

Bail bondsman jailed for impersonating police, extortion

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A bail bondsman allegedly masquerading as a police officer was arrested on charges he shook down owners of a Naklua somtam restaurant for 10,000 baht.

Verayuth Buddapanth, 25, was apprehended Oct. 18 during a police sting operation in which the Nong Bualumphoo native was caught accepting a 1,000 baht payment from alleged extortion victim Yuphin Konpkhum.

Yuphin told police trouble began when her 21-year-old son Jitipong called, saying he'd been detained by a police officer who refused to release him unless he was paid 10,000 baht.



Victims of the scam point out the man who tried to scam them.

Jitipong explained to investigators he'd been pulled over by Verayuth on Soi Wat Thamsamakkee and that he didn't realize the bail bondsman was not a real officer. Verayuth allegedly conducted an illegal search of Jitipong's motorbike and attempted to bring him for a urine test. Refusing to go, Jitipong was told he would not be released unless he paid Verayuth 10,000 baht.

The youth called his mother, who borrowed 8,800 baht from a relative and paid off the fake cop, promising to get the rest later. Yuphin said she then realized she'd been scammed and contacted police, who helped her set up the final cash exchange and sting.

Verayuth denied charges he'd impersonated a police officer and had only asked for the cash from the Konpkhum's to "clear himself" of a drug-dealing charge. When questioned about the 8,800 baht earlier taken from the somtam chefs, Verayuth denied it was him, saying a man identified only as "Net" had taken the money.

Verayuth now needs his own bail bondsman after skeptical police locked him up pending further investigation. Police again repeated warnings to not surrender to any search or detainment by anyone claiming to be a police officer without verifying his credentials with the relevant police station.