

Jobless man jailed for e-shopping scams carried out while on bail

An unemployed man cheated 34 victims of about \$30,000 through on-line shopping scams.

Dwight Soriano would post items such as watches and Gundam robot models for sale on websites like Carousell and Gumtree, and collect money when he actually did not have the items.

The 30-year-old Singaporean was jailed 17 months on Thursday after he admitted to 19 of 70 cheating charges. The total amount involved in all the charges is \$39,386. He has made restitution of \$6,303.

He carried out the online scams while he was out on police bail for another cheating case.

He had tricked his former girlfriend, Ms Wong Yee Poh, into believing that he had been kidnapped abroad and needed her to transfer money to his bank account for his release.

He duped her into transferring a total of \$10,100, including \$90 to buy bus tickets in Malaysia, to his account.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Charis Low said Soriano went to Thailand in May 2013. In August that year, he pretended to be a kidnapper and messaged Ms Wong to say that Soriano had been kidnapped. He demanded ransom money.

Each time she transferred the

amount demanded to his POSB account, Soriano, posing as the kidnapper, would send text messages saying Soriano had been released but recaptured. He would then – as the kidnapper – send her messages demanding further payments for his release.

Ms Wong lodged a police report on Dec 3 that year that she had transferred money to Soriano as he had purportedly been kidnapped.

Back in Singapore, he devised a scam to cheat people into transferring money to his bank accounts.

From August last year to March this year, he posted electronic advertisements claiming to have various

items, such as Gundam figurines and G-Shock watches, for sale.

When his OCBC Bank account was frozen, he used eight bank accounts belonging to seven friends to receive payments.

He told them his own account had been frozen and he needed to receive his salary or money from other friends.

Pressing for a stiff sentence, DPP Low said there is pressing public interest to deter would-be criminals from using the Internet as a cheap and convenient platform to draw in a large number of victims.

“There has been a recent sharp increase in cheating cases involving e-commerce,” she said.

For the first half of this year, they were up by 62 per cent compared with the same period last year.

Soriano could have been jailed for up to 10 years and fined on each charge.



Dwight Soriano cheated 34 victims of about \$30,000 through online scams. He was jailed 17 months after he admitted to 19 of 70 cheating charges.

Elena Chong

Three years’ jail for mum attack

Man hit, slashed and scalded his mum, and also threatened her life

Elena Chong
Court Correspondent

An unemployed man who beat up his 63-year-old mother and poured hot water on her was jailed for three years yesterday.

Rajesh Pannu, who suffers from chronic schizophrenia and was not suffering a relapse at the time, hit his mother with a broomstick until it broke. The 32-year-old also threw her walking frame away, hit her on the forehead with a plastic mug and threatened to kill her.

Rajesh, whose sentence was backdated to his remand on Nov 20 last year, pleaded guilty to three of five charges in July.

He was watching television at home in Tampines on Nov 19 when he accused his mother, Madam Narindar Kaur, of making noise when she used her walking frame. In anger, he grabbed it and threw it away.

When she told him she would call his uncle for help, Rajesh slapped and punched her on the face and body several times.

He also took her mobile phone and threw it on the floor, unplugged the telephone and took it out of the living room.

Next, he hit her all over with a broomstick until it broke. Bleeding from the nose and in great pain, she made her way to her bedroom.

Rajesh became angrier on seeing that she could walk without her frame and hit her forehead repeatedly with a plastic mug.

He left and returned with a knife to continue his “vicious and merciless” assault, the court heard.

He said: “I want to kill you!”. He slashed her right forearm twice and left the room to boil water to cook noodles.

He then took the pot of hot water and poured it on his mother, saying again: “I want to kill you!”. After that, he poured a second pot of hot water on her and went to sleep.

She made her way to the toilet, where she fell because she held on to a loose basin.

When Rajesh later found her lying on the toilet floor, he called for an ambulance.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Seline Yap, who had previously asked for 36 months’ jail and caning to be imposed, told Community Court Judge Mathew Joseph yesterday that the prosecution had reviewed its stance and would not be seeking caning in view of Rajesh’s condition.

Mr Sunil Sudheesan, from the Association of Criminal Lawyers of Singapore, who came on board in August, asked that Rajesh’s psychiatric report be enclosed in the warrant of commitment to ensure that he gets full treatment while in Changi Prison.

“Ultimately, this is a case where the offences are serious and a length of custody is certainly required. My client accepts responsibility for his actions,” he said.

For causing grievous hurt with a heated substance, the maximum penalty is 15 years’ jail and fine or caning.

In a separate case in the same court, Nelson Kee Zhi Ming, 27, was sentenced to eight months’ jail for breaking the rib of his father, Mr Kee Moh Seem, 63, in his home in Bukit Batok on July 14.

The son was handed a concurrent sentence of five days for using criminal force on his 53-year-old mum by pushing her.

Kee had quarrelled with his father and later pushed him to the ground and knelt on his rib area.

The maximum punishment for causing grievous hurt is 10 years’ jail and fine or caning.

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