

Blair, David.

Belleville lawyer believed found in Florida jail

*Intell
Feb 10/82*

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Staff Reporter

A man, identifying himself as Belleville lawyer David Blair, is in Clearwater Jail, in Florida, facing a number of narcotics charges and a charge of car theft.

The man, who Metro Toronto Police believe to be Blair, has told Florida police he is David Blair, a Belleville lawyer, who is facing charges of fraud in Toronto. Metro fraud squad Sgt. Charles Dimock said today his department is investigating the arrest of Blair in Florida and is laying the groundwork to begin extradition proceedings.



DAVID BLAIR

Bail has been set at \$200,500 in Florida, but police there said Blair has been in custody since his arrest. He appears in court March 25 for his first appearance on the charges in Pinellas County, Florida.

"We're fairly certain it's the same Blair as we have warrants for here," said Sgt. Dimock. Metro Police issued a Canada-wide warrant for Blair, 33, on two counts of fraud totalling almost \$100,000 and involving two Toronto investment firms.

Pinellas County Sheriff's Department fugitives Det. Bill Lanier said this morning, in an interview from the Clearwater Jail, he spoke to Blair Tuesday. He said the man police believe to be Blair told him "he is an attorney in Canada and that he has a lawyer there working with police on extradition over a fraud matter there." Det. Lanier said a man was arrested Dec. 18 near Clearwater while driving a stolen car.

Blair is currently in jail facing a charge of trafficking cocaine, possession of 35 pounds of marijuana, grand theft - auto, possession of stolen licence plates, and possession of methaqualone.

Sgt. Dimock said this morning Metro Police are not overly concerned with positive identification through such means as fingerprints.

"He's admitted he's David Blair and has made no attempts to hide his identity. He told police there to contact his lawyer in Toronto and that lawyer has been in contact with Blair," he said. "We will have to wait and see how Florida police proceed with their charges before we begin any extradition proceedings. Once we begin extradition, we have only 45 days to wrap it up before their (Florida courts) people close the door on any extradition."

Det. Lanier said there was some original confusion, at the time of arrest, as to the identity of Blair. "He was originally booked as a John Doe. He had many pieces of different identification on him and we didn't quite know who he was at first. He was originally picked up in a traffic check.

Blair appeared to have vanished in October when police found his car parked at Detroit Metropolitan Airport. Police, at that time, believed Blair had fled to the United States, but did not know where.

Blair, along with his law partner and three employees won a \$1 million lottery several years ago. The law firm was later dissolved.

*Intelligence
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