Uber's ousted CEO calls investor lawsuit unfounded

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Former Uber CEO Travis Kalanick is disputing claims in an investor lawsuit against him and told him he had hours to sign it, or else Benchmark would start a public campaign against him.

Ultimately, he relented, "given his emotional state," according to the filing.

Kalanick argued that the lawsuit—which has brought to light strains and infighting at the world's most valuable venture-backed startup—should be dismissed and that the dispute should be settled in arbitration.

Kalanick said Benchmark seeks to "silence and sideline" him and effectively ban him from any major decisions at the San Francisco firm.

Benchmark has asked the court to bar Kalanick from tinkering with the Uber board in any way, arguing that the former CEO was trying to pack the board with loyalists to clear the way for his return.

Kalanick—who had been the driving force behind Uber's massive global expansion, but whose brash style had made him a liability—still holds a large voting stake in the company, which is valued at $68 billion.

The pioneering company has been facing pressure to rein in a no-holds-barred management style led by Kalanick, 40, and to reform its work environment.

Kalanick's departure capped a rocky period for the global ridesharing giant, which has been roiled by disturbing reports of a cutthroat workplace culture, harassment, discrimination and questionable business tactics to thwart rivals.

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