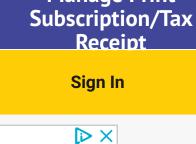
E Sections

Q Search

DU/ER



f T in Ê

Full Comment

Christie Blatchford

-31%

Christie Blatchford: B.C. teacher fired for having the wrong opinion

His passing comment that he found abortion to be wrong caused a female student to complain that his words had 'triggered' her such that she felt 'unsafe'

NATIONAL*POST

Dec 07, 2016 • December 7, 2016 • 4 minute read • 💭 Join the conversation

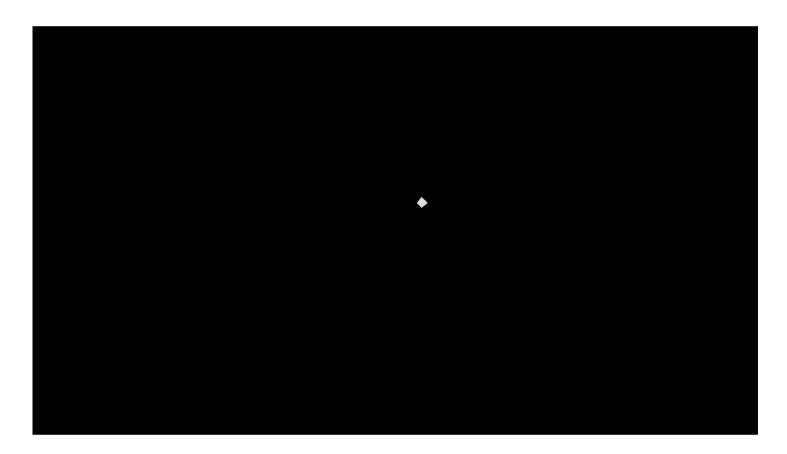


A B.C. case may be the first time a Canadian teacher has been fired not amid allegations of impropriety, but for having the wrong opinion.

A teacher at a posh private school in British Columbia was fired last month after making an innocuous comment about abortion to his Grade 12 law class.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

Though there is no way of knowing, since discipline matters are shrouded in secrecy, it may be the first time a Canadian teacher has been fired not amid allegations of impropriety, but for having the wrong opinion.



Certainly, Lori Foote, a spokesperson for the 60,000-member-strong Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation, said Wednesday that no one at the association is "aware of anyone being fired" in Ontario in comparable circumstances.

The 44-year-old teacher, who has asked that he not be identified to protect what's left of his career, was teaching "the criminal law unit, a lesson on vice, ethics, morality and the law" to his small class in the Vancouver-area school in late November.

"I was working my way through examples of how some people's sense of personal ethics was more liberal than the letter of the law," he said in an email.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

TRENDING

Subscribe

-31%

- Eminem takes a knee during the Super Bowl halftime show
- 'This could cost him his 0 job': A blockaded Canada turning on Trudeau, poll finds
- **Olympics-Freestyle skiing-**3 American Hamill crashes during slopestyle qualifier, gets treatment
- Scott Stinson: The IOC's soft touch on Russia has created an Olympic scandal of its own making
- **Ex-Tehran police chief** 5 linked to rights abuses spotted working out at Toronto-area gym



Such is the cost of a small misstep in a crushingly politically correct world.

In other words, he said, in a pluralistic democracy, there's often "a difference between people's private morality and the law.

"I find abortion to be wrong," he said, as another illustration of this gap, "but the law is often different from our personal opinions."

That was it, the teacher said. "It was just a quick exemplar, nothing more. And we moved on."

A little later, the class had a five-minute break, and when it resumed, several students didn't return, among them a popular young woman who had gone to an administrator to complain that what the teacher said had "triggered" her such that she felt "unsafe" and that, in any case, he had no right to an opinion on the subject of abortion because he was a man.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

The school, for the record, is a witheringly progressive one.

Before classes even started last fall, teachers underwent serious "gender training" given by QMUNITY, an organization for LGBTQQ2S (lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, questioning and two-spirit) people. Teachers were told in no uncertain terms, for instance, that "no one is 100-per-cent male or female" and that everyone is somewhere on the "gender spectrum."

Unsurprisingly, students at the school, where \$30,000-a-year tuition buys small classes, regularly say "I'm so triggered" and are allowed to walk out of class.

