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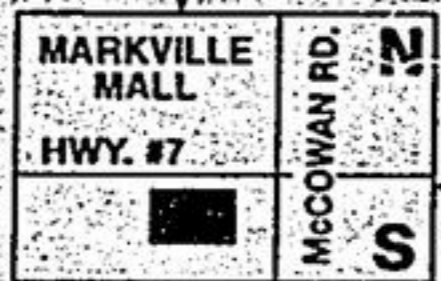
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Lengthy police chief probe shrouded with rumours

KATHLEEN GRIFFIN
Staff Reporter

York Regional Police Chief Bryan Cousineau will likely spend the Christmas season wondering if he'll face criminal charges in the new year.

The nine-month long investigation has been completed, according to

Ontario Provincial Police Det-Sup't. Larry Edgar.

The case has been sent to the provincial Crown's office in Toronto to determine whether there is enough evidence to lay charges.

"Before a final decision is made on charges we have to get a legal opinion," Edgar said.

"Then (investigator) Wally Baker and his people will decide the next step."

Cousineau has been on paid leave since March after senior officers made several allegations against him during a routine provincial audit. The auditors contacted the OPP, which began an investigation into criminal wrongdoing. York Region has been paying double salary for Cousineau and interim chief Peter Scott since then and the three-month leave has been extended three times. Police Services Board members are frustrated the investigation is taking so long, but say their hands are tied - in the absence of charges, the job still belongs to Cousineau.

The OPP have kept the nature of allegations and their investigation very close to the vest and as a result, rumours abound.

A 1994 trip to China by Cousineau paid for by the Inter-Canada Far East Trade Centre, a Markham company, has been reportedly part of the investigation, as have irregular use of cell phones, air miles and the purchase of a souped-up Camaro.

Recent reports about a \$125,000 payment to Cousineau from Magna International for future security services in 2002 is the latest in the sea of speculation.

The OPP will neither confirm nor deny the reports. Former Police Services



COUSINEAU

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CORRECTION NOTICE

Due to a printing error in this week's flyer, 8 roll Christmas wrap 30inx480in on pg. 1 should have read 3.99 each not 4.99 as indicated. We are sorry for any inconvenience this may have caused our customers.