



# HALL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

## CRIME PREVENTION UNIT



### SCAM ALERT

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**DATE:** June 19, 2009  
**TO:** Neighborhood Watch Liaisons  
**FROM:** Deputy Stephen Wilbanks  
**SUBJECT:** SCAM ALERT  
**DISTRIBUTION:** All

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Today the Sheriff's Office received a report from a citizen regarding a new twist on the old Nigerian scam that has the potential for physical crime as opposed to just financial inconvenience.

The complainant received a telephone call from a person with a heavy foreign accent who identified himself as a representative of Publisher's Clearing House. He informed the potential victim that she was to be the recipient of a prize in the amount of 2.5 million dollars, but she first needed to pay \$499 in cash for "U.S. taxes" **(RED FLAG #1)**.

The caller then stated that he would send a representative to her home **(RED FLAG #2)** to collect the money. He stated that this person's name would be "Lisa Fernandez" and that she would be accompanied by (2) FBI agents **(RED FLAG #3)**. When the victim became suspicious and told the caller she didn't keep that much cash, he asked her how much she had on hand **(RED FLAG #4)**, and offered to have the "agents" meet her at Wal Mart, Western Union, or her bank to pick it up **(RED FLAG #5)**. She then took his phone numbers, ended the conversation, and called law enforcement.

When our Deputy responded he called the numbers and identified himself. The caller became irate, identified himself as an FBI agent, refused to state which office he was assigned to, and directly threatened the Deputy **(RED FLAG #6)**. The caller then called the victim back on her home phone, and while he did not directly threaten her, he emphatically stated that she should have kept their business private **(RED FLAG #7)**.

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**(RED FLAG #1):** If you win a prize, you won't have to pay to get it. That's why it's called a prize.

**(RED FLAG #2):** This indicates that they may already have the victim's address or more personal information.

**(RED FLAG #3):** The FBI doesn't accompany the sweepstakes prize patrol.

**(RED FLAG #4):** It's no one's business how much money you have. A legitimate business will never ask.

**(RED FLAG #5):** Never, ever, ever agree to meet a strange person somewhere to give them money. If you do, that location will soon thereafter be referred to as a crime scene.

**(RED FLAG #6):** A real FBI agent is a professional; He has no problem identifying himself or his station, and doesn't generally make a habit of threatening other law enforcement officers.

**(RED FLAG #7):** Publisher's Clearing House doesn't want their business to be kept private- they put it on TV.  
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Again, the Nigerian scam is nothing new, but what concerns us here is that it appears that they may have someone in the local area available to actually visit and victimize someone in person. Simply recognize that any variation on this theme is most certainly a scam, and do not in any way entertain it. Call law enforcement and remain vigilant.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

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Crime Prevention Coordinator  
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