What happened to the teacher over the ensuing few days sounds like something out of the Cultural Revolution in Mao's China, where people were subjected to what were known as ideological struggle sessions, forced to "confess" to various imagined sins before large crowds, and roundly denounced.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

MORE ON THIS TOPIC

Michael Den Tandt: Young **MPP expresses opinion, gets** rude introduction to new face of 'tolerance' in liberal...



Immediately after the student complained to the administrator, the teenager came, with a teacher at her side as support, to confront him in a public area of the school.

She pressed for an apology, but the teacher resisted, because, he said, it would set a dangerous precedent for a teacher to be reamed out in the presence of a colleague.

"When I didn't show contrition," he said, "I was summoned upstairs and grilled by two administrators who told me my job was on the line."

Now panicking — he has a family to support and had just recently returned to teaching after several years in business with a relative — he apologized profusely and promised to apologize the next day to the offended student.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

Instead, the school had an administrator take over the class for a day, whereupon, he was told, they would all discuss what went wrong in his absence. He would be invited back to "hear the grievances and offer an apology. It was clear I must do this successfully or I would be terminated."

He repeatedly asked what he'd done wrong or if there was an allegation of misconduct.

"The answer I got back was that I was recognized as an outstanding teacher, but student 'safety' was the school's primary concern."

With the discussion now scheduled for the following day, the teacher, near to melting down with apprehension and disbelief, went to a walk-in clinic and asked for tranquillizers.



I was summoned upstairs and grilled by two administrators who told me my job was on the line.

The discussion was postponed another day, and after "white-knuckling" it through his other classes, it came time for the law class.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

It was exactly the horror show he'd imagined: His boss sat among a crowd of students, ran through a list of what had gone wrong and "what I needed to do to change." While most students appeared to be on his side, the offended girl was still furious.

He apologized specifically to her, but then made what was apparently a fatal error: He said he liked her, that she was a bright and engaging student, and said he'd told her father just that at a recent parent-teacher night.

She stormed out of the class in tears, and he was again castigated by his superiors, this time for having been "too personal" in his apologia.

On Nov. 30, he showed up at the school, was retrieved by an administrator and taken to the "head" of school, the private school equivalent of a principal.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

He was told he "could no longer continue in the classroom," and was offered a short-term medical disability top-up for employment insurance.

He was then escorted down the hall and off the premises.

"Such is the cost of a small misstep in a crushingly politically correct world," he said sorrowfully.

