defendant refused to apologize or retracted any of the defamatory statements, continues, to date, to deny that he is responsible for the postings, even in the face of this court determination of his liability,” Ramsay wrote in her decision.

“The plaintiffs argue that the defendant’s failure to do so entitles the court to decline to reduce the plaintiffs’ damages.”

Farid is also prohibited from publishing any more defamatory content about his victims, and is ordered to take steps to remove existing content.

*National Post*

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Was he born in Canada? If not, get him on a plane.

REPLY 4 0

IM

Ivan Myers · 5 HRS AGO

But Justin Trudeau defamed those that were or supported the Truckers as white supremacist, misogynists and racists! Then he proceeded to seize their property, and bank accounts and destroyed their livleyhoods. Can we sue this guy for deffimation?

Oh right, canada is a nation of laws and Justin and the progressives are above the law

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1 SHOW OLDER REPLIES

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David Vaughn · 8 HRS AGO

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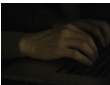
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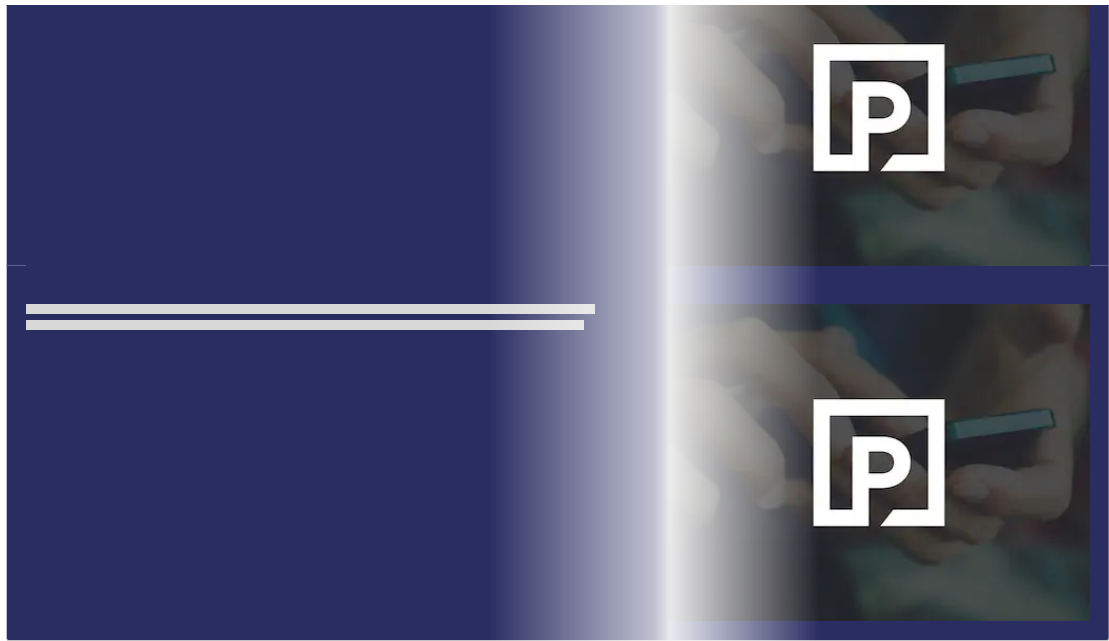
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