Beat: Technology

U.S. tech firm RadiumOne fires CEO convicted of domestic violence

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USPA News - U.S. tech firm RadiumOne fired its wealthy chief executive officer over the weekend after his recent conviction for domestic violence led to outrage online, the company confirmed on Monday. The entrepreneur has claimed the allegations were exaggerated and that he was "cornered" to take a plea deal.

Gurbaksh Chahal, 31, was arrested and charged with 47 felony counts of domestic violence in August 2013 after he allegedly hit and kicked his girlfriend 117 times over the course of a 30-minute argument. Video from a security system inside the home showed the alleged assault but the tape was seized without a warrant, making it inadmissible in court. Chahal`s girlfriend later stopped cooperating with investigators and asked prosecutors to drop the charges, but prosecutors continued the weakened case nonetheless. Chahal, whose net worth is believed to be more than $100 million, pleaded guilty earlier this month to misdemeanor battery and domestic violence charges, resulting in a $500 fine, three years of probation, and mandatory domestic-violence classes. And while the case initially attracted little media attention, the plea deal came into the public spotlight after Chahal wrote about it on Twitter. "I got cornered to accept a misdemeanor plea with a $500 fine to resolve the matter and move on with my life, rather than continuing a political witch hunt for another year attempting to fully clear my name," he said. The tweets - and the details of the case - led to increasing calls for RadiumOne to fire their founder. On Monday, company spokeswoman Aman Battish confirmed RadiumOne`s board of directors had voted Saturday evening to terminate Chahal`s employment as CEO and Chairman of the company. Chief Operating Officer Bill Lonergan was chosen to immediately take over Chahal`s role as CEO. "This week, social media became the court of public opinion and decided to grow a life of its own," Chahal wrote in a blog post on Monday. "People can`t look at the facts in 140 characters so they start to believe all of the falsified exaggerated allegations. They can only choose to hate." Chahal said he had earlier received support from board members, including one who advised him to not do anything and to stay quiet on the matter. "Surprisingly enough, 48 hours later, the Internet continued to show its hateful nature and they called a special board meeting," he said. "In that special board meeting, they asked for my resignation as Chairman & CEO. When I declined to do, they fired me. Even though, I only accepted this misdemeanor plea under their guidance." In a blog post on Sunday, before RadiumOne announced their decision to fire their founder, Chahal admitted to `losing his temper` after discovering his girlfriend was having unprotected sex for money with other people. Chahal said his girlfriend called 911 after he had told her he would contact her father about the alleged cheating. "I lost my temper. I understand, accept full responsibility and sincerely apologize from the bottom of my heart for that. But I didn`t hit her 117 times, injure her, or cause any trauma as the UCSF medical reports clearly document," he wrote. "This was all overblown drama because it generates huge volumes of page views for the media given what I have accomplished in the valley." When asked on Twitter why he had not released the videotape from his security system, Chahal said it was no longer in his possession. "The tape in question that was thrown was also bullshit," he added in his blog post. "If anything, it actually made the SFPD look bad because they violently assaulted me as I opened my door despite my being fully cooperative."

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