



United States Army

Criminal Investigation Command

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CID Lookout

Army Special Agents Issue Warning Concerning “Nigerian Scam”

FORT BELVOIR, Va., September 1, 2006 – The U.S. Army Criminal Investigation Command released an advisory today warning Soldiers and family members of a so-called Nigerian Fraud Scam or advanced fee fraud, using unsolicited faxes, electronic-mail or letters. The advisory also warns of the criminal implications for Army personnel who actively facilitate the scheme.

The Nigerian Scam starts with someone from Nigeria, or another country, making unsolicited contact with unsuspecting victims requesting their help in disposing of gold or money recovered in Iraq, or oil revenues from Nigeria or Russia, or lottery winnings from some overseas location. Other contacts request help to negotiate U.S. Postal Money Orders or Traveler’s Checks that later turn out to be forgeries or counterfeit. The perpetrator uses false names or steals another person’s identity and fraudulently uses that identity.

In most instances, if victims respond to the proposals they are asked to do something to show good faith with the person who sent the original mail. In the case of money orders and traveler’s checks, the person is asked to negotiate the checks, told to keep a percentage of the funds for themselves, and to send the remaining money to a Nigerian address.

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“NIGERIAN FRAUD SCAM”

Add 2-2-2

In the case of gold or money dispositions, the victim is sometimes asked for personal identification, to include bank account numbers, or as the scam progresses, the victim is asked to send money to pay for unexpected fees (hence the name, advance fee fraud) that are needed to bribe an official or free up a process so that the gold or money can be transferred.

Soldiers and civilians who knowingly participate in the negotiation of fraudulent money orders or travel checks in furtherance of fraud schemes are subject to Title 18 of the U.S. Code, Section 1343, *Fraud by Wire, Radio or Television*. The title states that individuals who devise schemes to defraud, obtain money or property under false pretenses, representations or promises will be fined or imprisoned for not more than 20 years, or both. Violators that affect financial institutions can be imprisoned not more than 30 years, fined not more than \$1 million, or both.

According to CID Special Agents, electronic-mail fraud provides unique challenges for law enforcement personnel, Soldiers, Army civilians and family members. Criminals can mask their identities, locations and cover their tracks quickly. Websites can easily be established and removed in very little time, allowing scam artists to strike quickly and disappear even faster.

CID officials remind individuals to never provide their personal identification, bank account numbers, or other financial information to an unsolicited request. The unknown source could use the information to the financial harm of the victim. Never travel to foreign locations to meet with the individuals conducting these schemes for any reason. Victims have often been robbed, kidnapped, or even killed, when lured to other countries.

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Add 3-3-3

The United States Secret Service (USSS) and the United States Postal Service (USPS) are primary U.S. law enforcement agencies in dealing with these types of scams. U.S. citizens or residents who have not suffered a financial loss and want to report a scam may forward unsolicited emails to the USSS at 419.fcd@uss.s.treas.gov. U.S. citizens and residents who have suffered a financial loss are instructed to contact the nearest field office of the Secret Service by telephone.

Victims are advised to continue reporting these fraudulent scams to law enforcement agencies when they are attempted.

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