

**Subject: FW: Fraud Suspect Nabbed By Police Posing As Cabbies**

**Date:** Thu, 14 Jul 2005 14:50:58 -0700

**From:** "Ernie Crist" <ernie\_crist@dnv.org>

**To:** <fonvca@fonvca.org>, <Cagebc@yahoo.com>

This message is passed on to you courtesy of Ernie Crist and welcome the new and improved Liberal Party created society. No disrespect intended to the good and honest members of the Liberal Party.

Ernie Crist

-----Original Message-----

From: Kelly WEEKS [<mailto:kelly.weeks@rcmp-grc.gc.ca>]

Sent: Thursday, July 14, 2005 2:08 PM

To: bfearnley@cnv.org; bperrault@cnv.org; bsharp@cnv.org; ckeating@cnv.org; Darrell Mussatto; ktollstam@cnv.org; rclark@cnv.org; rheywood@cnv.org; Alan Nixon; Ernie Crist; James Ridge; Mayor Harris; Lisa Muri; Maureen McKeon Holmes; Richard Walton

Cc: crabold@cnv.org; Jeanine Bratina; Colleen Brow

Subject: Fraud Suspect Nabbed By Police Posing As Cabbies

The North Vancouver RCMP's Economic Crime Unit working alongside the Surrey RCMP's ECU have taken a Surrey resident into custody in relation to long string of Credit Card Frauds affecting several jurisdictions in the Lower Mainland. 32 year old, Parminder Singh Athwal, was taken into custody on July 12th, 2005, when he attempted to pick-up items bought over the telephone using a stolen credit card number.

Police were tipped off when a North Vancouver merchant reported a suspicious over-the phone purchase which the supposed "customer" wanted delivered to via taxi to an address in Surrey. Police immediately recognized the scam for what it was and were there to meet ATHWAL when he attempted to pick up the items from the taxi. In fact, the taxi driver himself was an RCMP member posing as the driver.

To date, Athwal is charged with one count of Fraud Under \$5000. However, police are investigating over 17 different similar incidents in Surrey, White Rock, West Vancouver, Vancouver and North Vancouver in which the methods used were all the same. In all these cases, the method used had two phases.

In the first phase, the suspect(s) call businesses, posing as representatives of Visa or MasterCard and advise the unsuspecting merchant that there is some problem with the last transaction processed for the respective card type. The suspect then asks the merchant to provide the details of that transaction. If the merchant provides the requested information, the crooks move on to phase two.

Phase two involves calling a business picked at random and purchasing goods over the telephone using the information obtained in the first phase. Police have identified some consistent features of these calls. For example:

1. The caller always identifies himself as a medical doctor.
2. The caller always states he is buying a gift for a daughter or daughters.
3. The caller always makes his purchase over the telephone using a stolen credit card number.
4. The caller almost always asks for a combination of a gift certificate and cash drawn on the stolen card.
5. The caller always has a taxi pick up the items purchased and bring them to an address of his choosing, usually in Surrey.
6. The caller is always very pushy and intimidating to those he speaks to over the phone in an attempt to pressure the business into putting through the requested transaction with the minimal amount of questions.

7. The caller often puts on an English accent.
8. If the first credit card number doesn't go through the caller has been known to provide a second or even a third number.

Several press releases have been issued in the past, in an attempt to educate the public in regards to the tactics used by these fraud artists and how to avoid them. None the less, there still seem to be merchants out there who are getting caught by this. Police point out that fraudulent purchases such as these, most often are charged back to the merchant, as the card company takes the view that processing these transactions demonstrates a lack of due diligence on the part of the merchant.

If you have any information in regards to similar incidents you are asked to call your local RCMP or police agency. If you wish to remain anonymous you can contact Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS.

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