



12:24 am · 6-22-09

75°

Tonight's Low: 66°

7 Day Forecast



Triangle 411 Autos Classifieds Jobs Real Estate Shop WRAL WRAL-TV

Log In  Enter keyword(s)

[Home](#)
[News](#)
[Traffic](#)
[Weather](#)
[Sports](#)
[Business](#)
[5 On Your Side](#)
[Health & Life](#)
[Entertainment](#)
[OUT ABOUT](#)
[GOLD](#)

[Local](#)
[State](#)
[Nation](#)
[World](#)
[Politics](#)
[Obituaries](#)
[Green](#)
[Tech](#)
[Crime](#)
[Strange](#)
[Education](#)
[Documentaries](#)
[Blogs](#)
[Public Records](#)



## Judge nixes locksmith scheme in N.C.

Posted: May. 14, 2009

**RALEIGH, N.C.** — A Superior Court judge on Thursday ordered a bogus locksmith operation recently exposed by WRAL News to stop operating in North Carolina.

Judge Paul Ridgeway's temporary restraining order came hours after the state Attorney General's Office filed suit against 704 Locksmith Inc., NC Charlotte Locksmith Inc., Locksmith Service Inc. and two Charlotte residents who are believed to run the three companies. All three firms operate under multiple names, according to the lawsuit.



**WATCH VIDEO**  
State sues over deceptive locksmith tactics

None of the defendants appeared in court Thursday afternoon, and Ridgeway's order means any employees of the company who pose as locksmiths can be cited with contempt of court.

A WRAL News hidden-camera investigation showed tactics used by the nationwide operation, from phony Internet ads designed to divert customers from legitimate businesses to out-of-state call centers promising low service fees to desperate people locked out of their homes.

Once the operation dispatches its crews posing as locksmiths, however, the price for the service quickly escalates, the WRAL News investigation showed.

Following the investigation, a number of victims of the scheme filed complaints with the Consumer Protection Division in the Attorney General's Office.

"They're not licensed locksmiths. They pretend to be a local company and sometimes adopt names that sound like a local locksmith," Attorney General Roy Cooper said.

Ed Walters, who operates Raleigh Locksmith, was cited in the suit as a businessman who has lost customers to deceptive trade practices. Raleigh Locksmith is one of the names used by 704 Locksmith, according to the suit.

### Credit Card Fraud

Software Solutions for Large Organizations. Get Info Today.

[www.SAS.com](http://www.SAS.com)

### The Fraud Library

Learn about prevention techniques Over 40 techniques for eCommerce

[www.fraudpractice.com](http://www.fraudpractice.com)

### Prevent Identity Theft

Always a step ahead of ID Thieves. Get Daily Surveillance & Protection

[Stop.IdentityTheft.com](http://Stop.IdentityTheft.com)

### Free Triple Credit Report

Free Triple Bureau Credit Reports & Scores Instantly. Get Them For \$0!

[FreeOnlineTripleCreditReport.com](http://FreeOnlineTripleCreditReport.com)



Ads by Google



### Video

- State sues over deceptive locksmith tactics
- Investigation exposes phony locksmiths
- Web only: Fake locksmiths caught on hidden camera
- Doctored Internet ads divert locksmith customers

### Documents

- Restraining order against deceptive locksmiths
- State's suit against deceptive locksmiths
- Consumer complaint form

### Related Links

- Anatomy of a sting

### Related Stories

- State to investigate locksmith scheme
- Deceptive locksmith ads used to fool customers
- Sting key to picking apart locksmith scheme

### Site Search

locksmith

**MOST VIEWED E-MAILED DISCUSSED**

### STORIES

- Durham teen girl shot in head
- N.C. tourist dies after fall from Myrtle Beach hotel
- US Airways to offer flights from N.C. to Hawaii

### VIDEOS

- Car crashed into store to rescue shoplifter
- Evening Pick 3, Pick 4 and Cash 5
- Heavy rains flood parts of Wake County

### SLIDESHOWS



The suit also referred to a Cary woman who was victimized in March when a bogus locksmith drilled out her front-door lock and tried to charge her \$215 for the service. The man reluctantly accepted payment by check after she refused to go with him to an automated teller machine to withdraw cash to pay the bill, the suit states.

Cooper said people who are locked out of their home or car are already vulnerable and "to get ripped off on top of that is really just too much."

"Our No. 1 objective ... is to stop them from doing business anymore," he said of the defendants.

The state also is seeking civil penalties of \$5,000 against the defendants for each time they used deceptive trade practices. Consumers who have been victimized by the scheme must file a formal complaint to be eligible for any restitution the state collects in the case.

