

Two men charged with kidnapping businessman

Accused also stole credit cards, money

- By Bassam Za'za', Senior Reporter
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Dubai: Two men have been charged with impersonating policemen, kidnapping a businessman and forcing him to pay them a ransom of Dh300,000 in cheques for his release, heard a court yesterday.

One of the suspects, a 35-year-old Indian investor, pleaded not guilty when he appeared before the Dubai Court of First Instance.

"I am not guilty. The claimant [a 37-year-old Indian manager] knows me and he is a friend of mine ... we didn't force entry to his place," contended the investor, B.J., when he defended himself before Presiding Judge Hamad Abdul Latif Abdul Jawad.

Charges

Prosecutors accused B.J. and his alleged associate, 30-year-old Emirati businessman, C.Z. — who missed yesterday's hearing — of impersonating policemen, kidnapping 37-year-old S.A., extorting Dh300,000 in three cheques and stealing his 22 credit cards and an extra Dh1000.

Statement

The manager testified to prosecutors that the alleged kidnapping happened when the suspects forced their way into his flat at around 8.30pm.

"Immediately after my wife answered the door bell, the suspects forced their entry into the flat and posed as policemen ... one of them carried what he claimed to be a military ID.

"They took me in their car and asked me to pay Dh1 million ransom against my release ... after negotiations, they reduced the amount to Dh300,000.

"I asked them to drive me to my company's address in Port Saeed. B.J. walked me up to the office, while C.Z. waited in the car. I called my accountant and asked him to come to the company to sign three cheques ... then police raided the place and arrested B.J. before he departed.

"They seized the cheques in his possession," S.A. said in his prosecution statement.

Records say that the victim's wife claimed that C.Z. stole her husbands credit cards and Dh1000. She said that after the incident she called her brother-in-law and sponsor, who called the police.

On bail

An Emirati police officer testified that C.Z disappeared immediately after B.J.'s arrest. The latter is currently on bail.

"When I questioned B.J., he denied the charges and claimed that S.A. repaid him an old commercial debt," said the officer.

The judge adjourned the case until June 14 for B.J.'s lawyer to prepare his defence and C.Z. to attend the trial.

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