

Don't Talk Money with Strangers

Beware the Flim-Flam Artist

By PAT PETRASKE

The victims are those who believe they will get something for nothing or those who boast "Oh, I'd never fall for that."

But still this is the season of the flim-flam man who is waiting to take your hard-earned money, warned Officer Ken Rowe from the Community Service Department of the Rochester Police Department.

The "how-tos" of pulling off a swindle vary but each scheme entices its victim to become an eager and willing accomplice. To keep the wool from being pulled over your eyes, "beware of your own susceptibility," Rowe told the members of the Dutchtown Senior Citizens gathered for their semimonthly meeting at the Church of the Holy Family.

Senior citizens are prime targets for the old practice of misrepresentation and fraud, commonly called "bunko." It occurs prevalently in the form of defrauding someone of his life savings. The film, "On Guard Bunko!" sponsored by the Charles Settlement House, showed its first victim: a trusting elderly woman who agreed to turn over the entire contents of her bank account.

The "con artist," in a telephone conversation with her, posed as a bank official who said he was

trying to determine which of his employees was tampering with some of the accounts. The woman could "help" by surrendering her money; it would be treated with a special chemical which could then be traced to the guilty party. Without asking for identification, the victim turned over \$14,000 to what she believed was an agent from the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The four-phase approach had been easily accomplished. An elderly woman living alone was selected by a trial and error method of randomly calling names found in the telephone book. Subsequent conversations determined if the life savings of the woman were worth the effort of carrying off the scheme. Phase three induced the victim to take the money out of the bank herself. The last step was to take the money and run.

Another common swindle can come to your door in the form of a salesman who could be selling anything. One salesman offered a housewife a free set of encyclopedias since she had been selected "by your neighbors in our survey as a pacesetter in your community." He also was willing to pay her \$25 for every referral and sales lead she could supply him. A cursory glance at the contract and a quick signature left her with a load of long term installment payments for the

encyclopedias with no mention of the \$25.

Greedy can sweep along anyone who believes he is about to get something for nothing. The movie's "pigeon drop" segment began with the "discovery" of \$30,000 which was quickly explained by the con artists as "gambling money that had been lost." The con woman agreed to share the money with two nearby women if they would let her hold the money from their savings accounts in her hands as "a sign of good faith."

The victim agreed and ended up losing \$9,000 after an unbelievable switching of envelopes.

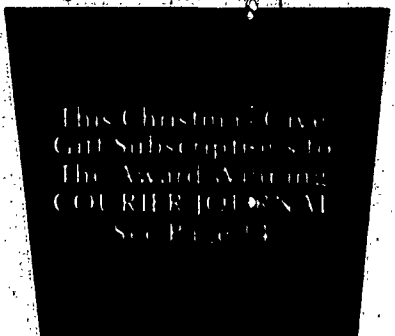
Some of the cases in the film brought chuckles from the audience but several hit close to home. One senior citizen related that as a result of her failing to read a contract that she believed was for a chimney cleaning, her furnace was dismantled. She had unknowingly signed an agreement for a new furnace.

Efforts by her lawyer saved her

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Apalachin — The Rosary Society of St. Margaret Mary Church here will hold a Christmas dinner on Dec. 9 at Glance's Cafe in Endicott. Reservations should be made by calling either 607-625-2032 or 607-625-2102.

The society will also collect donations to be given to a needy family.



Officer Ken Rowe [r.] relates the pitfalls of bunko to [left to right] Henry Clar, Milt Ritzenthaler and Elmer Walters [foreground] at a senior citizens' event.

from an expensive mistake. Her friend was not as fortunate and had to pay \$2,000 for what started out as a \$10 chimney cleaning job.

Rowe emphasized that senior citizens be cautious "whenever you are approached by anyone

and it involves money." A quick call to the bank could have verified the story fabricated by the so-called bank official. Asking to keep the contract for the encyclopedias until it could be thoroughly read could have saved the housewife a great deal of money.

USCC Committee Endorses Boycott

Washington, D.C. [RNS] — Citing a "lack of social justice" for striking workers of the Farah Manufacturing Co., based in El Paso, Tex., a committee of the U.S. Catholic Conference here has endorsed the strike and called for a nationwide boycott of Farah products.

The 21-member Committee on Social Development and World Peace stated in a resolution adopted without dissent that "the circumstances of employment (at Farah) constitute a denial of human dignity" and it recommended and endorsed unionizing efforts of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America "in the interests of social justice."

The resolution on the lingering labor dispute between Farah and the ACWA followed a six-month committee study and reports by two USCC agencies — the Division for Urban Affairs and the Division for the Spanish-Speaking. Face-to-face meetings between USCC officials and representatives of Farah were also held.

(The resolution marked the second time within a week that an official U.S. Catholic body endorsed a nationwide boycott in support of workers. On Nov. 15, the U.S. bishops' meeting in Washington, D.C., endorsed a boycott of grapes and lettuce urged by the United Farm Workers.)

Auxiliary Bishop John J. Dougherty of Newark, chairman

DARK ROOM NEEDED

The Catholic Youth Organization, in an effort to establish a photographic dark room, last week asked persons with processing and printing equipment they would care to donate, to contact acting director John Klein at 454-2030. Klein noted that the organization especially needs: an enlarger, with lens board and carrier; an adjustable enlarging easel; a set of polycontrast filters; a washer; a dryer; a safelight with an OA filter; processing trays and a fiberglass photo sink.

of the USCC's committee, said in a letter to every Catholic bishop in the U.S., that his committee brought to the attention of the bishops' Administrative Board in September the question of Farah workers organizing as members of the ACWA. He said the Board directed the committee to take "appropriate action."

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