



# HALL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## CRIME PREVENTION UNIT



### CRIME PREVENTION BULLETIN

**DATE:** April 1, 2011  
**SUBJECT:** Telephone Collections / Warrant Issue

While it may or may not be a true scam, please note an issue regarding a collection agency that was brought to our attention. We've had previous reports of this situation, but since it uses a scare tactic that an unsuspecting citizen might easily fall victim to it's worth mentioning again.

A local citizen recently received a voice mail from "Americas Network Inc." @ 1-877-331-8194. The message was this: "Please do not be alarmed. We have attempted to reach you for several weeks now regarding the civil or criminal investigation concerning you. This investigation IS time sensitive and therefore, it will require your immediate attention. You ARE running out of time 'cuz the investigation is about to close. Please call now-877-331-8194.

When the citizen returned the call, she reached a voice mail instructing her to leave her name & number and one of the "agents" would get back with her. She later called the number back and received an answer from a rude female asking for her number, which she provided. The person on the phone then said that she could not discuss the issue until the citizen provided her personal information. When the citizen refused, she was told, "Ok, I'll go ahead & issue a warrant for your arrest."

The citizen later received a voice mail message stating, "Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_, since you have ignored our call and haven't paid the \$156.30 owed, your case has been sent the attorney and a warrant has been issued for both you & your husband. We are collecting for a bad check you wrote to Pizza Hut May 2, 2003. You both will have a \$1500 bond. The local Judge has been notified and bond can't be paid until you go in front of him on April 20th at 9am."

Here's the bottom line: America's Network is actually a licensed "financial services" (read that "collections") company operating out of Snellville, GA. While some of their practices are objectionable and perhaps unethical, they aren't necessarily illegal. They've had numerous complaints with the Better Business Bureau, resulting in an "F" rating by that agency. The incident referenced above may or may not have been someone calling from America's Network. It could have easily been someone posing as a representative from that company trying to run a scam.

Our advice is this: if you receive a call from any collections agency referencing a transaction that you doubt, contact your financial institution to verify the validity of that transaction. If it is valid and they've turned it over to collections, they will be happy to inform you of how to best resolve the issue. Anytime you deal with collectors, request written proof of whatever they are claiming, and request that they send you their demands in writing so you can #1: verify that this is a legitimate company and collection issue, and #2: have documentation for your personal files.

Lastly, a private company cannot "issue" a warrant for your arrest. A judge is the only person that can issue a warrant. They can request a warrant application hearing before the court, where they would be required to show proof of their case and the judge will decide if a warrant should be issued. If there is ever any doubt, call the courthouse or the Sheriff's Office Warrant Division. They will tell you right away if any such warrant exists. The collections business is a nasty one, and some companies don't hesitate to operate in a questionable manner. Always conduct your own independent verification before you send money to anyone.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

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