



## BC Crime Prevention Association

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Q: I was the victim of a 4600 US funds scam regarding a mustang – I reported it to the better business bureau and all the other places I was supposed to. Do I qualify for victim assistance - I am a 55 and that was my life savings. Also I have come across the same scam again and want to know if I can help to catch these people? Please help me out here.

A: Reply: There is insufficient detail in your question to provide a focused answer. Accordingly, we offer the following general advice:

1. If this scam involved circumstances in which you paid US\$4,600 for a vehicle that was never delivered, then your only recourse is to commence civil action against the seller as this would be, in a general sense, a breach of contract.
2. Conversely, if you sold the vehicle to someone who never paid you, this is also a breach of contract.
3. It is also possible that you have been a victim of the Nigerian Cheque Overpayment Scam in which a stranger from another country offers to buy something you have advertised, sight unseen, but sends you a cheque for thousands of dollars more than your asking price: the purchaser then tells you to deposit the cheque but refund the difference in a wire transfer. The catch here is that the cheque you receive is a forgery and is worthless. If this is what happened to you please contact Phonebusters as per paragraph 7 below.
4. By victim assistance we assume you are referring to financial assistance. Unfortunately, this is only available in British Columbia cases of violent crime and would not be relevant to your case.
5. Under normal circumstances, if you are a victim of fraud, you should report the circumstances to your local police department and follow their advice and let them know that you have spotted the same scam again.
6. The best policy to avoid these kinds of scams is to educate the public about cases such as yours and warn them of conducting purchases or sales with people in other countries when you do not know the bona fides of the person you are dealing with.
7. In addition to locally reporting frauds and scams you could also contact Phonebusters, the Canadian Anti-Fraud Call Centre, located in North Bay, Ontario. Their website address is: [www.phonebusters.com](http://www.phonebusters.com) and their toll-free number is: 1-888-495-8501. You can also report frauds online to the new RCMP Reporting Economic Crime website at: [www.recol.ca](http://www.recol.ca)