

A CASE OF A SERIOUS FRAUD SCAM

This is a true account of what happened to one our members. They have written it up to share with you in the hope that it will prevent it happening to anybody else.

This event took place last year during our first lockdown, and according to the police, there had been a number of identical cases during the previous year in and around Aylesbury.

“I received a phone call one Monday morning from the police station in Reading. They stated that they had a man in custody who was claiming to live at my address and was my nephew. I explained they did not have anyone living at my house, and whilst I have a nephew, he lived in Worcestershire. The police officer apologised for bothering me and thanked me for confirming this.

A couple of hours later the police rang again, to confirm that the man in custody had now pleaded guilty and confirmed his real name. The officer explained that they were concerned for two reasons, one this man worked at the HSBC bank in Aylesbury, and they had been contacted by the staff there to state a large sum of money had been withdrawn from my account, but then replaced an hour later. Their concerns were that this was done before bank opening time so they knew it could not have been the customer. The money put back included counterfeit notes. The police officer asked me to ring my bank immediately using the number on my bank card.

The phone call was made, and the gentleman answering the phone said he was aware of this crime, he had been talking to the police. He advised that I did not log onto my online banking system in case it had been corrupted. This all made sense at the time, and I was reassured that my money was safe, and the counterfeit notes had been removed, and the balance adjusted back to the original sum. Some time later the police rang again and talked to me about the situation, stating that the fraud squad were aware of a small group of employees at the bank were under suspicion and they had a lot of evidence already, but needed my help before they moved in and arrested them. I was then passed onto an Inspector, who explained that they wanted to ask for my help, as they needed one more piece of evidence. Both police officers gave their full name and numbers, and were extremely polite and reassuring.

They asked that I draw out some money so they could check the numbers on the notes, as they believed a large amount of counterfeit notes were being issued over the counter. They reassured me I was quite safe, and a plain clothed officer would be nearby, also I was not parting with my money, but when getting home, they would ask me to read out the numbers on the notes. This was done, following a request to wear gloves when handling the money, so fingerprints were not contaminated. A subsequent call from the police confirmed that notes were counterfeit and the evidence they required. The police later explained they needed to collect the money as evidence, they would reimburse the full amount, that they would send an officer to collect the money and issue a receipt. They also explained that I must not discuss any of this case with anyone, friends or family, until they had made the arrests. When all this was done, a further phone call was made to reassure me.

However, I suddenly started to worry about how genuine this all was. The detective constable stated he was passing me over to the detective inspector---however he said

Inspector Detective, this rang an alarm bell. After a sleepless night, I decided to ring Reading Police via 101, and----they had never heard of these officers, the police (genuine ones) confirmed I had been scammed----and was not the first.

Lessons Learnt

- *If the police ring---tell them, you will ring back— ring 101 and get them to put you through to the police station and check they are genuine.*
- *If you receive a dodgy call asking you to do anything do not! ----only ring your bank or anyone else on a different phone. The police would never request anyone to collect money in these cases.*

These criminals are very convincing and I had been brought up to always respect the police and help in any way to fight crime.”

The case is ongoing and the member is not yet sure whether the money will ever be returned by the bank