Single Ring Phone Scams on the Rise

November 1, 2017 - It happens to everyone. Your phone will ring once or twice but the caller hangs up before you can answer the call. So what do you do? If you're like most people, you'll return the call even if you don't recognize the number or the name of the person calling. That's a mistake that can cost you a lot of money.

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Single ring phone scams work like this. A call comes into your number and the phone rings just long enough for your phone to record the number the call came from. The caller then hangs up. The phone number looks like any otherâ€¦ with a legitimate 3 digit area code. What you don't know is that the call didn't originate in the United States. The area code is from Canada or the Caribean and the phone number you are connecting to is a high priced pay-per-call service. When your bill arrives, it will include a connection charge along with per-minute charges. Depending upon how long you stay on the call, your bill could range into hundreds of additional dollars.

These scams are not new. In fact, they started back in the 1980's in the United States with 900 service; a service which the FTC eventually killed off for all practical purposes because it was being misused. But once it was killed off domestically, the scam artists moved their operations off-shore. And they are still going strong.

Anyone who has been victimized by one of these calls should contact their phone company and try to get the calls credited to their bill. They should also file a complaint with the FTC.

And the next time you receive a call that hangs up before you can answer the phone, don't call the number back unless you recognize it. If the call is important, the caller will leave you a message.
byJim Malmberg
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