

Invasion of the Israeli Locksmith Scammers

ALOA's 7th END - LITIGATION

For presentation to the 2009 membership meeting of the Associated Locksmiths of America
By Charles Eastwood CRL

Hi, I'm Locksmith Charley and I am here to talk about the Invasion of the Israeli Locksmith Scammers and what Aloa is doing, isn't doing, and should be doing about this ever increasing threat.

I am sure that everyone present here today is painfully aware of the extreme problems being caused to locksmiths and consumers nationwide by several criminal enterprise companies that are substantially tarnishing the positive image that professional locksmiths have taken decades to establish.

Their tactics are well known to all of us by now:

First – flooding the phone books and internet with hundreds to thousands of phone numbers listed to bogus addresses and company names and sometimes using the names of well established legitimate locksmiths.

Second – quoting low prices or service call only prices only to tell the customers upon arrival that their situation is different and that the price is going to be substantially more – that is to say “bait and switch”.

Third – unnecessarily destruction of customers' locks so they can fraudulently up charge for replacement locks either because they are so technically inept that they can't pick a lock or because they have been indoctrinated that drill and replace is considerably more profitable.

In one way or another All of these tactics constitute consumer fraud, but more importantly they are a concerted criminal attack on the dignity and honor of the locksmith profession generally and they need to be stopped, **immediately and permanently**.

While our Legislative guy Tim McMullen, is doing a dandy job, having semi-annual meetings with Attorney's General in Washington, he has told me that Arizona, where I live, fails to send a delegate to these meetings. Lotta good that does us in Arizona... I have spoken with a consumer, Lisa Mendez, who has been on two different TV stations consumer action programs about the way the scammers have victimized her, and Lisa told me that in response to her official complaint to the AZ A.G.'s office they told her “We know all about the locksmith scams and there is nothing we can do about it...”

In reading the “State of the Association” article in the July 2009 issue of Keynotes I come to understand that the board of directors establishes “ENDS” or “GOALS” for the association and the executive director somehow finds the “MEANS” to accomplish those “ENDS” which are: 1. Legislation, 2. Communication, 3. Education, 4. Recognition, 5. Professionalism, and 6 Membership.

I agree with all of the stated ends or goals as they exist presently, but given the insidious ongoing criminal mafia-style attacks on our industry I feel that the board of directors is sadly lacking a 7th END or GOAL. We may have some argument over the NAME of the 7th END. Some may call it defense. Some may call it offense. I would call it LITIGATION.

I have spent several hundred hours researching and cross-referencing information on the internet and have discovered one company ATLAS advertising 250+ phone numbers and 300+ addresses in the Phoenix market. During that research I have also identified that BASAD, DEPENDABLE, COMPLETE, and MILLENNIUM are also working the Phoenix market and there are strong indications that I have not taken the time to cross-reference that RUN-LOCAL, EXPERT, and perhaps others are also achieving penetration into the Phoenix market.

I have started writing a civil complaint (50 pages + so far) against 5 companies of Scammers and 5 telephone companies that are complicit in moving their phony listings to market and should ALOA fail the membership entirely, I will probably go ahead and file it in Superior Court, alone, and procure what injunctions that I can against their ongoing criminal activities.

I don't really want to do this alone, but absent any support, feel that I have to do what I have to do. If the ALOA membership agrees to demand litigation, I will turn over everything I have done and learned to ALOA and our legal counsel.

ALOA's seemingly official positions are "complain to your Attorney's General" and "Lets Legislate!"

My feeling, however, is that rather than requesting 50 separate Attorney's General to file cases against 5 or 10 companies (250 to 500 separate court actions in a multitude of jurisdictions) Our organization, ALOA, is uniquely situated, and qualified, to put a stop to this crap once and for all by filing ONE action.

If ALOA files **one action** in United States District Court naming each and every scammer company that our membership can identify as well as all of the telephone companies providing their phone service and facilitating the publication of all of their phony addresses into the public domain we can put an immediate stop to the activities of ALL of the scammers at once.

My feeling is that every ALOA member knows, or can readily ascertain, the identity of all of the SCAMMERS operating in their areas. If ALOA sets up a central repository, members can fully report all of the scammers nationwide and ALOA will have all of the information.

Once ALOA files ONE class action, with 2 classes of victims, locksmiths and defrauded consumers, and gets ONE judge to issue preliminary injunctions and restraining orders, pending the trial on the issues, which may take months to a year or more to get to court, if we can get their phones turned off pending the hearings / trial, the scammers will be effectively out of business NATIONWIDE!

For the good of the locksmith trade in general, I move that the membership of ALOA vote to **command** the board of directors of ALOA to instruct ALOA's legal counsel to immediately file suit in United States District Court against every identifiable scammer company and the telephone companies that they are using to propagate their phony listings to all of the print and internet media and seek preliminary and permanent injunctive relief prohibiting these companies from acting in a manner in which they have been all too comfortably acting.

Dated: 8/10/2009

Charles Eastwood, CRL

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