

Nigerian Scams

The basic premise behind a Nigerian Scam is that someone wants to give you a lot of money but first you must pay some type of fee to get the money. Once you take their bait and give them money, they will keep asking for more because the original offer has just doubled. This will go on until you realize you are getting scammed. Some people only stop when they run out of money. In one local case a victim lost over \$100,000.

Contact between the scammer and the US resident usually is made on the internet in chat rooms, instant messaging, and on various matchmaking sites.

Another version of the Nigeria Scam is they will front you the money that is needed up front. They send you a check, ask to deposit it, wait for it to clear and then wire the money back. There is a difference between a check “clearing” and “honoring” a check. According to Federal Law, when a person deposits a check, the bank must make the funds available within a short amount of time. This is usually only a few days. For a check to clear, the time can be anywhere from a day to a year, depending on where the check was drawn. If a person deposits the check and waits three or four days and sees the funds are in the account, they may assume the check “cleared”. In the Nigerian Scams, the check never clears and the amount of money you withdraw from the bank will have to be paid back by you.

In a more recent scam, similar to the above styles, the scammers will mail you extremely-high-quality counterfeit \$100 bills. They will instruct you to keep \$500 and wire the rest back to Nigeria. The bills pass many commonly used tests to determine the authenticity of the bill, but will fail passing others.

For more information on the Nigerian Scam and other scams please check the following websites:

www.419eater.com

www.419baiter.com

www.fakechecks.org

Various federal sites, such as the FBI, US Secret Service and the Federal Trade Commission also provide information relative to preventing being a victim of scams.

If you have any question relative to the Nigerian Scams, or other scams, please contact your local police department immediately.

Detective Chris Carey Holden Police