

CRIME SCENE

Immigration scam foiled by police

A Markham immigration consultant has been charged by Hong Kong police for selling forged documents used by Chinese nationals to secure Canadian citizenship.

Wai-ming Derek Ip, owner of Immigration and Investment International Inc., and his unidentified sister, remain in custody of the Hong Kong police after his arrest Friday.

The investigation, a joint-forces operation between the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and Hong Kong detectives, is continuing here and in China and could see as many as 200 people charged in what police are calling a huge international immigration scam.

Ip is charged with selling such counterfeit documents as education certificates and records of employment to would-be immigrants for up to \$8,000, RCMP Const. Pamela Wilson said.

Ip's name first came up in a related investigation in Seattle, Washington last summer.

Hong Kong police notified the RCMP in January. Officers from both forces participated in a simultaneous search and seizure operation Feb. 4.

The RCMP searched Ip's Crown Steel Drive business as well as a Scarborough home and seized a number of documents, Wilson said.

Fireplaces stolen

York Regional Police are searching for suspects after six fireplaces were stolen from houses under construction in the new community of Cornell.

Suspects kicked in the doors of the unfinished homes, at Cornell Common Road and Country Glen Road, sometime before 1 p.m. Saturday.

Six gas fireplaces, worth more than \$12,000, were removed.

Damage is pegged at \$6,000. Anyone with information is asked to call 881-1221 or CrimeStoppers at 222-TIPS.



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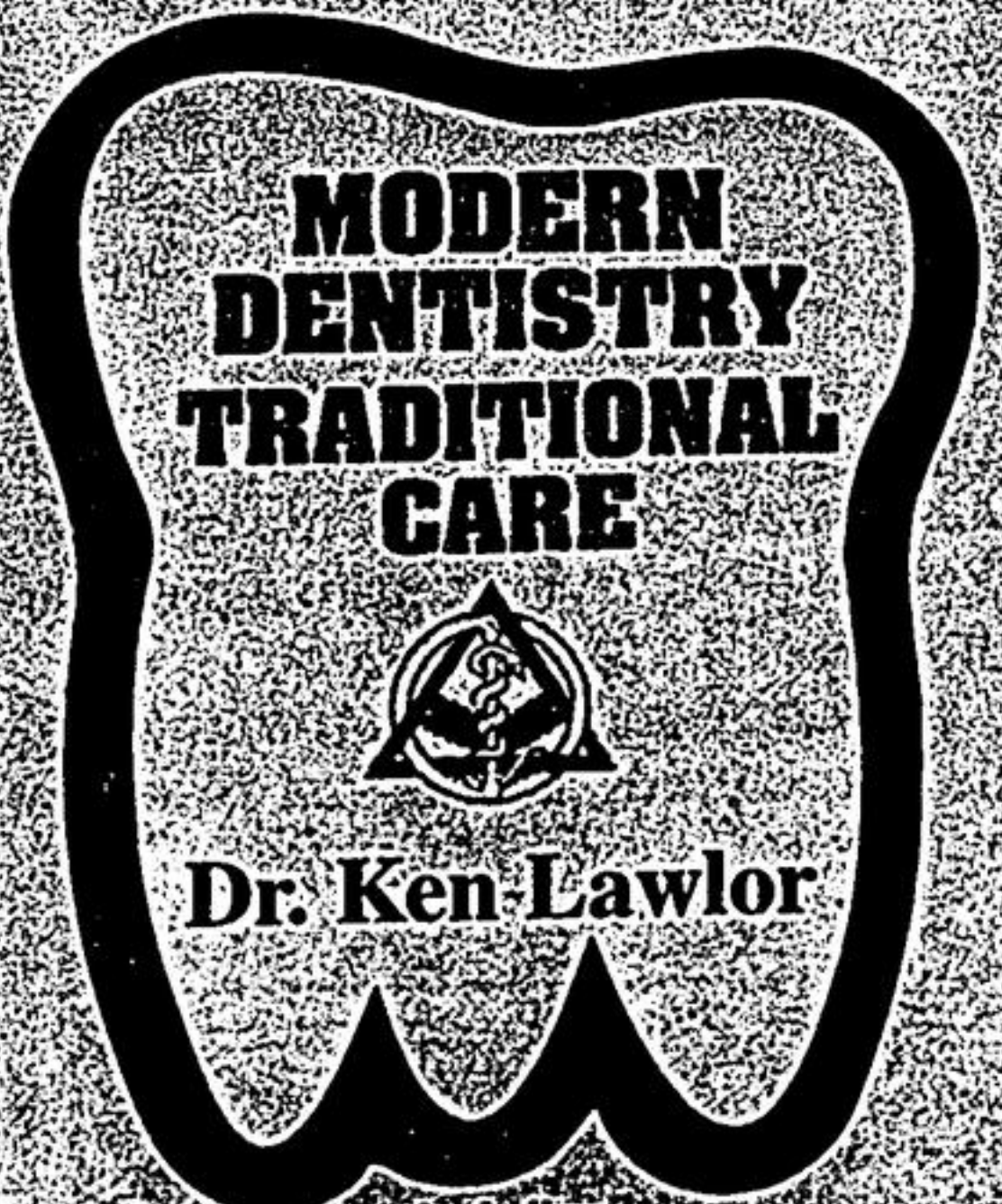
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