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### **Zondo Commission – Detractors looking for scapegoat over Prasa collapse, says Montana**

Former Prasa CEO Lucky Montana says because the agency was never captured by the Guptas during his term, his detractors and those allegedly fighting corruption will use any means available to find wrong in any other decision he made as CEO.

Montana returned to the state capture commission on Tuesday to answer to more allegations made against him by former colleagues at the rail agency.

“The problem is that people thought at the beginning, the Guptas are so much at Prasa. When they realised the Guptas are not at Prasa because we said no, then they had to find something else ... they actually thought the Guptas were involved with President Zuma at Prasa with the rolling stock programme,” Montana said.

“The reality is that there was no President Zuma, there were not Guptas lurking at Prasa. I stood my ground. Even when we’re discussing Parliament in the parliamentary enquiry into governance at Eskom, I dealt with the Guptas.”

He was questioned on the allegations made last year by former general manager for legal services, Fani Dingiswayo, who claimed Montana’s close proximity to a select group of contractors of Prasa clouded his judgement and made him a difficult CEO to work with. He ruled the agency with an iron fist and dictated who got tenders, claimed Dingiswayo.

Once such case, he said, was a contract for employee development training by a company called Prodigy, entered into in late 2010. Owned by KwaZulu-Natal businessman Roy Moodley, Prodigy proposed a training programme for employees at varying levels of the Prasa structure. Because there was no budget for such a project, given that the proposal came in in the middle of the financial year, the Transport Seta was brought on board to help fund it. The contract was worth R72-million.

Dingiswayo’s difficulty with the project, said evidence leader Advocate Vas Soni, was that the cost of training per individual multiplied significantly over a period of two years, from R6 000 to R24 000. Montana denied this, explaining to the commission that Dingiswayo’s reading of it was flawed, as he conflated the costs of two separate programmes within one contract. This, he added, was bound to happen because Dingiswayo was motivated by a need to vilify Montana, and did not check up on his facts. Furthermore, Dingiswayo was not even employed by Prasa at the time the contract was concluded, and was informed by an investigation that was later be launched by the board of Popo Molefe, whose only goal was to find fault in Montana as CEO.

“The people who say I’m a dictator .... were appointed by me. Even Mr Dingiswayo,” Montana said. “All the people who stabbed me in the back are people that I employed.”

According to Montana, Prasa’s executive level became a factional environment when Molefe arrived, because the board chairperson invited Montana’s enemies to become confidants of his

board, and to be part of his campaign to discredit Montana. A case in point was Dingiswayo's boss, former group legal head Martha Ngoye, who had previously held the position of CEO of Prasa subsidiary Interside. When the board of Interside expressed to Montana as chairperson that they were unhappy with her performance, he encouraged her to move to the group structure to replace the legal head of that time who had just left. Ngoye would later turn on him, said Montana, without explanation.

"I didn't realise how bitter she was that she was no longer CEO of Interside."

Soon after the arrival of Molefe's board in August 2014, Montana went on leave, leaving Ngoye to act in his place. Unbeknown to him at the time, Ngoye would use the opportunity to turn on him, on the Molefe's encouragement, and allow herself to be used to find dirt on Montana. Between her and Dingiswayo, only certain contracts were picked out for the commission's scrutiny.

The Prodigy contract was one, and the others were contained in Prasa's modernisation and rolling stock programmes, both conceptualised through Montana's leadership. Because the legal department sought to nit-pick on the 'Montana contracts', Prasa ended up with many litigation matters that cost the company money every year.

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