



**Sid Bourne on facing up to rogue customers**

# Amazing scam leaves fitter gobsmacked and out of pocket!

ROGUE consumers continue to cause consternation. Like rogue traders, they spoil it for every honest trades person and decent consumer.

To be fair, there are just a few rogues, but one is enough to play havoc. They have no respect for the law and they do not mind who they hurt along the way. Here is another example.

I was called out to look at a solid wood walnut flooring installation, for which the contractor had not been paid after several months. The consumer's excuse was that he was not happy with the floor.

I went to site with contractor to try to resolve the alleged problem. The contractor knocks at the door and asks to speak to his customer, Mr Rogue.

'I am the new owner,' says the pleasant man who answers the door. 'I have just bought this house with the new floor.'

The contractor was gobsmacked. The new owner invited us in to discuss the problem. He said that when he bought the house, Mr Rogue offered to sell him the new walnut floor.

Mr Rogue's story was that he had ordered a solid wood floor for the lounge, and would have it fitted in his new house but as 'goodwill gesture' to the new owner he offered to sell him the floor for just £400 in cash. Although it sounded

'too good to be true', the new owner quickly accepted.

Listening to this, the flooring contractor sat with his mouth open, realising that he had been ripped off. His explanation about his contacts with Mr Rogue made me cringe.

Apparently Mr Rogue had found the contractor in yellow pages. He chose the walnut species which he said would match his new decorations. The contractor quoted £3,450 plus the cost of installation which Mr Rogue accepted without argument.

The contractor was congratulating himself on an easy sale, when Mr Rogue adds: 'I have one small problem.'

'I do not have all the money right now, but I expect to come into some cash in the next couple of months guaranteed.'

'Would you be willing to do the job for me and I will pay you in full plus a drink in a couple of months? I can give you £30 up front to show I am honest.'

The contractor swallowed it hook, line and sinker. He never even took the £30.

The new owner admitted that he thought that £400 for the floor was an incredible bargain. He then revealed that the painter and decorator had also been done by

the same Mr Rogue. And the police had been informed.

Sad to report, this Mr Rogue escaped arrest and is apparently sunning himself by his new apartment in Spain.

While the contractor has my fullest sympathy, he failed to spot obvious clues, such as a 'for sale' board when he came to talk about installing the floor and a 'sold' notice when he later came to fit it.

The contractor did mention this in passing, but Mr Rogue laughed and said he changed his mind, he would not be selling the house.

The gullible contractor thought nothing of it and merrily carried on fitting the expensive new floor.

Philosophically, the contractor admits that the episode taught him a valuable lesson. If ever he makes a sale that easily, without argument, he will at least take a deposit to cover the cost of the materials.

This happened over two years ago and it was only when I bumped into the same contractor a few weeks ago that he reminded me of this incident. He has never got his money back, but gave me permission to write about it in **CFJ**.

But there was a happy ending. When the contractor reported the incident to the law, the duty police officer who took down his

## Sid Bourne goes solo

Sid Bourne, who has over 25 years experience in the flooring industry, has set up his own business, **Flooring Assessments**, intended to supply NVQ qualifications to the flooring industry.

■ [www.flooringassessments.co.uk](http://www.flooringassessments.co.uk)

In addition Sid will continue his consultancy work and offer Independent Inspections for problem jobs and complaints.

Sid also plans to help promote the BWFA (British Wood Flooring Association) along with training, including on-site training, in addition to specification work.

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particulars, happened to be looking for a wood floor for his own home. The contractor got the job along with a deposit; he also got four other jobs from different people in the same police station. And, needless to say, the Old Bill paid their bills.

Finally, the identity of Mr Rogue mentioned above is now exposed for all to see on the website:

[www.roguecustomers.co.uk](http://www.roguecustomers.co.uk) **CFJ**

## THE GLUES BROTHERS

by Bob Lawton

