

Religious 'healer' sought in million-dollar scam



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Peel police believe more than 40 members of the region's East Indian community have been bilked out of \$1.2 million, allegedly defrauded by a man claiming to be a religious healer.

Authorities have issued a Canada-wide warrant for two men they believe falsely represented themselves as a spiritual healer and his assistant.

Police allege the men advertised the healing services of Brother Roshan on the radio, claiming they could help anybody with health, financial and family problems. They allegedly used magic tricks to convince people he could turn their luck around.

On the radio, the ad promised that the healer would pray for them free of charge. Listeners were provided with phone numbers to contact them.

Det. Michael MacDougall, with Peel Region's fraud squad, said he believes "hundreds" of people responded to the ad and signed up to meet with the suspect.

'Healer' predicted lottery win

People who signed up to meet the suspect were directed towards a home in Mississauga. Once at the home, they were taken upstairs by an assistant to meet Roshan and explain their problems to him.

The suspect would pray for them free of charge and tell them that their maladies were the result of a curse put on them. He assured them he would pray for them again and asks them to return in a few days.

Police say the victims were asked to come back a few more times. During the next visit, police say victims were told they had won the lottery and had yet to claim their prize. Roshan asked them to return with a dozen eggs but also asked them to keep them hidden and not tell anyone.

On following visits, Roshan wrote the names of each of his client's family members on each egg. He then placed the eggs in a covered pot of boiling water. Once they were cooked, he took out each egg and broke them open.

When he opened the egg with the client's name on it, there was a lottery ticket inside with a note saying they will win the lottery.

Clients were then told they must do the good deed of donating money if they hoped to claim their lottery prize. They were told the money was for expensive "prayer powder" from India that would help him rid people of curses, MacDougall said.

In further visits, Roshan reportedly gave his clients lotto numbers, the date of the lottery win and the date to buy the ticket.

MacDougall said most of the victims were told they would win the lottery on Dec. 29, 2007.

Suspect linked to similar Texas case

Several clients went to see Roshan around the date they were scheduled to win. When they arrived, they found the house vacant and the suspects were gone.

At this time, victims began to talk with each other and they learned they were all promised the same thing and had likely been victimized.

"I bet you there are more victims out there who don't want to come forward because they don't want to be embarrassed in front of their community," MacDougall said.

The victims are from all over the area, from York region, Brampton and Mississauga.

Roshan is also a suspect in a similar case in Texas, MacDougall said.

In that case, one family lost \$105,000. In the GTA, one client forked over \$160,000.

"We're not talking about small sums of money here," said MacDougall.

The suspects were subletting the Mississauga home. The owner of the house lives in the U.S.

Mohammed Umar Ashraft, aka Mohammed Roshan Zameer, a 43-year-old Indian national, is wanted for one count of defrauding the public and laundering proceeds of crime.

Latafat Ali Khan aka Samir Ali or Shair Ali Khan, a 36-year-old Indian national, is wanted on one count of defrauding the public.