



THE INVESTIGATOR

About Us

Since 2000 BCSI has performed hundreds of successful investigations. Our integrated team of investigators and support services ensure that the investigations are conducted in a timely fashion with leading edge techniques. BCSI is considered the platinum standard of the industry based on the quality and the wide spectrum of its services as well as the expertise of the investigators.

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Rental Scams



According to a [Vancouver Sun article](#) published in May 2019, “The average monthly cost of a two-bedroom listing in Vancouver is \$2,915, while the average monthly cost of a one-bedroom is \$1,828.” Housing prices at this rate are much higher than what the average Vancouverite can afford which allows scammers to find creative ways to take advantage of those on the hunt for a deal.

Covert Operation

Our Firm implemented a covert operation on a popular rental site to find out more about this scam. It did not take long for our investigators to come across a suspicious advertisement for a two-bedroom apartment listed at \$1,455.00 per month including utilities in a sought-after area of the North Shore. The photographs attached to the listing display a large apartment that features marble countertops, wood floors, and in-suite laundry. Listed below industry standard by almost half, it is an offer that is hard to resist. In an email response from our investigator’s inquiry, the owner gave a summary of their living situation which detailed that they resided overseas. The story initially sounded plausible, genuine, and relatable. The owner stated that they understood that the rental cost is below average but that this is because they are more concerned with finding the right people to live there than financial gain. They stated that a professional company will aid in setting up the contract as they can’t be there in person. It is also detailed that the rental not only included heat and electricity but also cable and internet. Our investigator responded to their email with a covert story of their situation. The tone of the second email from the owner was very different than the first. After only a few emails, the investigator is told that they have been approved to rent the space. The owner goes on to give directions on finalizing the deal which appeared to be cut and paste with capitalized portions of text in red font. The owner required personal information right away to pass on to a “third-party company” and a deposit of \$2,200.00 was required before the apartment could even be viewed. Finally, the email was concluded with “Please let me know when the funds are available.”

Key Aspects of [Emails](#) that Raise Suspicion:

1. Below average rental cost and the amount of utilities included (heat, electricity, cable, internet)
2. With only a few email communications, the investigator is told they have the space.
3. The owners email address included the name of the owner which was spelt differently than the tagged name associated to the email address
4. The owner provided a very detailed personal story which explained why they lived overseas, would require payment via E-Transfer or wire, and couldn’t meet in person.

5. Request for personal information and pre-payment required to view the apartment.
6. Well versed instructions to how to set up payment
7. Within only two email transmissions funds are expected to be transferred with no contract signed, apartment viewing, or phone conversation
8. The very different tones of the two emails; the first being personal and the second being detached
9. The font size and color inconsistencies of the text in the second email is a red flag

With a multitude of students looking for housing this month, be extra diligent when researching apartments online and when it sounds [too good to be true](#), it probably is...

Contact Us

If you have been a victim of a rental scam or want to learn more about our services, call our office at 604-922-6572 or visit our website at www.picanada.ca.



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