

Officer offers tips on how to spot 'The Fraudster'

by **Det. Sgt. Troy Izlakar**
Halton Regional Police

Off the top of your head, when was the last time you recall someone knocking on your door and handing you a big bag of cash? I'm going to go out on the limb and say... never.

When you are contacted by a fraudster by telephone or email, you must remember their job is to create the illusion that a big bag of money is coming your way.

All you need to do is pay an administration or transfer fee, perhaps some foreign government tax and you, my friend, are a millionaire.

Unfortunately, by the time a victim realizes they are being scammed, they have given the fraudster thousands of dollars, or even their life savings, only to learn there never was a big bag of money.

"Remember, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is," that's the motto of officers in the Halton Regional Police Fraud Unit.

Fraudsters are cultivated and skilled to craft the illusion of instant wealth; they are very good at what they do and know exactly what you want to hear.

With our country's aging population on the rise, we are a target-rich environment for bad guys, who know our demographics all too well.

Let's face it, our senior population is at a



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point in their lives where they may have some disposable assets, available time and feel a certain civic willingness to help out that nice person on the telephone whose relative overseas can't afford a lifesaving operation.

Sound farfetched, perhaps? Not really.

Everything in this article has occurred to actual citizens in this region as a result of high-pressure tactics, a wish to offer assis-

tance or simply wanting in on that get-rich-quick scheme.

First, you need to know the mental make-up of the fraudster that wants to take your money.

They are smooth, calculating, well-trained individuals, who most often only want to know you over the phone or on a computer.

They particularly don't care about what your financial situation will be at the conclusion of their scam, they just want your money... all of it.

You could call them narcissistic, unsympathetic and deliberate.

Most criminals that you learn about in the media, typically don't wake up in the morning thinking about how they're going to commit a crime. Usually they just make poor decisions when presented with an opportunity or situation.

The fraudster, on the other hand, begins every day contemplating how they can rip you off.

They keep careful records on the things you tell them, your pet(s) name, your favourite show on TV, where you bank and how much money you have saved over the years.

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