

# North End News

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## Conned:

*When a young woman knocked on reporter Carol Johnstone's north-end door in the rain looking for cab money, Johnstone offered her \$7, The woman told her it wasn't enough...*

### Carol Johnstone

A woman in her late twenties knocked at my door around sup-  
per time. Her dark-brown, round face was edged with acne scars. Rain drops glittered on her wind-blown black hair.

She said she'd missed her bus. She asked if she could use my phone to call her mother who was meeting her in Dartmouth. She said she worked at the Tim Horton's on Young St. and that her mother had her pay cheque.

The rain was blowing in the open door of my Hydrostone flat. I invited her in and pointed to the phone in the living room where my daughter, Alexandra, 13, was watching television.

The woman made her call, said her mother wasn't home and asked whether I knew when the next bus was. I invited her back to my room, where I have the number for Go-Time for our bus stop. I made the call. The next bus would be in seven minutes.

She said her name was Denise and asked me mine - Carol Johnstone. She said that was really close to hers, which she said was Johnson.

She said she really needed to take a taxi, but didn't have enough money. I

hesitated, and she said that she just lived around the corner and would be back in half-an-hour to pay me back, when she got her pay cheque.

I took out my wallet and counted out two \$2 bills and three loonies. She said it wasn't enough. She'd need \$10.

By this time, I had Casino Taxi on the phone and asked the dispatcher how much it cost to get to the address on Windmill Road that Denise supplied. The dispatcher said about \$10. All I had was a \$20 dollar bill, which I gave to Denise with the admonition that I needed it for food and she had to bring it back that night. I asked her to write down her name and number.

When she left in the taxi, I was worried about giving my food money away, but I went back to my school work.

About an hour later, there was another knock on the door.

This time it was the taxi driver. He asked me if I knew Denise. She hadn't paid her fare, because she said she didn't have any money.

She'd told him roughly the same story, but had changed her last name to Williams, and said I was her sister.

He'd dropped her off at the address on Windmill Road, but she came back, saying her mother wasn't home.

He told her he wanted to take her to the police station and check this out, but he said she broke into tears and threatened to commit suicide. He didn't want that, so he took her to another house, near MicMac Mall.

He said after waiting about 10 minutes, he went to the door. She refused to come out or pay.

On the way back to see me to try and get his fare, he called Tim Horton's and found out she didn't work there.

We'd been conned.

He was glad he'd come back to my house, because he would have put my address on a blacklist and no taxis would've stopped there.

After he left, I called the Halifax police department.

Evidently, last year around this time, there was a rash of similar scams in the north end, only the woman had a child with her.

However, the police officer who interviewed me said by the description, it probably wasn't the same person. And this was the first time this year he'd heard this story and that it was good I'd called.

My daughter complained, "Mom, you never give me \$20, but you'll give it to a stranger."