



NIGERIAN SCAM WITH A THREAT!

Everybody knows how quickly Nigerian letters mutate like a virus, picking up elements of previous versions but also adding a new twist! Following massive publicity given to this scourge over the years, most members of the public have been sensitized to these scams, recognize them, delete them and move on.

If you need a primer there are so many excellent resources out there to guide you and one of them is NExT Web Security Services whose website contains a handy list of 20 types of Nigerian scam (<http://www.nextwebsecurity.com/419ScamTypes.asp>) and the "Top 10 Warning Signs" associated with these solicitations (<http://www.nextwebsecurity.com/Top10.asp>) Unfortunately, there are some people who miss the message and are drawn into a dialogue with Nigerian fraudsters. Once that happens the tone of the letters can turn nasty, especially if a potential victim is sent a nice-looking cheque and decides that he doesn't want to continue to deal with the fraudsters.

Recently, a Broward County, Florida resident advertised a car for sale on the internet and received an interesting e-mail response that had all the hallmarks of a Nigerian scam but he didn't realize it at first! He made the mistake of replying to the sender who mailed him a (counterfeit) cashier's check. Once the seller's credit union came into the picture staff put a stop to the fraud and intervened as they recognized that their member was being scammed!

The Florida case is noteworthy because it is direct and threatening and has a new dimension! The author is a "Major Schneider Adams" who writes:

"Subject: YOUR URGENT ATTENTION IS NEEDED.
MIND YOU THAT WHAT YOU ARE HOLDING IS SOMEBODYS FUND AND IF YOU DONT SEND THE MONEY TODAY, YOU WILL HAVE THE FBI KNOCKED ON YOUR DOOR TOMORROW. SEND THE BALANCE LESS THAN EVERY CHARGE. AND THEN GET BACK TO ME WITH THE FOLLOWING;

1. Money transfer control number (MTCN)
2. Senders name and address
3. Exact amount sent after the transfer charges has been deducted.
4. Present location of the purchased property.

Awaiting your response.

Thanks,
MAJ.S.Adams "

Appended to this e-mail was a photo of a Canadian soldier in military combat dress with the caption: "Mark Andrew Wilson, shown here in this undated photo, of the Royal Canadian Dragoons was from London, Ontario. He was remembered as a skilled soldier who always pushed others to be better soldiers"

This e-mail example illustrates how low authors of Nigerian scams can become. It is significant that the author provided a link to a real story (the death of a Canadian soldier - Mark Wilson was the 40th Canadian soldier to be killed in action in Afghanistan on October 6 2006) as this is designed to sanitize the entire solicitation as legitimate and honourable. The author has simply lifted the photo and caption from a report posted on the Internet and in the mind of the victim the author is also a military person ("Major Adams"). Added to that is the clear threat that if the

seller does not send the money to the buyer the FBI will be contacting the victim about his failure to respond.

This example serves as a sharp reminder that Nigerian fraudsters will go to any lengths to continue the charade. The techniques they use are calculated to make victims feel as though they are on a train that is gathering speed and they cannot get off that train until they have complied with the fraudsters wishes!

Thank goodness in this case that a Florida Credit Union came to the rescue of one of its members and put a stop to this fraud.

Remember - do not respond to a Nigerian fraudster under any circumstances. If you are advertising something for sale on the Internet and an offer comes along that looks to good to be true - stop and think clearly. Why would someone offer to buy the item sight unseen? Especially someone from another country! Do your due diligence and apply some commonsense when negotiating with interested buyers!

This tip brought to you by Jeff Burton, Crime Shield Coordinator, BC Crime Prevention Association - educating the public by providing them with information they can use to protect themselves from fraud and other crimes.

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