

FOR HEARING
PEOPLE ONLY



At the airport, I was approached by a Deaf person selling manual-alphabet cards. Should I buy one?

NO! NO!

Many people in the Deaf community know someone who sells "ABC" cards for a living. That certainly doesn't stop us from feeling angry and resentful about it.

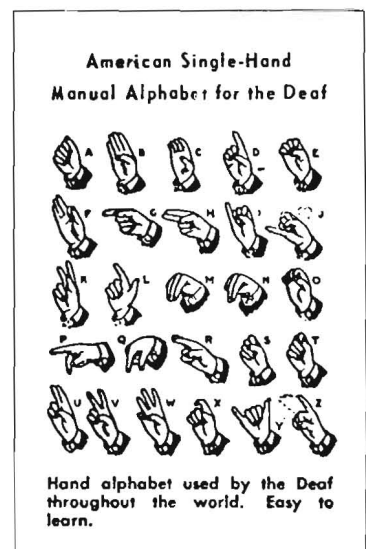
A peddler appears to be uneducated, unskilled, and unemployable, a pitiful victim of society. In truth, some of these peddlers are not uneducated, nor unskilled, nor unemployable. They're clever. By preying on the gullibility of Hearing people, a successful peddler can earn

\$200—or more—a day! Card peddlers like to frequent heavily-trafficked places like airports, where a continuous stream of foreigners, newly arrived in the States, are getting their first glimpse of American society—and the first Deaf person they meet is, for all practical purposes, a beggar. Small wonder that Deaf people, the majority of

whom are hard-working, bitterly resent the stereotype that these peddlers perpetuate.

There's one thing that these peddlers can't seem to handle. When approaching a potential "soft touch" who asks them sternly in fluent ASL, "Why are you doing this?" the only thing they can do is mutter "Oh, sorry!" and make a quick escape.

Have a question about Deaf people and their culture?...Write to: "For Hearing People Only," DEAF LIFE, Box 63083 Marketplace Mall, Rochester, NY 14623-6383.



Sample manual-alphabet card sold by Deaf peddlers