

# Taken for a jet-ski ride

## But tide turns on conman in R45 000 scam

**BARBARA COLE**

**A**N UNSUSPECTING Durban businessman who was swindled out of R45 000 turned the tables on the conman and outfoxed him this week.

The suspect, believed to be part of a syndicate, is under police arrest in Johannesburg, and Berea police were yesterday travelling to Johannesburg to bring him back to Durban to face the music.

Now the unnamed businessman, who believed he was set up in a well-orchestrated scam, is hoping to get his money back.

He had responded to an advertisement in a Sunday newspaper for the sale of two jet skis for R45 000.

The "seller" – a man claiming to be a Dr Pillay – told him that another potential buyer was also after the jet skis and whoever deposited money into his bank account first could have them.

Keen to get them, the businessman promptly deposited the money.

He had also been given a detailed description of an address in Port Edward where the jet skis were kept.



**A CONMAN'S worst nightmare: private investigator Reg Horne**

He drove straight there – only to find the address and the jet skis did not exist.

"A policeman told me there was no such road and said he believed I had been taken for a ride," the businessman recalled. "This was carefully planned and, in the time that I was driving down to Port Edward, the money that I had deposited into the bank had been withdrawn."

Determined to track down the

swindler, he called in Reggie Horne, managing director of Justicia Investigation, a private investigation company. Within a week, Horne and his Johannesburg colleagues had tracked down the main suspect, who had allegedly been using the bank account of "acquaintances" for the scam.

And he was in for a shock when a couple of private eyes moved in and nabbed him on Tuesday.

He spent the night in the police cells while waiting for the Durban investigating officer to arrive.

The "acquaintances" who allowed him to use their bank account to clear the R45 000 are also expected to be questioned.

Said Horne: "People think they can come to Durban, rip someone off and then duck back to Johannesburg without a trace. But not this time."

■ Independent Newspapers advertisements carry a warning about "unscrupulous people".

One tip to would-be buyers is not to deposit money into an account in advance.

There are also several warnings about buying second-hand cars.