

Nigeria - [419 Coalition](#) 2005 News on Nigerian Scam / 419 Operations

31 DEC 2005

From the Saturday Punch, a Nigerian newspaper:

EFCC prosecutes 78 over multiple fraud

No fewer than 78 suspects are being prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission for their alleged involvement in various economic crimes, including two separate scams valued at N58 million and \$15 million respectively.

The suspects, according to Saturday Punch's investigations, were allegedly linked to felonies such as stealing, obtaining money under false pretences and conspiracy.

The suspects are among hundreds being investigated over fraudulent acts and are facing charges at courts in Lagos, Kaduna and Benin.

A senior official of the commission said that 51 of the suspects were facing their charges in Lagos, 18 in Kaduna, and the rest in Benin, adding that the sums had been recovered from them.

Our correspondent also learnt that two of the suspects had been convicted but had gone on appeal. Another EFCC official told our correspondent that the agency had adopted fast-track prosecution of suspects, to avoid complaints over delayed trial.

Commenting on the matter, EFCC's Head of Media, Mr. Osita Nwaja, said the agency would follow due process in the prosecution of the cases, adding that the suspects would be given the chance to "defend themselves while we produce our own evidence."

25 DEC 2005

From the South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Woman loses \$9,200 in Nigerian e-mail scam

by Ian Katz

For Gerri Tennenbaum, it was a "vulnerable moment" when she trusted someone she thought of as a friend. Now, the victim of an elaborate counterfeiting scheme, she might be out \$9,200, her rental apartment and any hope of getting Hanukkah gifts for her two children.

A divorced schoolteacher struggling to raise her 9- and 12-year-old boys -- both of whom are mildly autistic -- Tennenbaum was feeling frazzled in early November by eight days without electricity after Hurricane Wilma.

She had been chatting online several nights a week for two months with a man who called himself Eddie Smith, a U.S. citizen working as a geologist and computer engineer in Nigeria. They met through a dating site and communicated via Yahoo's instant messenger service about work, life and the possibility of eventually meeting in person.

On Nov. 2, near the end of a long chat, Smith asked Tennenbaum what seemed to her a simple favor: If he sent some travelers checks and money orders that he couldn't cash in Nigeria, could she deposit them into her bank account and send him the cash through Western Union? She obliged, figuring MasterCard travelers checks and U.S. Postal Service money orders must be safe.

What she didn't know is that Smith, which is probably not his real name, was cleverly manipulating her for his gain.

It was an example of an increasingly common scheme in which Nigerian fraudsters befriend people in dating sites and chat rooms, and persuade them to send cash in exchange for money orders or travelers checks that turn out to be fake. When the victims learn that the checks are phony, it's too late, and thousands of dollars have already been sent to the "friend."

Tennenbaum's bank, Citibank, told her that the \$9,200 in checks and money orders she exchanged there were counterfeit and that she is responsible for repaying the bank.

"I have nothing," said Tennenbaum, 44, who teaches second grade. "I'm a smart person, but I had a vulnerable moment and got suckered. I thought I was doing somebody a favor."

Tennenbaum was unable to pay the \$930 monthly rent on her apartment on time and received a note from the manager that she could be evicted. "Every time I come home, I peek around the corner to see if there is a notice on my door," she said.

Through tears, she added: "I feel like I didn't do my job as a parent because I got sucked in."

To recoup its losses, Citibank took a direct-deposit paycheck and other money in her account totaling \$1,788, she said.

Though she admits she shouldn't have been so trusting, Tennenbaum also blames the bank for not recognizing that the money orders and travelers checks she cashed were fakes. "I'm holding the bag for something the bank should have caught," she said.

Eight days passed before she could see from her account that the checks were not valid, she said.

In an e-mail, Citibank spokesman Mark Rodgers wrote: "It is unfortunate that Ms. Tennenbaum was defrauded. However, customers are liable for the soundness of checks and other instruments that they deposit." If a check is counterfeit, "it is the customer, not the bank, who is responsible," he said.

Any offer from Nigeria should raise a red flag, said Allen Lowe, an expert on Nigerian fraud and assistant to the special agent in charge at the U.S. Secret Service Miami field office. "We don't consider all Nigerians to be bad or crooks," but the Internet is teeming with Nigerian fraudsters, he said.

Typically, they send an unsolicited e-mail promising to pay the recipient millions of dollars in exchange for parking a larger amount of money in a U.S. bank account. In these so-called advance-fee scams, the victim is told to pay hundreds or thousands of dollars before getting the big payout.

But in Tennenbaum's case, greed was not a factor. In fact, Smith worked for two months to gain Tennenbaum's trust before typing: "can u help me cash money orders baby."

Catching foreign fraudsters overseas is extremely difficult, in part because they never give their real names, Lowe said.

Cybercrime experts like Lowe say victims are often intelligent and well-educated. That's little consolation to Tennenbaum, who has Florida certification in elementary, early and primary education, and in English as a second language.

"I'm not sleeping at all," she said. "I am constantly stressed."

3 DEC 2005

From The Punch ("The Saturday Punch"), a Nigerian newspaper:

Four foreigners lose \$ 18, 800 to 'EFCC chairman'

Sesan Olufowobi

A man, who allegedly duped four persons of \$18,800 by parading himself as the chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, has been arrested by operatives of the agency.

Saturday Punch gathered that the 30-year-old man identified as Anslam Nnabuigha Afam allegedly created a website with EFCC's logo as well as the name and pictures of the commission's Chairman, Mr. Nuhu Ribadu.

Findings by our correspondent revealed that Afam posted a "To whom it may concern letter" on his site, urging foreign contractors owed by Nigeria to contact him on a phone number listed on the site to discuss how they would be paid. He also stated that they would be required to obtain an EFCC affidavit of claims certificate from the "Lagos State High Court Commission."

To process the claims and obtain the affidavit of claims, however, the contractors were required to pay \$4, 700 each. It was learnt that at least four persons fell victim of the scam before he was caught.

An EFCC official told our correspondent that the commission stumbled on the site and succeeded in tracking him down.

"He had some of his education abroad and I think this gave him some advantage in knowing how to trick foreigners, especially in the United States," the official said.

Afam also told interrogators that he had defrauded only four persons so far, adding that he had not been in the business for long.

Saturday Punch also gathered that the commission was still investigating his claims to ascertain whether there were more victims, adding that officials of a Nigerian bank, which the suspect used to transfer money, were also being questioned.

Head of EFCC's Lagos Office and Director of Operations, Alhaji Ibrahim Lamorde, confirmed the arrest and stated that the matter was being investigated.

