

Name: Alert ID: TMML2024039284746 A serial fraudster pretended to be a police officer and a lawyer in order to con three vulnerable women out of thousands of pounds. Stephen Davey used two false identities - 'Stephen Burns' and 'Simon Davey,' - as part of his elaborate plot. The women, who cannot be named, include a single mother who thought Davey could help her through a family court case after she suffered from domestic abuse. However, the conman went on to steal a total of nearly £8,500 from his victims between January to April this year, leaving them feeling 'extremely vulnerable and anxious'. He was jailed for four years yesterday - the judge describing him as a 'dishonest fraudster' with an 'appalling criminal record'. The 49-year-old has 17 previous convictions for 94 offences, 57 of which are fraud offences and 37 for theft. Prosecuting, Nardeen Nemat, explained Davey met his first victim at the start of December 2018 when he began regularly attending a sports bar in Liverpool. He introduced himself as 'Stephen Burns' - a police officer, offender manager and probation worker. Over the following months Davey convinced the woman that he was in love with her. In order to borrow money from her, he told her that he was in the process of buying a house for the pair of them to live in. The woman went on to ask Davey if he would help her friend, a victim of domestic violence going through the Family Courts, retain custody of her children. Liverpool Crown Court heard how Davey said he had a friend - whom he named as 'Simon Davey' - who was a family law solicitor and could help the woman, who was struggling to pay for legal representation. There was no such lawyer, and over the next four months Davey used this ruse to take payments from the woman, having promised to find her representation her at court. He also claimed he had hired a private investigator to follow her ex-husband, and charged her for the service. In total he took £8,000 from her. Davey told the woman not to attend court and that 'Simon Davey' would represent her in her absence, but no one attended, leaving her unrepresented. Even after this, Davey carried on the fiction, telling the woman that she'd been granted full custody of her children and compensation when this was not true. He also told her on occasions to keep her children off school and produced fake legal documents and emails from Warrington Borough Council about her ex-husband's parental rights. Still claiming to be a police officer, Davey went on to send the woman fake screenshots claiming that they were from the police. He said that the police were involved in an operation to arrest an ex-husband of one of his victims for 14 offences, including terrorism and possession of indecent images of children. He also forged a fake email from the Chief Constable of Merseyside Police to claim the man was going to be arrested. Prosecuting, Nardeen Nemat said between January 2019 and April 2019 Davey asked for and obtained money from the victim on a regular basis. This included £400-500 for private health scans, after Davey claimed that he feared he may have bowel cancer and that waiting for a scan on the NHS would take too long. Davey was then introduced to another friend of the two women, also in family law proceedings against her ex-husband following domestic abuse. He referred the woman, who wanted a non-molestation order to be put in place to protect herself and her daughter, to 'Simon Davey' in exchange for £475. But despite the woman being told the order was now in place to protect them, no application was ever made. The court heard Davey's crimes were finally discovered after staff at the Tune Hotel in Castle Street, Liverpool, where he was staying, became suspicious and googled his name. The search brought up a series of news articles about earlier frauds he'd committed, prompting a member of staff to confront him via Whats App. Davey never returned to the hotel, abandoning his possessions and staff contacted the police. His bedroom was searched by the police and various articles were recovered that he'd used as part of his frauds, including police lanyards and files provided by the women to 'lawyer Simon Davey'. The prosecutor said: 'Stephen Davey is a serial fraudster whose behaviour showed a disregard for the havoc and heartache he created in the lives of the people he conned. 'The women thought he was trying to help them with difficult family problems, yet he just made things so much worse. 'By telling the women that his "solicitor friend" was dealing with the Family Court matters and that they didn't need to attend court, he could have derailed their hopes of maintaining custody of their children. 'His behavior was reckless and heartless. Thankfully the women found the courage and perseverance to support this prosecution and help the Crown Prosecution Service build a strong case - so strong that Davey pleaded guilty at an early stage.' In a victim impact statement read out by the prosecution, the first mother said she was seeking assistance from the family courts after an abusive relationship but she no longer trusts police, social services or legal representation as a result of Davey's actions. She described how guilty she feels for allowing her children to get to know Davey and that they don't

understand why they can't see 'Stephen Burns' again. The victim says she feels 'extremely vulnerable and anxious' since the incident and has since been referred for counselling and given strong medication for her anxiety. The court also heard how the second mother has been left feeling anxious and has suffered panic attacks at work where she has broken down and cried as a result of Davey's actions. The prosecution said the victim was previously in a violent relationship and had been subject to mental torture, and following Davey's actions, she has been left feeling more vulnerable than ever before and fears that her daughter could be kidnapped. She has also been left struggling to trust the police and says she is constantly looking over her shoulder. Defending, Tom Watson said: 'He does accept that the two victims have suffered and have suffered as a result of what he has done and he does not wish them to suffer any further. 'The defendant knows this court will look at his record and see something of a life of crime and he does not attempt to deny that but he does attempt to give some form of apology for his behaviour. 'His criminal record is something which he is disgusted with himself for.' The court heard how Davey, who has two children aged 21 and 23, enrolled on a online BA degree in Criminology and Psychology in 2015 because 'he does want to make something more of himself'. Judge Warnock, said: 'The matter is complex and tortuous because you took complex and tortuous actions against your victims. 'The real harm in this case is the affect it had in the case involving these children. 'You have an appalling criminal record, you are a dishonest fraudster. You have been committing this type of offence for a long time with 94 offences for 17 convictions starting in 1987. 'The time has come for you to stop committing fraud and harm to others.' Stephen Davey, of Kirkdale in Liverpool, was sentenced to four years in jail for fraud and theft, with 25 per cent credit having to be given for his early guilty plea. The court imposed a 10-year restraining order, which states that Davey must not contact any of the women or go to their addresses. The restraining order also covers the Tune Hotel in Castle Street where Davey had been living at the time he committed his offences. A Proceeds of Crime timetable was also set to recoup as much as possible of the money he took from the women.