

SCMP

\$400,000 flat sale scam ends in prison

MAGDALEN CHOW

A jobless man who tried to swindle a housewife out of \$400,000 by claiming he had a flat to sell was jailed yesterday for 20 months.

Deputy Judge Stephen Chow said he accepted Mak Tak-ming was not the mastermind of the carefully organised plan.

The judge took a starting point of 2½ years' jail and reduced it by a third after Mak, 41, had admitted conspiracy to defraud with an unknown person.

Government counsel Martin Hui Siu-ting told the District Court how victim Tsang Yuk-lan wanted to buy a flat at Villa Tiara in Tuen Mun.

She commissioned estate agent Tang Mei-heung.

Ms Tang did not have such a flat but asked the Kong Fai Estate Agency for help.

Kong Fai employee Chiang Fuk-mei was telephoned on April 28 by someone calling himself Mr Mok, who claimed his boss had a flat at Villa Tiara for sale, the court heard.

Mr Mok said the flat had been bought through internal acquisition and was available for \$2.1 million, plus a profit surcharge of \$500,000.

Ms Tsang offered to buy it at a profit surcharge of \$400,000.

A deal was struck and Mr Mok said the seller was Mak, whose identity card data was faxed to the agency.

Mr Mok asked Ms Tsang to deposit \$400,000 into a Hongkong Bank account before an agreement was signed.

Mak was filmed by the bank's surveillance cameras when he withdrew the money on April 30, the court heard.

Ms Tsang had reported the matter to police after she was unable to trace a Mr Mok.