



## THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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### Receiver removed from Stanford case

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#### *Vantis acted improperly in destroying original computer evidence, Quebec judge rules*

An Antigua-based receiver that destroyed original computer evidence from the Montreal offices of alleged fraudster Allen Stanford's global bank - and refused to share the copies with Canadian and U.S. authorities - has been removed from the case and severely reprimanded by a Quebec judge.

Vantis Business Recovery Services acted improperly and abused its power in efforts to locate the missing millions of dollars at the Montreal office of Stanford International Bank Ltd. (SIB) and elsewhere in Canada, Mr. Justice Claude Auclair of the Quebec Superior Court said in his orally rendered reasons in two separate but closely linked rulings Friday.

Judge Auclair ordered Vantis to hand over its receivership of SBI's Canadian operations to Ernst & Young Canada as the new court-appointed interim receiver in the case.

The judgments are part of a broader jurisdictional skirmish between Vantis and the U.S. court-appointed receiver, Dallas lawyer Ralph Janvey, including ongoing court fights in the U.S. and Britain.

Vantis acted in a high-handed fashion after it was appointed by an Antigua court earlier this year to close down the Montreal office and try to recover the alleged Canadian victims' money, Judge Auclair said.

The Montreal branch was a representative office of Antigua-based SIB and as such an Antigua receiver was appointed. SIB was a subsidiary of Mr. Stanford's Houston-based Stanford Financial Group.

Mr. Stanford and some associates face a bevy of charges related to allegations of orchestrating a \$7.2-billion (U.S.) fraud involving bogus certificates of deposit.

Stanford Financial had more than 30,000 clients in 113 countries. In Canada, an estimated 225 investors placed a total of \$308-million in SBI. About \$20-million of that amount has been located.

Mr. Stanford denies all wrongdoing and is in a jail near Houston awaiting trial on 19 felony counts.

In his rulings, Judge Auclair said Vantis destroyed original databases in SBI's Montreal office and stonewalled efforts by Quebec's financial regulator - the Autorité des marchés financiers - to get access to the copied information, he said.

Vantis - a division of British accounting, tax and business advisory firm Vantis PLC - also refused to collaborate with the U.S. receiver, he said.

He dismissed Vantis's argument that Antigua banking privacy laws prevented it from disclosing the information and that anyone wanting access to it had to go through Antigua courts. There is a Canadian jurisdictional requirement here that applies and that was not followed, he said.

Judge Auclair derided Vantis's contention that it had to destroy the original databases and make copies because of fears that creditors might move to repossess the premises and their contents.

"As if we don't have any safes in Canada to protect and preserve" such materials, he said.

Julie Himo, the Montreal lawyer representing Vantis, said outside the courtroom that it's too early to say whether the decision will be appealed.

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