

Strathmore RCMP charge three in identity theft case

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RCMP in Strathmore have laid charges against three individuals involved in an identity theft and fraud group.

On December 8, an employee at a Strathmore hotel called the Strathmore RCMP to report a male was staying in the hotel in a room booked using Aeroplan points. Aeroplan had notified the hotel that the points had been obtained fraudulently and were not valid for payment.

Officers attended the hotel and spoke to the man that had booked the room. The man said he would pay with a different card and provided a driver's license as identification. While the man spoke to the front desk staff to arrange payment, an RCMP member examined the driver's license and was able to pull the picture off, revealing that it was a forged license and that the man had provided a false name.

The male was then arrested and officers returned to the hotel room where they found a female who was in violation of her release conditions and a male that had outstanding warrants for his arrest. Inside the hotel room, officers recovered approximately \$40,000 of merchandise that had been purchased through fraudulent means. The items recovered included pre-paid credit cards, cell phones, computers and clothing. A small amount of methamphetamine was also found in the room.

30-year old Andrew Bruggeman from Edmonton, 25-year old Stephani Fink, and 36 -year old Dwayne Ireland, both from Calgary, have been charged with numerous offences including Fraud, Identity Theft, Possession of Property obtained by Crime, and Failing to Comply with conditions of recognizance/probation. All three have been remanded into custody and are scheduled to make their first court appearances, via CCTV on December 15 in Gleichen Provincial Court.

Anyone who believes they have been a victim of identity theft is encouraged to contact their local police service. Information on identity theft prevention can be found on the RCMP website at <http://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/scams-fraudes/id-theft-vol-eng.htm>.

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