Cooper urged consumers to ask to see a North Carolina locksmith license, which is required by law, when using a locksmith. They also should ask for references, double-check the company's office address and watch out for locksmiths who arrive in unmarked vehicles or without uniforms, he said.

**Reporter:** Cullen Browder  
**Photographer:** Robert Meikle  
**Web Editor:** Matthew Burns

Copyright 2009 by Capitol Broadcasting Company. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

SHARE Take WRAL.com to go

Print Friendly | Email to a friend |

**Sponsored Links**

**Searching for a Job?**

Find a recession-resistant career: Accredited BA, BS, MS, MBA degrees.  
[www.DegreeTree.com](http://www.DegreeTree.com)

**Scottrade: Stock Trading**

\$7 Stock trades online. Get prices, charts & research for free.  
[www.Scottrade.com](http://www.Scottrade.com)

**1 Rule To Lose Your Gut**

I cut down 38 lbs of pure body fat in just 19 weeks with this 1 rule.  
[HelensDiet.com/Blog](http://HelensDiet.com/Blog)

**2009 Credit Score**

A Good Credit Score is 700 or Above. See Yours in Just 2 Easy Steps!  
[FreeCreditReport.com](http://FreeCreditReport.com)

**1 Flat Stomach Diet Works**

I lost 47 lbs of body fat with this 1 easy diet I saw on Rachael Ray.  
[HelensDiet.com/Secret](http://HelensDiet.com/Secret)

**News Alerts to your Email & Cell Phone**

Breaking News | 7am Headlines | Noon Headlines | 4pm Headlines | Video Alerts

**10 Comments**



Welcome to GOLO, where WRAL.com visitors can comment on stories and create profile pages, blogs and photo galleries.

You must be a registered WRAL.com user to use these tools. [Click here to register or log in.](#)

View Comments

**LOCAL NEWS**

**Plant to reopen two days after ammonia leak kills worker**

Updated 46 minutes ago | WATCH

**Lawmakers say budget process improved, still flawed**

Updated Jun. 21 3:04 p.m.

**Vendors take issue over selling space**

Updated Jun. 21 8:50 p.m. | WATCH

**Amber Alert issued for Southern Pines girl**

Updated Jun. 21 4:43 p.m.

**MOST VIEWED SLIDESHOWS**

**Keith Urban, along with Sugarland, play Raleigh's RBC Center**

Posted Jun. 21 4:30 p.m.

**Pet Photos | June 15 - June 21, 2009**

Jun. 19, 2009

**The week in photos**

Updated Jun. 21 2:49 p.m.



Top Weather Entertainment Strange Video



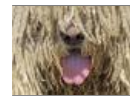
**top-voted stories**



Send us your news photos, videos, tips and story ideas.



**MULTIMEDIA**



**The week in photos**

A look at the top stories in news, business and politics through the lenses of Associated Press photographers.



**Country Music Television awards**

See pictures from the Country Music Television awards.



**Mary Easley timeline**

A look at Mary Easley and the high-paying job she held at N.C. State University.



**Bonnaroo 2009**

The eighth annual Bonnaroo Music Festival was held this weekend in Tennessee.



**The week in entertainment**

The week in photos from the Associated Press, WRAL and other sources.

more

**Credit Center**

**Get Your Credit Score & Report For FREE**



More confidence, more peace of mind, and more value. Get it all with your FREE Experian Credit Score & Report! [Find Out More!](#)

**Treat Yourself to a Good Time!!**

**You have heartburn. We have solutions**

**Lake Gaston-Many Choices! Good Prices! Low Rates!**

**Frozen in Fear with the Stock Market Returns?**

**McCar Homes Comes to Raleigh-50+yrs quality**

**Durham teen girl shot in head**  
Updated Jun. 21 11:45 a.m.

[more](#) | [RSS](#)

[homes](#)



**Attention Golf Fans!**  
Now you too can play  
a great fantasy game  
[CLICK HERE TO PLAY](#)  
**Golf Tournament Challenge**

**Links We Like**

**The Little Things Get You Promoted**



In the workplace it's the little things that get you noticed and help you stand out above the rest. [More Details](#)

**1,000 Delicious, Weight-Loss Recipes**



Learn how eating the right foods can help you lose belly fat and reach your weight-loss goal. Try the South Beach Diet Online for FREE! [More Details](#)

**Six Steps To A Successful Vegetable Bed**



If you want a great vegetable garden, follow these easy steps and in just a few weekends you should be ready to grow. [More Details](#)

[FAQ](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Tools](#) | [RSS Feeds](#) | [Email Alerts](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms Of Use](#) | [Site Map](#)

© 2009, Capitol Broadcasting Company, Inc.