



Georgetown Detective Warns Against Web Scammers

By Sally Applegate / correspondent

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Georgetown —

Attn: Honourable Contractor: We apologize, for the delay of your payment and all the inconveniences and inflict that we might have indulged you through. From the records of outstanding contractors due for payment with the Bank of England UK your name and company was discovered as next on the list of the outstanding contractors who have not received their payments.

Don't fall for it — these people aren't contacting you from the Bank of England. They are likely to be enjoying a coffee and free wireless Internet access at an outdoor café somewhere. The letter quoted above suggests there is a great sum of money owed to the “honourable contractor” and asks the recipient to e-mail his or her full name, phone, fax and mobile numbers, company name and address, position served there, profession, age, and marital status.

Armed with this information, the Internet identity thieves can be off and running, opening accounts in your name, placing long-distance phone calls on your number, taking out loans and generally helping themselves to your hard-earned money.

“They're after your personal information, so they can raid your bank accounts and take out credit cards in your name,” said Georgetown Detective Supervisor Thomas DeJoy.

The stilted and inaccurate English used in their official-looking letters, supposedly from various banks and even from the FBI, should be a tip-off to a rip-off.

DeJoy will be appearing on Beverly Enos's Spotlight Georgetown show for Cable Access Channel 9 in late March to warn residents of the dangers posed by this new generation of Internet scammers. The show on scams was taped March 3 for broadcast later in the month. Enos's show airs at 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays on local Channel 9, as well as at random times during the week.

One elderly Georgetown resident lost an enormous amount of money over a period of two years when a scammer claiming to be from the U.S. Department of Justice said the resident had won \$500,000 in the Canadian Readers Digest sweepstakes. For two years, the victim kept sending the scammer checks to cover the supposed expenses involved in collecting the winnings.



“During this time, the person was informed the winnings should be coming any time now. There was just a glitch, and the scammers needed a couple thousand more dollars,” said DeJoy. “The victim was warned not to tell family members about the winnings because it could interfere with the prize money being sent. The victim had been hoping to benefit grandchildren with the winnings.”

As the Georgetown resident continued sending out checks to UPS stores, another call was received, claiming the victim had won \$1.5 million in a Spanish lottery, according to DeJoy.

To avoid scams like this, people should be on the lookout for e-mails that come from one address and ask you to respond to a different email address, as well as spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors, and a failure to address recipient by name.

“Some people have been told a family member has been arrested, and they need to send bail money,” says DeJoy.

A mystery-shopper scam sends victims a bogus check for \$4,998. A close reading of this offer reveals that \$90 is for purchases to be made at Wal-Mart and the Gap, while all the rest is to be sent out to cover supposed transfer and service charge fees by Western Union and Moneygram.

The infamous Nigerian scams go out by the millions, informing people they have inheritances or lottery winnings they need to collect. There are, of course, fees to cover expenses involved in getting your money to you.

DeJoy is working to get the message out to residents.

“I hope this gets the point across that these people are out to separate you from your money,” said DeJoy. “They don’t care how much or little you have. They don’t care if you’re a little old lady going to church every day and scraping to make ends meet. Whatever you have, they will do whatever they can to find a way to separate you from your hard-earned money.

“Be wary of people on the Internet that you don’t know. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.”

If you’d like to check out DeJoy’s upcoming appearance on Spotlight Georgetown’s show on scams, check out Local Cable Access Channel 9. The channel shows its upcoming program schedules on a regular basis. You can also find the show schedule at wickedlocal.com/georgetown.

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Detective Supervisor DeJoy



Above: Detective Supervisor DeJoy holds scam advisories.



Above: Detective Supervisor Dejoy Reviews scam advisories