30 NOV 2005

There were a couple of articles on 419 Dutch newspaper Volksrant recently, here is a short one translated into English

for us by Ultrascan:

Amsterdam Centre of Nigerian Fraud
By our reporter Ferry Haan

AMSTERDAM - Amsterdam is the European Centre for Nigerian gangs who are scamming hundreds of foreigners out of tens of millions Euros. To counter act these actions the Amsterdam police reports that they are setting up a central point where victims can report the crimes that were committed against them.

Rene van der Wouw, detective for the Amsterdam police states that the central point will be a great progress in the fight against these criminals. He acknowledges that the Amsterdam police will not act on every report they get about these scams. "It is costing us too much capacity," according to Van der Wouw.

The police is trying to tackle these gangs via their internet providers, but those providers have to cooperate in order to get those guys. The Nigerian gangs are sending thousands of e-mails a day from Amsterdam, in which they are trying to contact potential victims. Often they are lured to Amsterdam with promises of loads of gold (and/or money), where they are then scammed out of their money.

When Dutch people are being scammed, it often happens from Madrid, another European centre where these gangs operate.

At least once a year the police tries to get several scammers caught, according to Van der Wouw. With this action the police is trying to prevent that 'Amsterdam becomes a free haven'. (for scammers)

Two years ago, 53 Nigerians were caught in Amsterdam. Only one person was convicted, the rest was free to go 'home' (and continue their actions).

American fraud specialist Brian Wizard, is warning that the worldwide attention for Nigerians is declining. "In the US there used to be 350 detectives working in the anti-fraud field, now the fight against terrorism is more important," he said.

28 NOV 2005
From The Punch, a Nigerian newspaper:

Bill wants banks shut for money laundering, 419

Ibanga Isine, Abuja

If a bill seeking the repeal of the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Act sails through in the National Assembly, banks and any other financial institutions found guilty of aiding money laundering and advance fee fraud (419) would be wound up.

Known as the Advance Fee Fraud and other Fraud -related Offences bill 2005, it also seeks a 20-year jail term, without an option of fine, for anyone convicted of 419.

It was gathered that the bill, a copy of which was obtained on Sunday by our correspondent, was sent to the National Assembly shortly after the Bayelsa State Governor, Chief Diepreye Alamieyeseigha, was arrested in London over charges of money laundering.

Section 10 of the proposed law reads, "Where an offence under this bill which has been committed by a body corporate is proved to have been committed on the instigation or with the connivance of or attributable to any neglect on the part of a director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of the body corporate or any person purporting to act in any such capacity, he, as well as the body corporate, where practicable, shall be deemed to be guilty of that offence and shall be liable to be prosecuted and punished accordingly."

"Where a body corporate is convicted of an offence under this bill, the court may order that the body corporate shall thereupon and without any further assurance, but for such order, be wound up and all its assets and properties forfeited to the Federal Government."

The bill also wants the courts to be empowered to, in addition to prescribed penalties, order convicted persons to make restitution to victims of fraud through the payment of amount equivalent to the loss they sustained.

Where the transaction involves a property, the bill provides that a property of equal value be returned to the victim or a person designated by him.

The possession of pecuniary resources or property for which a fraudster could not account for and which is disproportionate to his known income could be used to corroborate the testimony of a witness during trial under the proposed law.

Section 7, sub-section 2 (b) of the bill prescribes a 10-year term for persons involved in laundering of funds.

Persons involved in unlawful transportation of monetary instrument or funds from the

country or outside it, risk 10-year imprisonment or a fine of N500,000 or twice the value of the amount involved or both.

Also under the bill, a person or persons who with an intent to defraud, produces from a piece of paper or from any other material, any currency note by washing, dipping and treating the paper with a chemical substance would be liable to more than 15 years imprisonment on conviction.

Individuals or institutions involved in the provision of telecommunications or Internet services are expected to register such businesses with the EFCC and maintain a register of all fixed-line customers, which may be inspected from time-to-time.

The bill also makes it compulsory for persons involved in electronic communication businesses or Internet services to obtain the full names, residential or corporate addresses of their customers.

They must give such information to the EFCC on demand.

23 NOV 2005

From the Associated Press:

NIGERIA: Financial crimes agency returns millions to Brazilian bank

ABUJA, 23 Nov 2005 (IRIN) - Nigeria's financial crimes agency has returned US \$17 million to a Brazilian bank - the first installment of \$242 million siphoned by scammerls said.

The swin - ch led to the bank's collapse - marks one of the biggest cases of 419 fraud that government officials have cracked.

Nigeria has become notorious for fraudsters who pitch bogus schemes to entice people to part with large sums of money in expectation of higher returns. The scams are known as 419 deals, named for the section of the country's legal code that forbids such crimes.

On Monday, the head of Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nuhu Ribadu, made the refund of US \$17 million to William Richey, a lawyer representing the defunct Banco Noroeste of Sao Paolo, Brazil.

"By making this restitution to the victim of the scam we also want to send a strong, unequivocal message that we will no longer harbour such fraudulently acquired funds no matter where the victim is," Ribadu said in the statement.

Ribadu said more money recovered from three Nigerians convicted of the scam would eventually be returned to the bank.

Emmanuel Nwude and Nzeribe Okoli were convicted on Friday by a high court in Lagos for their role in the scam. Nwude got a 35-year jail term while Okoli was sentenced to 12 years. They are also to forfeit assets worth more than US \$121 million.

A third Nigerian, housewife Amaka Anajemba, was convicted in July and jailed for two and a half years. Anajemba was also ordered by the court to give up cash and assets of over \$48 million, including houses in Nigeria, the United States and Switzerland.

Convictions in the Brazilian bank case represent the government's most significant victory against fraud thus far.

Nigerian security agencies have redoubled efforts to combat such scams under President Olusegun Obasanjo, who has long pledged to tackle the rampant fraud that flourished in the country's long period of corrupt military rule.

Prosecutors alleged that those convicted were part of a fraud ring, including Anajemba's late husband, that tricked a top official of the Brazilian bank into transferring funds between 1996 and 2001 into various bank accounts around the world on the promise he would earn a \$13.4 million kickback from a fictitious airport contract.

419 Coalition Comment: Kudos to the EFCC, it is good to see that funds are being repatriated in this case. \$17 million on the way back, which is in itself Very significant, of course, leaving \$225 million for future repatriation.

