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SCAM ALERT!



A Consumer Update from Mat Heck, Jr., Prosecuting Attorney



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UNSOLICITED EMAILS SCAMS

The ability to send and receive emails from complete strangers became widely available in the 1990's. Ever since, fraudsters have used emails to convince people to send money overseas for a variety of fake reasons.

For example, we have all heard of a friend, or a family member, receiving correspondence from a "Prince" or "Royalty" in Africa advising that there are millions of unclaimed American dollars held in African banks. Promises are made that, for a small fee, the unknowing victim may receive a large amount of money. The recipient of the email pays the fee, but inevitably an additional problem occurs where requests for more fees are made. Victims send payment after payment

only to learn that the whole story was a scam. At that point, the money they sent is secure in Nigeria with no chance of recovery or justice for the victims of the scam.



Recently, these scams have taken a dark turn. Now, instead of money being tied up, the email claim that the sender has either:

1. Been hired to kill the recipient; or
2. Has uncovered a secret about the recipient that will be disclosed.

All the recipient needs to do to learn who wants them dead, or avoid disclosure of the secret, is pay money to the sender. Instructions are sent on how to send money via Bitcoin. Once sent, the money is untraceable, the offender is unfindable, and no one is held accountable.

WHAT CONSUMERS NEED TO LOOK FOR:

The following steps should be followed to avoid fraud:

1. Communication is key. If you receive one of these emails, notify law enforcement. These schemes require public awareness so that others in the community do not fall prey;
2. Pay attention to the content of the communication. Inevitably, the "secret" will be vague and not expressed with any detail. With most correspondence originating in Nigeria, spelling errors and context errors are common;

3. Keep in touch with elderly loved ones. Fraudsters rely on statistics. They know that most email scams will not be successful, but only need a few vulnerable people to respond with money. Talk to your elder loved ones and inquire further if they are talking about something that sounds suspicious.

IN THE EVENT YOU THINK YOU ARE BEING SCAMMED, REPORT IT TO YOUR LOCAL POLICE AGENCY, OR CALL OUR OFFICE AT 937-225-5757.

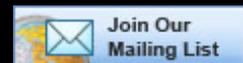
The above ALERT is part of the Montgomery County Prosecuting Attorney's initiative to help citizens become aware of ways they can avoid becoming a victim, or ways they can help stop criminal activity that may be occurring. Upon request, the office can provide presentations on crime prevention actions and activities to halt crime and increase the quality of life in our community.

If you would like additional information on the above ALERT, or would like additional information regarding our programs to assist consumers in general and/or seniors in particular, please contact Kimberly Melnick, Supervising Attorney, Adult Protection Unit, or Anthony Schoen, Supervising Attorney, Fraud and Economic Crimes Unit at 937-225-5757.

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