

Craigslist Buyer Gets Big Discount on Pricey Camera — By Using Counterfeit Cash

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A man selling an expensive camera on Craigslist was able to get the full \$2,475 negotiated price, in cash, from a buyer when the two met at Starbucks in downtown Darien.

Except that the cash was phony.

Editor's note:

*Beneath this article is a sidebar on the Darien Police Department's safety tips and a description of its "Internet Purchase Exchange Location," meant to make it safer to make exchanges for Internet-based sales. It's got **video surveillance**.*

For our editorial on **video surveillance** at Darien train stations, go to [this article](#) and scroll down. For an example of **video surveillance** of license plates leading to charges, see [this article](#).

Here's how Darien police described what happened, based on the complaint from the victim:

On May 7, the man posted a for-sale message for his high-end camera on Craigslist, with an asking price of \$2,600. He received a text message from someone who said he was interested in buying the camera, and even negotiated the price down to \$2,475.

The "buyer" said he would be coming up from Long Island to make the purchase, and the seller agreed to meet him at Starbucks at 815 Post Road at 4:30 p.m., Thursday, May 10.

The victim was running late, arriving at 4:55 p.m. When he entered the shop's parking lot, he told police, he saw a Hispanic male with a thin mustache and black "bun" style haircut, wearing khakis and a white button-down shirt, standing on the sidewalk holding a red and black duffel bag.

When the victim asked the man if he was the one who wanted to buy the camera, he said he was, and the two went into the coffee shop and sat down.

When the seller showed the suspect the camera, the purported buyer didn't seem to be too familiar with an item he was supposed to be paying \$2,475 to a complete stranger in order to get. In talking with the seller, the man said he was buying the camera for his father.

The suspect put the camera in his duffel bag and took out a handful of cash, counting out a total of \$2,500 (a bit more than the agreed-upon price). He handed over fourteen \$100 bills and twenty \$50 bills to the seller and left.

The victim looked over the bills and held one up to the light, looking for the watermark that he knew should have been present.

It wasn't.

The victim followed the suspect out of Starbucks to confront him. He saw the man walking away briskly, eastward, across the parking lot. The victim began to run after him, to Sedgwick Avenue, where the suspect got into a white sedan-style car with a New York license plate.

The victim described the driver as a Hispanic male. That was the last the victim saw of the suspects and the car.

The victim texted the suspect several times, and got no reply.

Police confirmed that all the cash was counterfeit. They are continuing to investigate the incident.

SIDEBAR:

Here's How to Make a Safer Exchange in Darien from an Internet Sale

This article, an announcement from Darien Police Department, [originally was published](#) Oct. 12, 2016.

Darien Police Department has offering up its parking lot as a safe place to exchange goods bought and sold on Craigslist, Facebook, eBay and other online sites.

Starting today, citizens who are purchasing or selling something to a stranger online can meet up in the police department parking lot to conduct their business.

We now have a dedicated area in our public parking lot for on?line buyers and sellers to meet and make the exchanges. Upon making your transaction arrangements, provide the other party with the Darien Police Department address of 25 Hecker Ave Darien, CT 06820. Any GPS should take you directly to our front door.

The designated safe “Internet Purchase Exchange Location” is in the parking lot on the south side of the building and is marked with a newly installed sign. This area is monitored 24 hours a day by video surveillance and is recorded.

The Darien Police Department location will not be used to make illegal transactions of dangerous or deadly weapons or any other dangerous materials. In addition, department employees will not be used to witness or be a part of these transactions. We are just providing a safe location to conduct your transactions.

Some additional information for on?line purchase transactions that you need to know:

- - Only use websites you are familiar with
 - Never provide personal information over the internet
 - Never purchase anything online using your credit card from a site that does not have an SSL (Secure Sockets Layer)
 - When taking photos, utilize the cut and paste method from a Word document. This will make it harder for someone to utilize GPS location programs to find where you live.

- Take a photo of just the item you are selling. Items in the background can represent additional targets for the would-be criminal
- Ask a lot of questions
- Don't go alone and show up early
- Finally, use the Darien Police Department "Internet Purchase Exchange Location" created to provide a safe place to make and document these types of transactions

Darien is one of the safest communities in our state and we are always looking for ways to make it even safer. This location gives people in our community a protected place to exchange internet purchases and provides a more secure alternative than meeting a stranger at a private residence.