21 NOV 2005

From Vanguard, a Nigerian newspaper:

\$242m scam: Nwude strikes deal, surrenders to EFCC
By Ise-Oluwa Ige

ABUJA Four days before an Ikeja high court convicted and sentenced Emmanuel Nwude to 25 years imprisonment for participating in defrauding a Brazilian, Mr Nelson Sakaguchi, a whopping sum of US\$ 242million between 1995 and 1998, he had voluntarily surrendered majority of his choice assets, both in Nigeria and abroad, for total and final settlement of the case.

Vanguard learnt at the weekend that Nwude, last Tuesday, in Lagos, personally signed a document titled "Settlement Agreement," which ceded to Sakaguchi, all his legal and equitable rights to the choice assets.

A copy of the agreement made available to Vanguard indicated that the trial judge, Justice Olubunmi Oyewole substantially premised his judgment on the substance of the 'settlement agreement' on forfeiture of the choice assets.

The voluntarily surrendered assets include real estates, a number of expensive cars and large public quoted shares in a number of blue chip companies.

He signed away his possessions of the assets on November 15, in Lagos when it dawned on him that he had a very bad case in court and after striking a deal with the EFCC on the settlement of the case.

While serving his jail term in Lagos prison, he is expected to deliver to Sakaguchi, all title documents to all the assets voluntarily surrendered by him within a maximum of 15 days.

The ultimatum for the delivery of the titled documents expires November 29, this year, otherwise the settlement agreement already signed by him would be deemed void.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission which prosecuted him in court was the engineer of the settlement agreement.

According to the agreement, the commission is also expected, in principle, to vet and okay the agreement especially its compliance within 30 days from the date both parties (Nwude and Sakaguchi) or their nominees, appended their signatures on the agreement.

By implication, EFCC is expected to okay the agreement on the surrender of Nwude's assets before December 14, this year.

The surrendered assets are to be disposed off with the proceeds from the sales exclusively used to settle a judgment debt entered against Nwude and his accomplices at a Superior Court of the State of California more than two years ago over the US \$242million scam, the biggest single fraud ever in the world.

In the final judgment off-shore, Chief Emmanuel Nwude Odinigwe was ordered to pay the plaintiffs in the suit including Sakaguchi, Leo Wallace Conchranc and Leo Wallace Conchranc (jnr) a whopping sum of US\$134,277,500.00.

The court also ordered him to pay interest on the principal judgment sum at the rate of 7% per annum "from the various dates of conversion until November 30, 2004, amounting to US\$74,903,563.00.

In all, Chief Nwude and his accomplices were expected to pay US \$209,181,063.00 amounting to N29, 076,167,757.00k (N29billion). Part of the proceeds made from the sale of his assets is also expected to be used to pay the legal fees incurred in a separate action commenced against him (Nwude) and his accomplices before the English high court of justice, Chancery division over the same US\$242million scam.

Probably because Nwude was not operating as a one-man-squad, Sakaguchi is demanding from him a total sum of US\$120,000,000.00 as final and total settlement of the case made against him.

19 NOV 2005

From Vanguard, a Nigerian newspaper:

\$242m scam: Nwude, Okoli jailed 37 years

By Wahab Abdulah, Gabriel Onyeaku & Faith Ifediora

Two of the three suspects charged for defrauding a Brazilian Bank of 242 million dollars said to be the biggest scam in history, Chiefs Emmanuel Nwude and Nzeribe Okoli were yesterday sentenced to a combined prison term of 37 years.

They are also to forfeit 110 million dollars to the Brazilian bank and pay 11.5 million dollars to the Federal Government. Chief Nwude bagged 25 years while Okoli will spend the next 12 years behind bars. The third accused person, Mrs Amaka Anajemba had avoided trial by pleading guilty to the amended charges and was immediately sentenced to 30 years imprisonment in July this year.

The duo were found guilty on all the 11 offences they were charged with. The terms are to run concurrently. The convicts changed their plea to guilty after initially pleading not guilty. They impressed the trial judge who commended them in his judgement.

Chief Nwude, Mrs Amaka Anajemba and Chief Okoli alongside their four companies were arraigned before an Abuja High Court in 2004 for swindling a Brazilian bank, Banko Noroeste S.A. of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Later, the Abuja High Court rejected the case on the ground that it had no jurisdiction before it was transferred to Lagos High Court presided by Justice Joseph Oyewole. The matter dragged for over one year with various applications filed by the accused persons to frustrate the trial.

Delivering judgement, Justice Oyewole convicted them and their companies. They are also to forfeit their property, including houses and vehicles. Justice Oyewole in his judgement held: "I have duly considered the submissions of counsel and I must commend the candour, wit and erudition displayed. This is in line with the best tradition at the bar. In imposing sentence on the accused persons, the court has noted the fact

that in changing their pleas, valuable time and resources are being saved and is evidence of remorse and common sense, a point appreciated by the prosecution as reflected in the present amended charges."

"A balance must however be arrived at by the court in ensuring that not only is the financial element which induces and motivates this class of offences is taken care of, but also impose sanctions that would signpost to society that crime does not pay and that certain conducts are simply not acceptable."

It is indeed sad that the activities of the accused persons not only led to the collapse of a bank in a foreign country but also brought miseries to many innocent people."

He subsequently read his sentences attached to each charge.

The principal victim of the fraud, Mr. Nelson Sakagushi, a director of the Brazilian bank who was in Nigeria in an attempt to give evidence in the case expressed satisfaction with the way the case was concluded by the court. He said "I never doubted the integrity of the court in Nigeria and I am happy that justice was done in the case."

Also, counsel in the case, including that of the defence Mr Ricky Tarfa, (SAN), hailed the court sentence, stating that "it's a well written judgement."

In his allocutos to the court, Tarfa, said his client was a first offender, who has no criminal records and that he was sick while having children and aged parents. He urged the court to temper justice with mercies in its sentence.

Here is the URL of this article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.vanguardngr.com/articles/2002/nationalx/nr119112005.html>

**The Nigerian newspaper The Guardian, also covered this story:

Court jails convicts 37 years in biggest fraud
By Mustapha Ogunsakin

THE much-celebrated \$242 million fraud trial against a Brazilian Bank, perpetrated by some Nigerians, came to an end yesterday as a Lagos High Court sentenced the two accused persons (now convicts) to a total of 37 years' imprisonment.

Besides, the convicts, Chief Emmanuel Nwude and Chief Nzeribe Okolo are to forfeit a total of \$121.5 million, including all their known property, both home and abroad, to the victims of the fraud (the Bank) and the Federal Government of Nigeria.

