

African Bank reverses a fraudulent debt

Fraudsters continue to wreck innocent people's lives by stealing their personal data and using it to commit fraud. This kind of criminal behaviour costs financial institutions R1 billion a year.



By the time you finish reading this article someone's identity will probably have been stolen and the victim will be forced to spend a lot of time and money trying to restore his or her good name - and credit record.

Mbekeni Dlamini, 47, of Protea Glen in Soweto, was a victim of such ID theft and he had tried since 2011 to clear his name.

Dlamini, said he wanted a loan from Capitec Bank but he was turned down on the grounds that he owed African Bank R112,000.

He went to African Bank's Dube branch - where the account was opened - to enquire about the loan he allegedly took. He discovered that the loan was granted without following Fica regulations.

"The branch only had a copy of an ID which with my correct numbers, but a faked picture," said Dlamini.

He says the address was for someone living in Meadowlands, while he lived in Protea Glen.

Legal action

Though he had submitted an affidavit stating that he did not take the loan or receive the money, the bank continued to institute legal action against him.

The lawyers eventually traced him to his work, the Times Media Group, where he was served with a final letter of demand.

Meanwhile, the fraudster had been granted a loan of R92,016 and a credit card facility of R20,248, using his (Dlamini's) identity without a payslip or proof of residence, Dlamini said.

Dlamini said he had never lost his identity document and that he always shredded his bank statements and any pre-authorised credit cards before discarding them.

He said he almost collapsed when he received a letter of demand from African Bank's attorneys at work.

"I was scared they would start garnishing my salary for a loan I don't know anything about," he said.

Resolved

It took Sowetan's Consumer Line a day to resolve Dlamini's problem.

Consumer and sustainability advocate at African Bank, Marilyn Budow, confirmed that Dlamini was a victim of identity theft and fraud.

"It does appear that Dlamini was a victim of identity theft and the bank will delete his details from the account in question," she said.

Budow said the Dube branch he had referred the complaint to initially, closed down more than a year ago and was unable to follow up on what had happened with regard to his initial efforts to have this matter resolved.

She said they would help him remove adverse information from the credit bureau. "We will request this to be effected urgently, but it may take about five days to process," said Budow.

She apologised to Dlamini for the inconvenience caused and conceded that the bank itself would carry the loss.

Source: Sowetan via I-Net Bridge

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