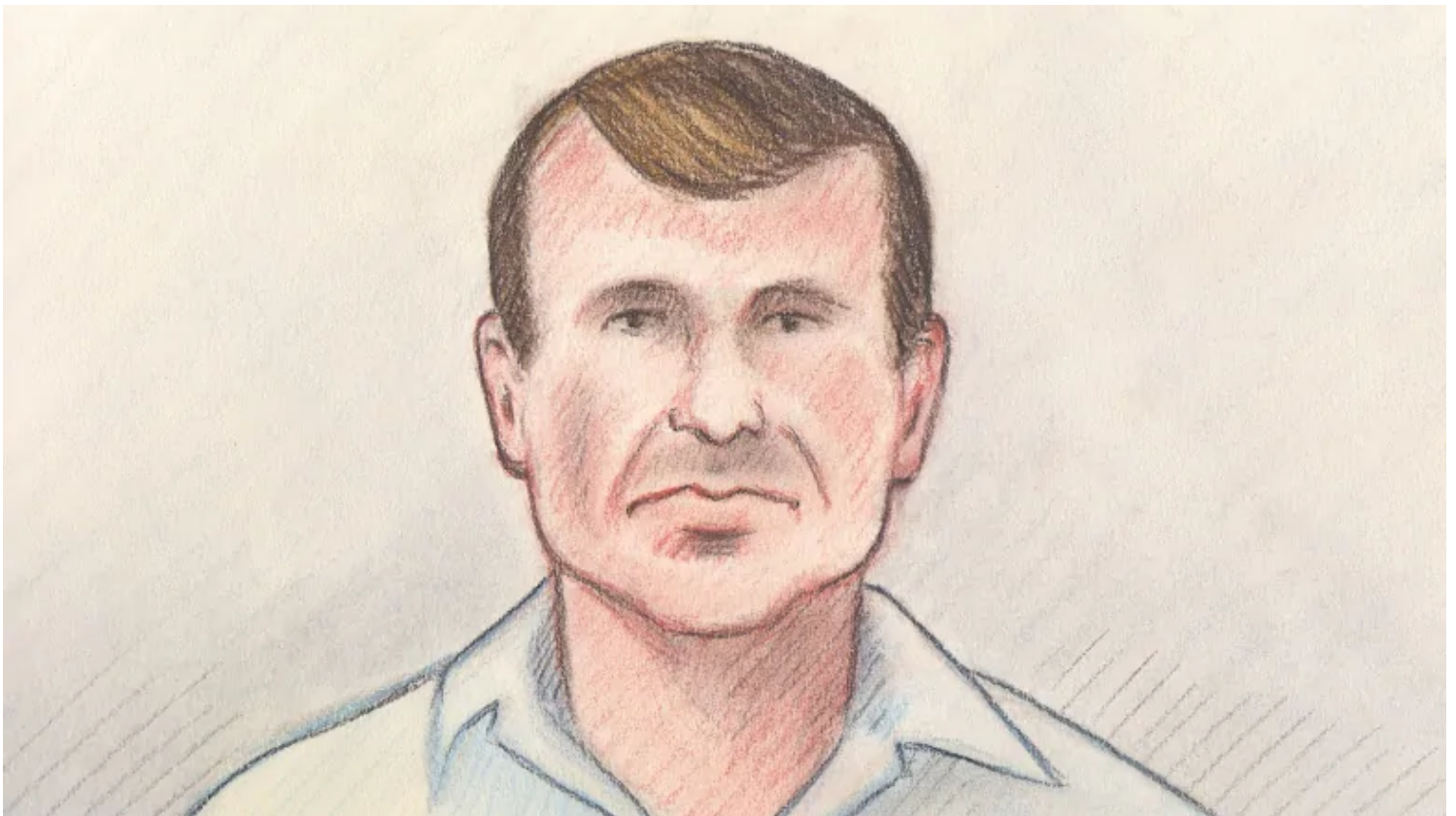


Politics

Secrets in hands of alleged RCMP spy would cause 'devastating' damage to Canada, allies: documents

Security services covertly searched Cameron Ortis's condo in August

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A covert search of Cameron Ortis' condo revealed hand written notes for how to remove metadata from documents, according to documents seen by CBC. (Sketch by Laurie Foster-MacLeod for CBC News)

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The cache of classified intelligence material an RCMP official was allegedly preparing to share with a foreign entity or terrorist organization is so vital to Canada's national security that the country's intelligence agencies say its misuse strikes at the heart of Canada's sovereignty and security, documents seen by CBC News reveal.

According to an assessment by the Communications Security Establishment, Canada's cybersecurity agency, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Cameron Ortis, the director general of the RCMP's national intelligence co-ordination centre, had material that, if released, would cause a "HIGH"—in all caps— degree of damage to Canada and its allies.

"Analysis of the contents of the reports could reasonably lead a foreign intelligence agency to draw significant conclusions about allied and Canadian intelligence targets, techniques, methods and capabilities," the documents said.

"This type of information is among the most highly protected of national security assets, by any government standard and goes to the heart of Canada's sovereignty and security."

The documents say that the possible dissemination of the documents would threaten Canada's relations with its allies.

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"CSE's preliminary assessment is that damage caused by the release of these reports and intelligence is HIGH (sic) and potentially devastating in that it would cause grave injury to Canada's national interests."

An assessment by CSIS says that while the agency has only had time to conduct a preliminary examination of the documents in Ortis's possession, they contain "sensitive intelligence that was highly classified in nature."

"Disclosure of such information beyond the intended audience may reveal not only the classified content of the particular reporting, but could possibly lead to the discovery of sensitive sources and methods with grave consequences.

"The loss of such information could also lead to a loss of confidence by our foreign partners," the CSIS analysis in the documents said.

Covert search of condo

The documents reveal that Ortis's condo was covertly searched last month and a number of handwritten notes were discovered providing instructions on how to wash metadata from PDF files.

The documents, of which CBC News has only seen parts, say that about 25 documents had been "sanitized to remove identifying information."

The documents also reveal that Ortis was just over \$90,000 in debt.

The papers reveal, [as reported by Global News](#), that the security services first got wind of Ortis through a separate investigation of Phantom Secure Communications, a B.C.-based company under investigation for providing encrypted communication devices to international criminals.

'I have information ... you will find very valuable'

In March of last year, the FBI revealed that it had taken down an international criminal communications service based in Canada that had a revenue of \$80 million over the last decade. The operation resulted in the seizure of 1,000 phones that the FBI said were being used to facilitate murders and drug smuggling.

The documents seen by CBC News say the FBI investigation discovered in 2018 that a person was sending emails to Vincent Ramos, the CEO of Phantom Secure Communications, offering to provide valuable information.

The documents allege that person was Ortis.

"You don't know me. I have information that I am confident you will find very valuable," one email contained in the documents said.

A subsequent email promised to provide "intel about your associates and individuals using their network internationally."

Charges under the Security of Information Act

Over the span of his career Ortis had some of the highest access to classified and allied information within the RCMP. Sources familiar with his work said he would have had knowledge of code words and operations.

Ortis was charged under a section of the Security of Information Act that applies to individuals "permanently bound to secrecy" as a condition of their work — which strongly suggests he had access to top secret material.

Under the Security of Information Act, Ortis has also been charged with:

- Unauthorized communication of special operational information.
- Preparing for the commission of an offence by obtaining or gaining access to information, or possessing any device, apparatus or software used for concealing, surreptitiously communicating or obtaining information.

One of the charges stems from 2015, while the others span a year, going back to September of 2018.

Ortis made a brief court appearance last Friday. He remains in custody with a bail hearing set for this Friday.



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