It was indeed a trial full of intrigues, which spanned one and a half years. For one full year, the convicts stalled the trials; changed counsel for about five times; a senior advocate of Nigeria walked out of court with a bomb scare that threw the whole of the high court complex, Ikeja into pandemonium on September 13, 2005.

On July 16, 2005 the third accused person, Mrs Martina Amaka Anajemba pleaded guilty to the charges against her. She forfeited N32 billion both in cash and assets, and was sentenced to two and a half years of imprisonment.

The convicts created a lot of unpleasant dramas and intrigues that were maturedly handled by the trial judge, Justice Joseph Olunmi Oyewole.

The convicts however started getting jittery when on September 13, an employee of United Bank of Africa (UBA) Mr. Oludayo Ogunleye was expected to give evidence in court about their transaction with the bank.

During the bomb scare in the court premises, the witness was abducted and the exhibits he was to tender in court were tampered with.

The bomb scare is currently being investigated by a tribunal of inquiry set up by Lagos State Governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu with Justice Adebola Adefope-Okojie as the tribunal chairman. The police authorities had also conducted a similar investigation.

By September 25, an Indian businessman, Mr. Naresh Asnani, standing as a witness, told the court how he assisted Nwude to launder \$127 million through various banks in Nigeria and abroad.

The last straw that broke the will of the accused however, was the appearance in court of the former Managing Director of Banco Noroeste Sa, (the bank that was duped), Mr. Nelson Sakaguchi. They could not believe, in their wildest imagination, that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) would be able to bring Sakaguchi to Nigeria.

Subsequently, a plea bargain situation was reached with the prosecutor, Mr. Rotimi Jacobs wherein they agreed to plead guilty for a light sentence in addition to forfeit all their known assets.

In delivering his judgement yesterday, Justice Oyewole said: "A balance must be arrived at by the court in ensuring that not only is the financial element, which induces and motivates this class of offences taking care of but also imposes sanctions that would sign post to society that crime does not pay and that certain conduct is simply not acceptable."

He continued: "It is sad that the activities of the accused persons not only led to the collapse of a bank in a foreign country but also brought miseries to many innocent

people."

Justice Oyewole thereafter sentenced the first accused (Nwude) to a total of 25 years imprisonment on a five-count charge.

Nwude is also to forfeit \$110 million to the affected bank, forfeit all his assets - property, cars, shares and money in bank accounts to the victims. He and his companies are also to forfeit \$11.5 million to the Federal Government after which they will wound up.

Okolo was also sentenced to a 12-year imprisonment in addition to forfeiture of all his property.

**The Nigerian newspaper ThisDay also covered this story:

\$242m Scam: Nwude pleads guilty, bags 25 yrs jail term
By Abimbola Akosile,

With the clear words, "I am guilty," uttered by Chief Emmanuel Nwude and his accomplice, Mr. Nzeribe Edeh Okoli, trial ended yesterday and judgment was passed by an Ikeja High Court judge, Justice Olubunmi Oyewole in a \$242 million advance fee fraud (a.k.a. 419) case involving fraudulently obtained from a Brazilian banker, Mr. Nelson Sakaguchi over a three-year period, from April 2, 1995 to January 20, 1998.

Nwude, (a.k.a Paul Ogwuma Odinigwe) 1st accused person, Okoli (3rd accused), Emrus (Nig.) Ltd., Ocean Marketing Co. (Nig.) Ltd. and African Shelter Bureau (Nig.) Ltd. (5th-7th accused), pleaded guilty to an amended 12-count charge filed yesterday by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in a plea-bargain move that saw the accused persons receiving 25 years and 12 years jail terms respectively and varying fines for the companies. The sentences are, however, to run concurrently from day of incarceration.

The 1st accused, who was first arrested June 4, 2003, was ordered to refund \$110 million to Banco Noroeste, and forfeit 14 properties (located in Lagos, Abuja, Enugu, Anambra, Rivers, and England), six choice cars and over 100 million shares in banks and various companies in Nigeria. Okoli (arrested on January 20, 2004) is to forgo an uncompleted filling station, residential complex and all landed properties located at 6, Ocean Avenue, Nkpokiti, Enugu State; while the three companies (Emrus, Ocean Marketing, and African Shelter Bureau) are to be wound up after refunding \$11.5 million to the Federal Government.

The judgment is coming 15 months after accused persons were first arraigned in a de novo trial before Justice Oyewole on July 23, 2004, following an Abuja High Court's dismissal of the previous 86 count charge brought against them for lack of jurisdiction (offences were committed within Lagos jurisdiction). Eminent lawyers like Chiefs Alex Izinyon (SAN), G.O.K. Ajayi (SAN) and Mr. Olisa Agbakoba (SAN) had appeared earlier and brought several applications on behalf of Nwude. Late Chief Rotimi Williams (SAN) (who briefly represented Amaka Anajemba), and Chief Chris Uche, who facilitated a plea, bargain for her.

When the matter came up yesterday morning, Mr. Rotimi Jacobs, lead prosecution counsel, informed court of an amendment in the previous 91-count charge filed against the accused persons. There was no objection to the new 12-count charge from Mr. Rickey Tarfa (SAN) lead defence counsel to Nwude and Mr. Adeshina Ogunlana, Okoli's counsel; after which the judge adjourned briefly to his chambers with all counsel to deliberate on the new dimension.

At 10.50am, when hearing resumed, Jacobs applied that the new charge be read to the accused persons, with again no objection from defence counsel. In a reading which spanned 25 minutes (11.15am), Nwude, who sported an ash coloured two-piece kaftan, pleaded guilty to every charge read to him by the court registrar, Mrs. Rosulu; a move which was copied by Okoli (who wore a navy-blue suit on a white shirt). Both accused also pleaded guilty on behalf of their companies when the charge was read to 5th - 7th accused.

Jacobs thereafter sought to present enough evidence before the court to convict accused persons, tracing the history of the fraud from March 20, 1995, when Sakaguchi (who was in court all through yesterday's proceedings) was contacted by letter for a contract, using Okoli's phone line to send a fax; after which regular contact was made by Nwude and late Christian Anajemba to obtain various sums of money from the victim on false pretence, allegedly to settle tax on a Federal Government contract award for construction of Abuja International Airport.

Justice Oyewole, who convicted the accused persons after listening to Jacob's submissions, listened to the allocutus from Tarfa and Ogunlana (defence counsel) before rising for one hour, ten minutes to deliver his judgment and sentence on the convicts. Though he was urged to temper justice with mercy, Oyewole insisted that a balance must be struck between the plea for mercy and need for a deterrent for would-be scammers. The judge thereafter sentenced Nwude to 5 years imprisonment for each of the five counts against him (counts 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5), while Okoli was sentenced to 4 years for each of the three counts preferred against him (counts 1, 6, & 7), which are to run concurrently.

