

## ***Nowhere to Run***

### **Produced by the United States Postal Inspection Service Transcription of Video**

I didn't want to come here, but I couldn't ask Mrs. Washburn to drive all the way back into town just to hear more bad news.  
Her daughter suggested meeting them halfway, and this place was it.

The stock they sold you is basically worthless.  
Either the companies don't exist or they have never heard of Lohan/Michaels investments.

I should have known better. I started getting these investments offers in the mail shortly after my husband died. I should have done my due diligence before sending them any money at all.

These crooks are very slick, Mrs. Washburn.  
They target seniors with mailing lists, lottery sweepstakes...  
Once they get your information, they don't give up.

Have you arrested these criminals yet? I mean, even if you can't recover any of my money, I would like the satisfaction of knowing that they are going to pay for their actions.

It's a bit more complicated than that. Lohan/Michaels is what we call a boiler room. It's basically a bank of phones and con men.  
They set up shop in Canada to make it harder to prosecute.  
It would be very helpful if we can get access to your phone records.

Sure... I don't have any problems with that. However, I have caller ID on all the phones at home, and I don't remember ever seeing a call that came from outside of the country.

Their calls are usually routed through the US through switchers, or they use prepaid cell phones or calling cards. They do the same with the mail, so you never see foreign postmarks.

Oh, I see. How clever of them. My husband always handled all of our investments. Perhaps I should have hired somebody after... the investments were so small, especially in the beginning, and I guess I wanted to think that I could do it on my own.

It's difficult watching someone when they realize that they've been taken.  
I could imagine Doris Washburn sitting alone in her house, just starting to realize that her husband was really gone. Then the phone rings, and it's a nice young

man asking if she had a chance to read the prospectus that she had received in the mail.

She probably explained that she hadn't had time, since her husband had only recently passed away. The con man would have then stopped talking about investments altogether. He'd spin some story about losing his aunt or sister. They might have talked for an hour or more, without him ever once asking for money. By the time they had hung up, Doris Washburn might have thought she'd made a new friend. The next time he called, she'd be happy to make a small investment.

Is there anything else you can recall that might help us? Did you speak to anyone else besides Mathew Raines?

Yes, I spoke to his supervisor on a least two occasions. And if anything he was even more charming than Mr. Raines. I remember that he always asked how my daughter was holding up.

Mom, I'll get the car.  
O, alright Honey.

I believe his first name was Richards or Richardson, something like that. I know I have it written down at home. I'm very careful about taking good notes. I believe his first name was Park.

Park Richards?  
Park Richards.

Park Richardson?  
Park Richardson... yeah..

I need to get your notes today, Doris.  
Alright.

We're gonna get to the bottom of this. I promise.

It couldn't be. We busted a boiler room operator named Park Richardson just before my father died three years ago. This was exactly the type of scam that he used to run.

Didn't I tell you about that one, George? Didn't I tell you to load up on that one, George? Didn't I tell you that I had my own mother in that stock, George?

Goddard.  
Hey Alan!  
Hey, Michelle!

Can you run a check with the US Marshalls and see if Park Richardson is still locked up?

Richardson? Isn't that the guy who was running that investment scam... the one that your father's friend was mixed up in?

Yes, that's him. I'm working a US-Canadian cross border case...

It sounds like his M.O.

If it's him, it might make extradition easier.

Gotcha...

I know the US Attorney would love to get him back. So would I.

Yeah...let me check with the Marshalls.

Great!

Give me about twenty minutes.

Ok.

Ok, Thanks!

It didn't take long to find out that Park Richardson had been released from prison four months ago. While he was inside the joint, he must have picked up some new tricks. We've gotten good at finding and busting boiler rooms in the US, so their newest wrinkle is taking their operations across the border. Sometimes to Canada, Latin America, or an offshore island. But as fast as they can change their tactics, so can we.

The Phonebusters National Call Center is a Canadian telemarketing fraud complaint organization. We now routinely work with Canada on cross border fraud schemes. I called one of my contacts there and gave him all I had on Lohan/Michaels and my suspicions about Park Richardson.

Two days later, an email brings me a passport photo of a man named "Park Richards," who's in Canada on a tourist Visa. The photo confirms that it's our guy. Knowing the city he's in helps, and within a few days Canadian law enforcement has tracked down the location of the boiler room in Montreal.

It takes time for the Canadians to build their case, get the warrants, and make the arrest...but I don't mind waiting. The look on Park Richardson's face is going to make it all worthwhile.

You can't keep me here. I'm an American citizen. I demand to speak to someone with the US Embassy, like "pronto". This is ... this is all just a big mistake... a misunderstanding... in the French-English thing you guys got...

Park Richardson.... Remember me? At your trial I told you that you should try a new line of work....

This one has too many occupational hazards.

Listen, no matter what they think I've done here, it happened in Canada, so it's none of your business.

Except that your victims are in the US, and you used the US mail to get to them. That makes it my business.

Hey.. Look...This is all just a big mistake... I just came here to help a friend of mine start up a small company. None of this is even in my name.

We're extraditing you to the US to face mail fraud charges.

You'll have plenty of time to sort it all out...about ten years.

Thanks to our partnerships with Canada, Park Richardson is now serving a ten-year sentence for mail fraud.

Effective law enforcement within the US has driven these criminals across borders in an effort to hide their crimes. While US-Canadian cross border task forces are helping to stop these crimes, prevention is still the best medicine.

Consumers should be aware that there is an increasing trend for fraud schemes to operate outside the US. Modern travel, communications, and the Internet make it even easier for these crooks to prey on you. You can help protect yourself with some simple steps.

Number 1: If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is. Beware of anything that promises large sums of money, sweepstakes or lottery winnings in exchange for your advance payment, donation, or investment.

Number 2: Don't allow yourself to be pressured into making a decision. Consult with your financial advisor, Better Business Bureau, family member or trusted friend, or your consumer protection bureau before deciding to act.

Number 3: Remember that legitimate businesses will never object to you asking questions. They are also happy to provide references. Beware of anyone who tries to conceal their mailing address, telephone number, or evades questions about their operations.

Number 4: Be aware that if you respond to even one of these offers, your name will likely be added to a "mooch" list by these criminals. These are mailing lists, similar to those used by legitimate businesses that track people who have fallen for these scams in the past. They are bought and sold as part of these underground enterprises.

Number 5: Be cautious if a company insists on using a commercial wire transfer service to send money. It's often impossible to verify the actual destination where the money will be picked up, making the receiver of the money difficult to trace. Always pay by credit card or postal money order.

And if you think you've been the victim of fraud, you need to report it. These reports are vital in helping to track down these criminal operations, especially if they are operating outside the United States. You can contact your local Postal

Inspector in the phone book or on our website at  
[USPS.COM/POSTALINSPECTORS](http://USPS.COM/POSTALINSPECTORS).

Cross border fraud can be a world of trouble for it's victims. Make sure that you're not one of them.

The United States Postal Inspection Service would like to recognize our partners in law enforcement for their efforts in combating cross border frauds.

These include:

Project Colt in Montreal  
The Toronto Strategic Partnership  
Project Emptor in Vancouver  
The Alberta Partnership against Cross Border Fraud in Calgary  
The Vancouver Strategic Alliance  
The Atlantic Partnership in Halifax

These task forces target criminals in Canada who operate fraudulent foreign lotteries, prize promotions, sweepstakes, advance payment loans, credit card, and internet scams.

The Phone Busters National Call Center assists these partnerships in investigating and prosecuting criminals who commit cross border and telemarketing fraud.

Our ability to protect U.S. consumers is greatly enhanced by these partnerships, and we are grateful for their cooperation.