

FRAUD ALERT!

From the Office of Seniors vs. Crime

BEWARE: Nigerian Black Money Washing Scam

In March a Florida Sheriff's Office Highway Interdiction Unit conducted a routine traffic stop and found \$20,800 in cash, black construction paper the size of dollar bills, several bottles of commonly known substances and a list of ingredients necessary to complete the "Black Wash/ Money Washing" scam. Deputies also found wet twenty dollar bills with white paper in between, cut to the exact size of the dollar bills used commonly in the "Nigerian Money Washing" scam.

Both are part of the Nigerian Advanced Fee Scam involving unsuspecting victims conned by very charismatic and persuasive individuals.

So, how do these scams work?

The **Black Money Scam** involves the scammer sending out thousands if not millions of e-mails searching, "phishing" for victims. The e-mail states the victim may be the beneficiary of an unclaimed estate held outside the U. S. that includes thousands of dollars and a large trunk, contents unknown. In order for the "victim" to receive their "inheritance" they are asked to send monies to cover the cost of taxes and the shipping expenses of the trunk. Eventually through continued communication, the con-artist will reveal that the trunk is full of money and needs to be shipped out of the country undetected. Hence, the bills have all been dyed black to avoid detection by US Customs.

At some point a meeting is arranged between the scammer and the victim. The victim is invited to inspect the contents of the trunk and after much ceremony the trunk is opened to reveal a large amount of black paper "money." The victim is informed they are looking at real money stained black, but in fact the trunk is full of black construction paper except for a few real bills that have been dyed black. The con-artist will pick up the real dyed money and dip them into a "magical cleaning solution" to show the victim that the money is real. Once the real money is revealed the victim who is now eager to wash more money in the trunk is told they will need to buy the magic cleaning solution. The scheme goes on and on until the victim either realizes he's been had or gives away all of his money.

The second scam is the **Nigerian Money Washing** scam and uses wet money and white paper. The scammer tricks business owners into believing he can duplicate money by using an unknown liquid and washing it between two pieces of white paper. After the "washing" is done the two white pieces of paper turn out to be exact copies of the original U.S. currency. The scammer then solicits several thousand *real* dollars from the business owner so he can duplicate their money for a percentage and then gives the business owner the counterfeit bills back instead of the real money.

As always, the Citrus County Sheriff's Office reminds you to be alert to frauds, scams and schemes and if something sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

If you have a problem or need assistance call us at **352-249-9139**

Or visit us at **4093 N. Lecanto Highway Beverly Hills**, next to the **Sheriff's Office Community Resource Office.**

Our hours are Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday From 8:30am to 1:30pm and you do not need an appointment.