Trial began October 5, 2004 in the matter, where six prosecution witnesses out of 28 (both local and foreign) have testified so far in court, in a de novo (fresh) case in which trial judge favours accelerated hearing. However, both Amaka Anajemba (Mrs.) and Fynbaz (Nig.) Limited (2nd & 4th accused respectively), initially charged alongside other suspects, pleaded guilty to a fresh 4-count charge on July 15, and were subsequently sentenced to prison terms and fines, with their names deleted from an amended

information filed by the prosecutor, EFCC.

Anajemba was sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment, and the said sentence to commence from January 30, 2004, when she was first remanded in prison custody. In addition to her prison sentence Justice Oyewole also ordered that numerous valued assets of 2nd accused person, both local and foreign, which value exceeded N3 billion and \$25 million respectively, be forfeited to the victims of the said fraud named in the charge, as restitution.

First arraigned in Abuja on February 4, 2004, accused persons, in an 86-count-charge, were alleged to have defrauded Sakaguchi of \$242 million from April 2, 1995 to January 20, 1998 at Opebi, Ikeja, Lagos State, contrary to Sections 1(1)(a) and (3) of the Advance Fee Fraud Act of 1995 as amended by Act 62 of 1998. Amount obtained was to represent payment due to the Federal Government of Nigeria on the alleged contract No. FMA/132/019/82 for construction of Abuja International Airport, Nigeria. Penalties for each of the counts range between 5 - 10 years.

Sakaguchi, star prosecution witness in the case, who first appeared in court on Tuesday, November 15, yesterday hailed the court judgment on the grounds that it has vindicated him after all the years of derision and public odium heaped on him by the bank's shareholders and prosecutors.

** 419 Coalition extends our thanks to the EFCC for all their hard work in the long haul of bringing these high level 419ers to Justice. We trust that the seized monies and assets of the 419ers will be distributed to their victim(s) forthwith.

16 NOV 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

\$242m Scam: Sakaguchi, duped Brazilian, appears in court
By Abimbola Akosile

Trial in a \$242million advance fee fraud a.k.a. 419 scam, took a new dimension in an Ikeja High Court presided over by Justice Olunmi Oyewole yesterday, when prosecution's principal witness, Mr. Nelson Sakaguchi, a Brazilian and director in Banco Noereste Brazil, appeared in readiness to give evidence in the year-old trial. However, barring any last-minute change, he will do so on Friday, November 18, next adjourned date.

Sakaguchi, a white, chubby, brown-haired man who sported a black suit on white shirt, was brought to court in a five-vehicle convoy of bullet-proof jeeps by officials of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and heavily-armed mobile policemen in a tight security cordon, which surrounded the Ikeja courtroom while yesterday's proceedings were going on.

The star witness was allegedly duped of \$24.2 million by three Nigerians including Chief Emmanuel Nwude (a.k.a Paul Ogwuma Odinigwe) 1st accused, Mr. Nzeribe Edeh Okoli (3rd accused), Emrus (Nig.) Ltd., Ocean Marketing Co. (Nig.) Ltd. and African Shelter Bureau (Nig.) Ltd. (5th-7th accused) between 1995 and 1998 through a complicated wire transfer system involving both local and foreign banks and some foreigners.

However, both Amaka Anajemba (Mrs.) and Fynbaz (Nig.) Limited (2nd & 4th accused respectively), initially charged alongside above suspects, pleaded guilty to a fresh 4-count charge on July 15, and were subsequently sentenced to prison terms and fines, with their names deleted from an amended information filed by the prosecutor, EFCC.

When the matter came up before Justice Oyewole yesterday morning, Chief Olisa Agbakoba, SAN, lead defence counsel for Nwude, was again absent in court (which led to an adjournment last week), although Mr. Rickey Tarfa, SAN, announced appearance for the 1st accused and sought court leave for some time to allow him acquaint himself properly with the matter; which prompted the court to grant a 30-minute recess. Although Agbakoba was earlier scheduled to cross-examine Mr. Naresh Asnani, an Indian business-man (PW6) who allegedly helped Nwude launder around \$127 million through his bank accounts, both Tarfa and Mr. Adeshina Ogunlana (Okoli's counsel) declined to cross-examine Asnani despite his previous lengthy testimony. Lead prosecution counsel, Mr. Rotimi Jacobs thereafter called upon Sakaguchi as the next witness, though the matter could not go on since he (Jacobs) told court he needed two days to confer with his star witness.

Sakaguchi, on a business trip to Nigeria in 1994, was allegedly introduced to the accused, by his friend Dr. Hakim Ukeh, an Enugu-based businessman. Two of the suspects allegedly claimed that they control the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). Nwude, a major shareholder at Union Bank of Nigeria Plc, posed as Mr. Paul Ogwuma, then Governor of CBN, while Amaka's husband, Ikechukwu Anajemba posed as Alhaji Mahey Rasheed, who was the CBN Deputy Governor in charge of foreign operations in 1995.

The unsuspecting Brazilian was deceived into believing that the suspects won a contract in Nigeria and was asked to send money to facilitate the supposed contract, which was done in 8 installments, beginning with a first installment of \$1.2 million on August 9, 1995 and last payment of \$1.35 million in 1998.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=33457>

15 NOV 2005

From WBAL TV News, NBC Channel 11, Baltimore MD:

TOWSON, Md. -- You've won thousands of dollars and you have a check to prove it, but are you the target of a scam?

Maryland, 46 other states and Western Union hope a new initiative will end scams run by people in foreign countries. The goal is to protect senior citizens and others who fall prey to false lottery notifications and money schemes.

It's considered a \$40 billion a year problem -- consumers losing money they sent to fraudulent telemarketers and scam artists. Now, in an agreement between Western Union and 47 state attorneys general, customers will be warned before they wire money.

Attorney General Joseph Curran said Maryland was part of a multi-state investigation of telemarketing fraud. The investigation found nearly 40 percent of all telemarketing transfers that went to Canada were fraudulently induced. It also found of those telemarketers who are dishonest, 8 out of 10 of their victims were seniors.

Sandra Hubbell received confidential letters from Nova Management and Payment, Inc., of Nova Scotia telling her she was the winner of \$100,000 in a lottery. She even received a check for \$3,600.

The catch: she had to deposit the check into her bank account. It would then be used to pay for processing and surcharges. She became suspicious.

