



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

San Diego Police Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 30, 2009

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CONSUMER WARNING

(San Diego) Consumers should be aware that if a deal appears too good to be true; it probably is. Recently a victim contacted San Diego Police regarding an offer he encountered online to purchase a Mercedes Benz S600 at a greatly reduced price. The victim was scammed out of more than fifty thousand dollars.

The victim located a car on the Auto Trader website and contacted the private seller of the vehicle directly via email. The victim was shown photos of the Mercedes and the seller sent the victim a copy of a title. The seller told the victim that the sale would take place using Yahoo Shopping as an intermediary. The victim eventually learned that Yahoo Shopping does not provide that type of service.

The victim was instructed to wire money to a bank account in another state. The victim was led to believe the account was a Yahoo Shopping escrow account. The victim was told the Mercedes would be shipped to him for inspection and approval prior to the funds being released to the seller. When the Mercedes never arrived, the victim contacted SDPD.

Detectives want consumers to be diligent in verifying the authenticity of all parties involved in all purchases over the internet. Consumers should not underestimate the technical ability and creativity of criminals that use the internet to commit theft. Once the theft has been committed it can be difficult to identify the suspect or recover the financial loss.

Detectives believe there may be additional victims of this scam who have not reported the cases. While it is sometimes difficult to track down the suspects in cases such as these; it is important to report these crimes.

If you have been a victim of this scam, please contact the SDPD for assistance at (619) 531-2000.

For additional information on identity theft, fraud and internet crime prevention please visit the following websites: SDPD Financial Crimes page <http://www.sandiego.gov/police/about/financial.shtml>
SD County District Attorney page <http://www.sdcca.org/preventing/consumer-protection/index.html>
The Identity Theft Resource Center page <http://www.idtheftcenter.org/index.html>

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It is also recommended that you report any internet related crime to the Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) by following this link: <http://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>. The IC3 is a partnership between the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#) (FBI), the [National White Collar Crime Center](#) (NW3C), and the [Bureau of Justice Assistance](#) (BJA).

IC3s mission is to serve as a vehicle to receive, develop, and refer criminal complaints regarding the rapidly expanding arena of cyber crime. The IC3 gives the victims of cyber crime a convenient and easy-to-use reporting mechanism that alerts authorities of suspected criminal or civil violations.

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