

Rob Ford friend faces trial on drug charges next year

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TORONTO – Rob Ford's infamous "crack video" likely won't come out in court until well after the municipal election, as preliminary inquiry and trial dates for his friend Alexander Lisi have been set for next year.

The dates for both an extortion case and drug charges against Lisi were set Tuesday for the spring of 2015, meaning further details of the allegations against him won't be aired in court before the Oct. 27 election.

Lisi was charged in October 2013 with trafficking in marijuana, possession of proceeds of crime, possession of marijuana and conspiracy to commit an indictable offence during an investigation into Ford, sparked by media reports of a video appearing to show the mayor smoking crack cocaine.

Lisi and dry cleaner Jamshid Bahrami, who is also facing drug charges in the investigation, had their drug trial set for March 24 to 27.

Police documents unsealed by the court have laid out some evidence police collected in order to get a search warrant for Lisi. The document contains allegations that have not been proven in court.

As police conducted surveillance on the mayor they saw various instances in which Ford and Lisi met at a gas station, behind a school and at a soccer field and exchanged packages, investigators have alleged.

Police also say in the document that friends and former staffers of Ford were concerned that Lisi was "fuelling" the mayor's alleged drug use. Ford took a leave of absence earlier this month for a stint in rehab following new reports about drug use and offensive rants.

The Globe and Mail reported that a drug dealer had shown two of its reporters a new video of Ford allegedly smoking what was said to be crack, reportedly recorded days earlier in his sister's basement.

Ford's lawyer said it was not possible to know what was in the pipe seen in stills from the alleged new video.

The Toronto Sun also published an audio recording of Ford at a bar making anti-gay remarks, using an ethnic slur, and saying he would like to "jam" rival candidate Karen Stintz.

Lisi is also charged with extortion for alleged attempts to get his hands on the original so-called "crack video."

A preliminary inquiry, which is held to determine if there is enough evidence to go to trial, was set Tuesday in that case for March 2 to 6 and April 13 to 17 of next year. If Lisi is committed to trial on that charge, it may not take place until late 2015 or 2016.

Toronto Police Chief Bill Blair has said the video will be introduced as evidence in Lisi's extortion case.

A police description of the so-called "crack video" has been released through the same set of court documents, but the video itself is not likely to be released through the court at least until Lisi's trial. It may be played in court at the preliminary inquiry, but those hearings are under publication bans.

Bahrami's lawyer has also set aside dates in April of next year to argue an entrapment motion, if his client is found guilty.

The dry cleaner's ties to Lisi have meant he has to wait a long time for his relatively straightforward drug charges to be heard in court,

his lawyer [Jacob Stilman](#) said outside court Tuesday.

"He only became a police target because the police perceived a connection between him and Lisi, which was not – in our view – what the police thought it was," Stilman said.

Bahrami may have met Ford on one or two occasions but he has no connection to the mayor, Stilman said.

"He's got some pretty significant health issues...and he's been very, very distressed by the attention these charges have brought on him," the lawyer said.

Lisi's cases will return to court June 17 for ongoing pre-trial discussions.

-With files from AdvocateDaily.com