"Not to mention I don't even remember entering a sweepstakes," Hubbell said. "According to the letter, it was 2 or 3 years ago I entered and they are just getting around to sending me my money."

Her bank found the check was bogus. She worries about seniors who may get similar letters or phone calls and then open up their bank accounts or send money transfers out of the country.

"It's terrible how people can prey on other people, especially the elderly," Hubbell said. "It's sad."

But Hubbell is glad there's an effort to prevent the fraud. Western Union will spend \$8.1 million on a national consumer awareness program for seniors and post warnings to customers. The company will block transfers if fraud is suspected and fire any of its agents who assist in fraud.

According to Western Union, customers who wire money and then think they are being scammed can stop the transaction and get reimbursed as long as the wire transfer has not been picked up on the other end. On the company's Web site, Western Union president Christina Gold said, "Consumer fraud is an issue we take very seriously."

Here is the URL for as long as it is good:
<http://www.thewbalchannel.com/news/5328001/detail.html#>

9 NOV 2005

This is an Op-Ed piece by Professor Niyi Akinnaso, who teaches Anthropology and Linguistics in the United States, which was published in The Guardian, a Nigerian newspaper. We thought it was an excellent piece, so we've put it up:

Yours sincerely, 4-1-9
By Niyi Akinnaso

I recently received the 100th and 101st letters from 419 fraudsters and I thought I should share them with the general public, partly because of the names mentioned in the letters and partly because of what the letters reflect about the fraudulent activities perpetrated by Nigerians.

In each of the recent con letters, a purported close relative of a now infamous Nigerian approached me about a lucrative business deal, involving plenty of money. One of the fraudsters goes by the name Mariam Abacha and the other by the name Olatunde A. Balogun. These, of course, should be understood as the assumed names of the fraudsters rather than their real names. The former claims to be the widow of "General Abacha the former head of state of Nigeria", while the latter introduced himself as "the first son of the Former Inspector General of Police" who is "still under the custody of Investigation that was set up by the Federal Government to investigate his financial success."

At first, the two messages looked very different, judging by the subject title and opening salutation. Mariam's message is titled "In good faith" and opens with "Dear Beloved." I first thought it was one of those evangelical messages of the type you are requested to circulate to at least three people. On the other hand, the subject title of Olatunde's letter is "Business Proposal" with "Dear Friend" as the opening salutation. However, upon reading both messages in full, I discovered several shared features characteristic of classical 419 letters.

First, both con letter writers contacted me via e-mail. I must add that I have also received numerous con messages via telephone and fax. Just a few days ago, some fraudster left a message on my phone, confirming that my check has been cleared by the Central

Bank and that I should contact him about the procedure for clearing it.

Second, the writers parade themselves as close relatives of some wealthy public figure. As mentioned above, one of the present writers is a wife and the other a first son of the wealthy person in question. These are excellent qualifications to convince me that both writers should have access to information about their relatives and, therefore, they should know what they are talking about.

Third, the relative and public figure represented by the fraudster is either dead or in serious trouble. So, the late General Abacha and the indicted former Inspector General of Police are good candidates, because neither could access his money. Since the federal government has been going after the money, it makes sense that close relatives would want to move some of it elsewhere to avoid seizure.

Fourth, each wealthy relative has millions of dollars kept somewhere, which the con relatives want me to receive and keep on their behalf. Mariam explains why she wants me to keep the money for her: "I have lost confidence with anybody within my country. I got your contacts through personal research." Moreover, "due to security network placed on my daily affairs I can't visit the embassy so that is why I have contacted you." Olatunde's reason is explicitly business-related: "I want you to do us a favour to receive this trunk box and lodge the cash into a safe account in your country or any safe place as the beneficiary. We have plans to do investment in your country, like real estate and industrial production."

Fifth, the money in question has been kept in a safe place, still unknown to the government. Mariam assures me: "My husband deposited \$12.6 million dollars with a security firm abroad whose name is withheld for now till we communicate." Olatunde said of his father: "Before his arrest, he had a trunk box containing cash deposited in a security vault in London up to the tune of \$20M US Dollars."

Sixth, I will have a share of the total sum of money involved; exactly 20 per cent in each case. So, I will make \$2.52 million from the transaction with Mariam and \$4 million from the one with Olatunde. A total sum of \$6.52 million or N912.8 million. However, the procedure for getting the money into my account is quite intricate. Consequently, neither fraudster would tell me via the present e-mail address.

This leads to the seventh shared characteristic of both letters. Both writers promise to provide further details about the transaction only after I have indicated my willingness to play along by responding to another private e-mail address. Mariam's private address is hajiamimi@yahoo.com, while Olatunde's is olatundebalogun000@yahoo.com. In my response, Mariam also wants me to supply my telephone and fax numbers. I guess Olatunde will request them later.

Although I never responded, and will never respond, to any 419 letter, I know a little bit about what might happen if I agreed to honor the fraudsters' solicitation. From various published accounts on 419, my bank account number would be needed so the money could be transferred there. If I express doubts about the funds being transferred, some fake documents may be sent to me (usually by fax) to authenticate the overseas account claimed by the fraudsters. I would be required to send some money for processing the transaction. Sometime down the road, complications may arise that inevitably would require me to send more and more money to save the venture. At the end of the day, my money would have gone to the fraudsters but no money would have come to me from them. And my bank account would have become insecure!

The fraudulent scheme just described above is known in the United States as "Advance Fee Fraud" Scheme, named after the advance fees often demanded from fraud victims. The same scheme is often referred to as "The Nigerian Connection" in Europe, thus highlighting the presumed country of origin of the scheme. However, both in Nigeria and abroad, the scheme is generally referred to as 419, after the relevant section of Nigeria's criminal code. Although such a scheme has been found to originate from other West African countries and con collaborators abroad, it is generally associated with Nigeria.

Indeed, as recently as August 7, 2005, Dulue Mbachu of the Associated Press went as far as pinpointing an area of Lagos where fraudsters plan and hatch their plots. This is how Mbachu puts it: "Lagos, Nigeria - In Festac Town, an entire community of scammers overnights on the Internet. By day they flaunt their smart clothes and cars and hang around the Internet cafes, trading stories about successful cons and near misses, and hatching new plots."

There are many lessons about Nigeria and Nigerians to be learned from the 419 scheme. First and foremost, the scheme is symptomatic of a broad range of fraudulent practices associated with Nigeria as a nation and some Nigerians at home and abroad. These fraudulent practices range from bribery and corruption, money laundering, credit card fraud, and illicit drug trade to examination fraud, falsified credentials, and rigged elections. These are the practices that have earned Nigeria the bad reputation of a corrupt nation, a stigmatisation that continues to affect trade, diplomatic, and other relations with Nigeria.

