

Fake edition of Sun sets off lawsuit; CanWest launches legal action against activist, local printing company; [Final Edition]

Doug Ward. The Vancouver Sun. Vancouver, B.C.: Dec 8, 2007. pg. B.11 dward@png.canwest.com

VANCOUVER - The owner of The Vancouver Sun has launched a lawsuit against a pro-Palestinian activist and a local printing company over the publication of a fake edition of the daily newspaper.

A writ of summons filed by CanWest Mediaworks Publications alleges that long-time left-wing activist Mordecai Briemberg, other unidentified activists and Horizon Publications conspired to produce and distribute a phoney edition of The Vancouver Sun on June 7, 2007.

The defendants distributed about 12,000 copies of the fake newspaper in Vancouver, Victoria and at the University of B.C.

"We take this matter very seriously. We did say that we would follow up, and I believe our customers expect us to," Vancouver Sun publisher Kevin Bent said about the suit.

The CanWest writ also alleges the defendants published the content of the fake newspaper on various websites.

The suit said the defendants were "motivated by hostility to the principal shareholders of the plaintiff and by a desire to undermine, or hurt, the business of the plaintiff and its principal shareholders."

The plaintiff's writ, submitted by lawyer David Church, said Briemberg and six other unidentified people are involved in anti- Israeli, pro-Palestinian media activities.

The writ alleges that the defendants "harbour antagonistic views towards the plaintiff, its principal shareholders and the reporting and editorial opinions expressed in the plaintiff's publications, including in The Vancouver Sun."

The writ also names Horizon general manager Garth Leddy as a defendant. Leddy declined to comment when reached Friday.

Defendant Briemberg has been a longtime critic of the Israeli policies in the Middle East. Briemberg was among some left-wing instructors fired in 1969 by Simon Fraser University.

The plaintiff is claiming punitive, aggravated damages and aggravated costs. CanWest is also seeking an injunction, prohibiting the defendants from creating any fake newspapers or publications with the plaintiff's trademarks.

Credit: Vancouver Sun