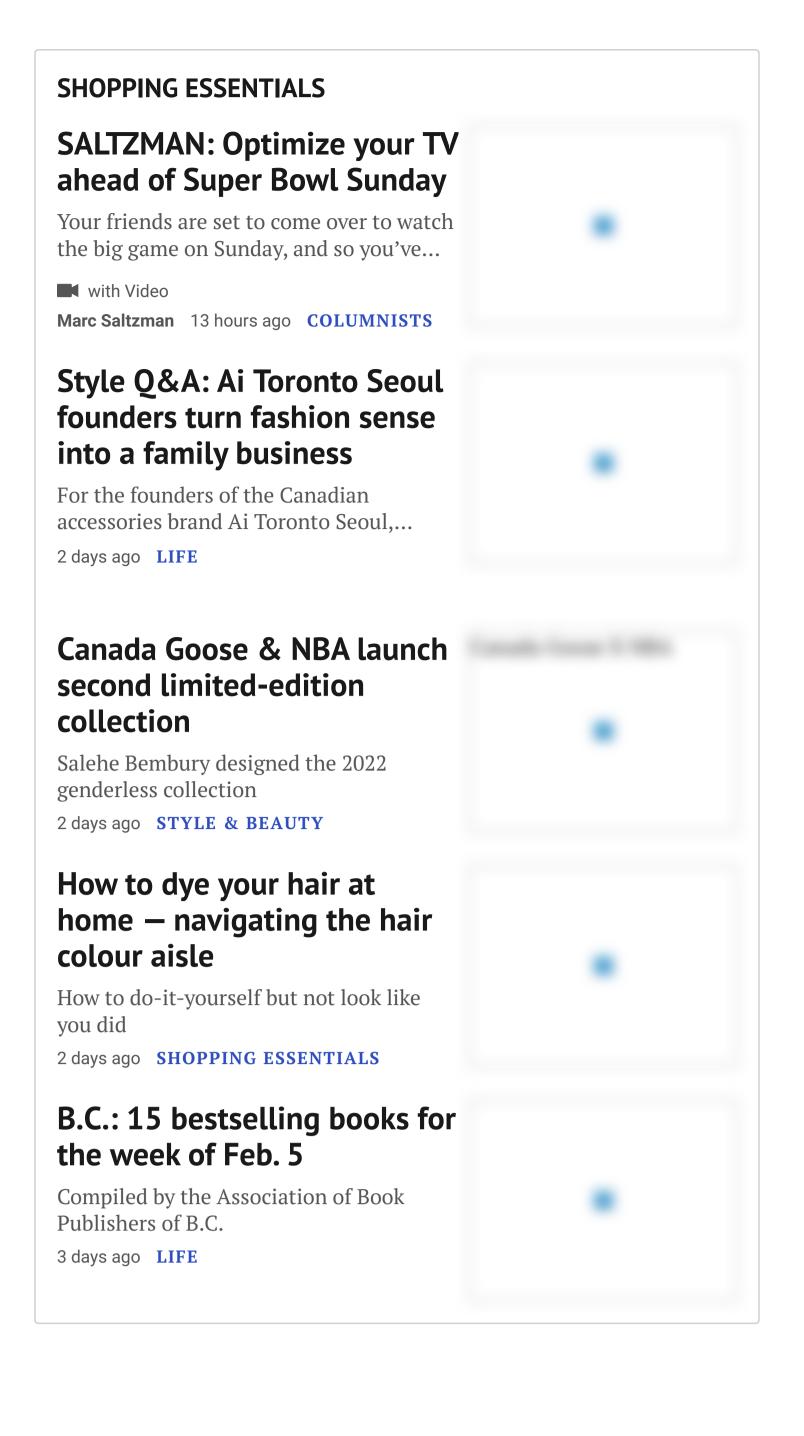
Postmedia is not identifying the school at the teacher's request.

"They torched me," he said, "but I'm reluctant to damage the brand ... So many kids who would otherwise fall through the cracks ... are valued and helped here," he said.

So still a good teacher, then, after all that.

• Email: <u>cblatchford@postmedia.com</u> | Twitter: <u>blatchkiki</u>







NP Posted

Sign up to receive the daily top stories from the National Post, a division of Postmedia Network Inc.

Email Address youremail@email.com

Sign Up

By clicking on the sign up button you consent to receive the above newsletter from Postmedia Network Inc. You may unsubscribe any time by clicking on the unsubscribe link at the bottom of our emails. Postmedia Network Inc. | 365 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3L4 | 416-383-2300

THIS WEEK IN FLYERS

COMMENTS

Postmedia is committed to maintaining a lively but civil forum for discussion and encourage all readers to share their views on our articles. Comments may take up to an hour for moderation before appearing on the site. We ask you to keep your comments relevant and respectful. We have enabled email notifications—you will now receive an email if you receive a reply to your comment, there is an update to a comment thread you follow or if a user you follow comments. Visit our Community Guidelines for more information and details on how to adjust your email settings.



News Olympics NP Comment Politics Post Picks Financial Post Healthing Driving The GrowthOp NYT Crossword Videos Podcasts Newsletters E-Paper Subscribe

My Account

Subscriber Self-Serve ePaper Contact Us

Advertise

Advertise With Us **Appointment Notice** Content Works Partnerships Resources

Remembering Celebrating Classifieds Marketplace Careers FlyerCity

Local Directory Sales

Post a Classified ad

Classified

About Us

Postmedia Network

Financial Post Regina Leader-Post Saskatoon StarPhoenix Windsor Star Ottawa Citizen Winnipeg Sun London Free Press Canada.com Canoe.com

Give us some feedback!

Driving.ca The Province Vancouver Sun **Edmonton Journal** Calgary Herald Montreal Gazette Toronto Sun Ottawa Sun Calgary Sun Edmonton Sun

FINANCIAL POST >

Follow us

(0)

365 Bloor Street East, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 3L4 P POSTMEDIA

© 2022 National Post, a division of Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited. Privacy - Updated Terms Copyright Digital Ad Registry