The two 419 letters analysed above are particularly significant because they highlight allegations of corruption in two high places, namely, the police and the presidency. Although he has not been convicted of any crime, Tafa Balogun, the former Inspector General of Police, is facing numerous charges of corruption involving billions of Naira. By the same token, the late Gen. Sani Abacha, a former Head of State, is said to have laundered huge sums of money through United Kingdom (UK) and Swiss banks, some of which was recently returned to Nigeria. Mariam and Olatunde, the present fraudsters, are capitalising on these well known cases.

Finally, these celebrated cases also remind us of other contemporary allegations of fraud. These include the National Identity Card Project fraud involving a former Minister of Internal Affairs; the bribe-for-budget scandal, involving a former Minister of Education and several Senators; the 14 billion Naira fertilizer scam, involving at least a Minister and a Senator; the ongoing money laundering case involving a state Governor; the recent disclosure by the Central Bank of 99 cases of bank fraud and forgeries involving N733.74 million; and the notorious forgeries associated with Oluwole market in Lagos.

It would be unfair, of course, not to acknowledge the anti-corruption work of the present administration, which heightened recently in response to pressure from G8 leaders and the Paris Club. While this effort is leading to various revelations of fraud, two important questions remain. First, what happens to the money being recovered? Second, will the present effort curb corruption any better than previous government efforts, such as Shagari's Ethical Revolution and Abacha's War Against Indiscipline and Corruption? Whatever the answers may be to these questions, it is at least refreshing to hope that Nigeria's political culture of corruption will change for the better.

20 OCT 2005

From the Los Angeles Times:

Nigerian Cyber Scammers

To the cyber scammers in Nigeria who trawl for victims on the Internet, Americans are easy targets. But one thief had second thoughts.

By Robyn Dixon, Times Staff Writer

FESTAC, Nigeria: As patient as fishermen, the young men toil day and night, trawling for replies to the e-mails they shoot to strangers half a world away.

Most recipients hit delete, delete, delete, delete without ever opening the messages that urge them to claim the untold riches of a long-lost deceased second cousin, and the messages that offer millions of dollars to help smuggle loot stolen by a corrupt Nigerian official into a U.S. account.

But the few who actually reply make this a tempting and lucrative business for the boys of Festac, a neighborhood of Lagos at the center of the cyber-scam universe. The targets are called maghas - scammer slang from a Yoruba word meaning fool, and refers to gullible white people.

Samuel is 19, handsome, bright, well-dressed and ambitious. He has a special flair for computers. Until he quit the game last year, he was one of Festac's best-known cyber-scam champions.

Like nearly everyone here, he is desperate to escape the run-down, teeming streets, the grimy buildings, the broken refrigerators stacked outside, the strings of wet washing. It's the kind of place where plainclothes police prowl the streets extorting bribes, where mobs burn thieves to death for stealing a cellphone, and where some people paint "This House Is Not For Sale" in big letters on their homes, in case someone posing as the owner tries to put it on the market.

It is where places like the Net Express cyber cafe thrive.

The atmosphere of silent concentration inside the cafe is absolute, strangely reminiscent of a university library before exams. Except, that is, for the odd guffaw or cheer. The doors are locked from 10:30 p.m. until 7 a.m., so the cyber thieves can work in peace without fear of armed intruders.

In this sanctum, Samuel says, he extracted thousands of American e-mail addresses, sent off thousands of fraudulent letters, and waited for replies. He thinks disclosure of his surname could endanger his safety.

The e-mail scammers here prefer hitting Americans, whom they see as rich and easy to fool. They rationalize the crime by telling themselves there are no real victims: Maghas are avaricious and complicit.

To them, the scams, called 419 after the Nigerian statute against fraud, are a game.

Their anthem, "I Go Chop Your Dollars," hugely popular in Lagos, hit the airwaves a few months ago as a CD penned by an artist called Osofia:

"419 is just a game, you are the losers, we are the winners.

White people are greedy, I can say they are greedy

White men, I will eat your dollars, will take your money and disappear.

419 is just a game, we are the masters, you are the losers."

"Nobody feels sorry for the victims," Samuel said.

Scammers, he said, "have the belief that white men are stupid and greedy. They say the American guy has a good life. There's this belief that for every dollar they lose, the American government will pay them back in some way."

What makes the scams so tempting for the targets is that they promise a tantalizing escape from the mundane disappointments of life. The scams offer fabulous riches or the love of your life, but first the magha has to send a series of escalating fees and payments. In a dating scam, for instance, the fraudsters send pictures taken from modeling websites.

"Is the girl in these pictures really you?? I just can't get over your beauty!!!! I can't believe my luck!!!!!!!" one hapless American wrote recently to a scammer seeking \$1,200.

The scammer replied, "Would you send the money this week so I may buy a ticket?"

"Aww babe. I don't have the money yet. I will get it, though. Don't you worry your pretty lil head, hun," the victim wrote back.

The real push comes when the fictional girlfriend or fiancée, who claims to be in America, goes to Nigeria for business. In a series of "mishaps," her wallet is stolen and she is held hostage by the hotel owner until she can come up with hundreds of dollars for the bill. She needs a new airline ticket, has to bribe churlish customs officials and gets caught. Finally, she needs a hefty get-out-of-jail bribe.

The U.S. Secret Service estimates such schemes net hundreds of millions of dollars annually worldwide, with many victims too afraid or embarrassed to report their losses.

Basil Udotai of the government's Nigerian Cybercrime Working Group said 419 fraud represents a tiny portion of Nigerian computer crime, but is taken seriously by authorities because of the damage it does to the country's reputation.

"The government is not just sitting on its hands," he said. "It's very important for the international community to know that Nigeria is not glossing over the problem of 419. We are putting together measures that will tackle all forms of online crime and give law enforcement agencies opportunities to combat it."

Asishana Okauru, acting director of financial intelligence for the government's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, said \$700 million relating to 419 crime had been seized in the two years since the establishment of the EFCC. There have been 12 convictions in such cases brought during that time, he said. Okauru said he felt this was a good result given the sluggishness of Nigeria's legal system, but critics say the courts are too slow and corrupt.

Nigerian authorities, extremely sensitive about 419 crime, say the scammers are mostly from other countries, and that any Nigerians who participate do so because of high unemployment and, above all, the greed of victims.

