

IDENTITY RECOVERY COVERAGE



Victims' Stories and Case Examples

Sleepless Nights

A California woman, an international banker, who spent more than 500 hours trying to clear her credit, said about identity theft: "At the time, the burden seemed like it cost me a lifetime." The victim said a woman stole her rental application from her landlord's property management office. The thief spent more than \$50,000 in her name, using her personal information to get a driver's license, open credit accounts, rent property, sign up for phones and utilities, lease a \$32,000 truck and get \$4,800 worth of liposuction.

The imposter was identified, but not arrested. She was later accused of smuggling marijuana — and charged in her victim's name! When she was sentenced to federal prison, they booked her as an inmate in her victim's name and she continued to use that name to send mail from her cell, the victim said. "I spent countless sleepless nights and seemingly endless days, dedicating my valuable time, energy, peace of mind, and what should have been a normal life, trying to restore my credit and my life," the victim told a Senate subcommittee investigating identity theft.

She was distracted at her job and became isolated from friends and loved ones. At one point, she was mistakenly held by U.S. Customs agents as a criminal when she returned from a vacation in Mexico. Her name had matched outstanding warrants based on identity fraud. "My world had become a living nightmare," she said.

Catch Me If You Can

In one notorious case of identity theft, the criminal, a convicted felon, not only incurred more than \$100,000 of credit card debt, obtained a federal home loan, and bought homes, motorcycles, and handguns in the victim's name, but called his victim to taunt him -- saying that he could continue to pose as the victim for as long as he wanted because identity theft was not a federal crime at that time -- before filing for bankruptcy, also in the victim's name.

While the victim and his wife spent more than four years and more than \$15,000 of their own money to restore their credit and reputation, the criminal served a brief sentence for making a false statement to procure a firearm, but made no restitution to his victim for any of the harm he had caused.

These complaints were sent to the Federal Trade Commission:

"Someone used my Social Security number to get credit in my name... I have been turned down for jobs, credit, and refinancing offers. This is stressful and embarrassing. I want to open my own business, but it may be impossible with this unresolved problem hanging over my head."

"My elderly parents are victims of credit fraud. We don't know what to do. Someone applied for credit cards in their name and charged nearly \$20,000. Two of the card companies have cleared my parents' name, but the third has turned the account over to a collection agency. The agency doesn't believe Mom and Dad didn't authorize the account. What can we do to stop the debt collector?"

"Someone is using my name and Social Security number to open credit card accounts. All the accounts are in collections. I had no idea this was happening until I applied for a mortgage. Because these 'bad' accounts showed up on my credit report, I didn't get the mortgage."

These reports were obtained from law enforcement agencies:

Creative Counterfeiting

A California man pleaded guilty to using stolen bank account information to deposit \$764,000 in counterfeit checks in a bank account he established.

Wireless Thieves

A computer hacker was sentenced to nine years in federal prison for tapping into the computer system of a home improvement store and downloading credit card numbers. The FBI said he and a co-defendant accessed the retailer's central computer through a Michigan store's wireless network.

It's Enough to Drive You Crazy

A woman admitted she obtained a fraudulent Florida driver's license in the name of the victim and used the license to withdraw more than \$13,000 from the victim's bank account. She also was issued five department store credit cards in the victim's name and charged approximately \$4,000.



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