When Samuel, at age 15, sat down in a cyber cafe and started drilling away at the keyboard, he had no idea he was being watched by one of Festac's cyber-crime wizards. After noting Samuel's speed and skill, the crime boss, nicknamed Shepherd, invited him to his mansion to try extracting e-mail addresses using search engines. Then, to make Samuel feel special, he took him shopping for designer clothes.

"He's fun to be with. When you're around him he makes you feel you have no problems," Samuel said. Shepherd hooked him with the same bait he uses for maghas.

"He said every hour I spent online I could be making good money," Samuel recalled. "He said, 'The houses I own, I got it through all this.' And they're not just ordinary houses. They're big, made of marble. He's got big-screen TVs, a swimming pool inside. He lives like a prince. He's the biggest guy in this town."

A teenager who didn't really know about the scams, Samuel was "a bit confused" when Shepherd offered him 20% of the take. "But I looked at everything he had, and it got into my head, actually. The money he had, the cars."

Eager to impress his new boss, Samuel worked for six-hour stretches extracting e-mail addresses and sending off letters that had been composed by a college graduate also working for Shepherd.

He sent 500 e-mails a day and usually received about seven replies. Shepherd would then take over.

"When you get a reply, it's 70% sure that you'll get the money," Samuel said.

Soon he was working for two bosses, Shepherd and Colosi, both well known to authorities but neither of them bothered in a place where police involvement in the scams is widely alleged.

"Most of the time you look for American contacts because of the value of the dollar, and because the fraudsters here have contacts in America who wrap up the job over there," Samuel said. "For example, the offshore people will go to pose as the Nigerian ambassador to the U.S., or as government officials. They will show some documents: This has presidential backing, this has government backing. And you will be convinced because they will tell you in such a way that you won't be able to say no."

After a scam letter surfaced this summer bearing the forged signature of Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, police raided a market in the Oluwole neighborhood of Lagos, one of six main centers that provide documents used in the 419 scams. They seized thousands of foreign and Nigerian passports, 10,000 blank British Airways tickets, 10,000 U.S. money orders, customs documents, fake university certificates, 500 printing plates and 500 computers. A stolen U.S. passport fetches

\$2,500 on the black market here.

The scams often involve bogus Internet sites, such as lottery websites, or oil company, bank or government sites. The scammers sometimes use London phone prefixes to make victims think they are calling Britain.

Though the fraud is apparent to many, some people think they have stumbled on a once-in-a-lifetime deal, and scammers can string them along for months with mythical difficulties. Some victims eventually contribute huge sums of money to save the deal when it is suddenly "at risk."

Stephen Kovacsics of American Citizen Services, an office of the U.S. Consulate, spoke to a victim who had lost \$200,000.

Kovacsics says he is awakened several nights a week by Americans pleading for help with an emergency, such as a fiancée (whom they have only met in an online chat room) locked up in a Nigerian jail. He has to tell them that there is probably no fiancée, no emergency.

Kovacsics said victims can't believe that a scammer would spend months of internet chat just to net \$700 or \$1,000, not realizing that is big money in Nigeria and fraudsters will have many scams running at the same time.

By 2003, Shepherd was fleecing 25 to 40 victims a month, Samuel said. Samuel never got the 20%, but still made a minimum of \$900 a month, three times the average income here. At times, he made \$6,000 to \$7,000 a month.

Samuel said Shepherd employs seven Nigerians in America, including one in the San Francisco Bay Area, to spy on maghas and threaten any who get cold feet. If a big deal is going off track, he calls in all seven.

"They're all graduates and very smart," Samuel said. "Four of them are graduates in psychology here in Nigeria. If the white guy is getting suspicious, he'll call them all in and say, 'Can you finish this off for me?'"

"They'll try to scare you that you're not going to get out of it. Or you're going to be arrested and you will face trial in Nigeria. They'll say: 'We know you were at Wal-Mart yesterday. We know the D.A. He's our friend.'"

"They'll tell you that you are in too deep - you either complete it or you'll be killed."

Samuel said his mother, widowed when he was 16, was devastated when she saw him in the street with Shepherd and realized what he was up to.

"She tried to force me to stop, but the more force she applied, the more hardened I became. I said: 'You can't give me what I want. I want a good life.'"

But Samuel began having second thoughts when a friend was arrested after ripping off a boss for \$17,000.

The friend was badly beaten before disappearing into the depths of the labyrinthine Nigerian justice system. Samuel thought of his mother and how she would be left alone if something happened to him.

When he gave up cyber crime at the end of last year, he said nothing to his mother. But she noticed.

"She said she was happy and she could sleep well," he said. "Actually, I started crying. I couldn't control myself. I realized there was more to life than chasing money."

Now when he sees Shepherd in the streets, his former boss just grins.

"He says: 'Don't worry. You'll come back to me.'"

(BEGIN TEXT OF INFOBOX)

The many forms of 419 scams

Advance-fee frauds, also known as 419, appear to offer a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to get rich or find the girl of your dreams. The scams can involve phony websites, forged documents and Nigerians in America posing as government officials. Here are some of the most popular:

The "next of kin" scam, tempting you to claim an inheritance of millions of dollars in a Nigerian bank belonging to a long-lost relative, then collecting money for various bank and transfer fees.

The "laundering crooked money" scam, in which you are promised a large commission on a multibillion-dollar fortune, persuaded to open an account, contribute funds and sometimes even travel to Nigeria.

The "Nigerian National Petroleum Co." scam, in which the scammer offers cheap crude oil, then demands money for commissions and bribes.

The "overpayment" scam, in which fraudsters send a bank check overpaying for a car or other goods by many thousands of dollars, persuading the victim to transfer the difference back to Nigeria.

The "job offer you can't refuse" scam, in which an "oil company" offers a job with an overly attractive salary and conditions (in one example, \$180,000 a year and \$300 per hour for overtime) and extracts money for visas, permits and other fees.

The "winning ticket in a lottery you never entered" scam - including, lately, the State Department's green card lottery.

The "gorgeous person in trouble" scam, in which scammers in chat rooms and on Christian dating sites pose as beautiful American or Nigerian women, luring lonely men into Internet intimacy over weeks or months then asking them to send money to get them out of trouble.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-fg-scammers20oct20,0,1677711,full.story?coll=la-home-headlines>

1 OCT 2005

Sent in by an Associate, from the the Middletown NY Times Herald-Record (Hudson Valley NY), Online:

Claryville: Police arrest two in lottery scam

The scam is one of the most common around today, according to the Federal Trade Commission: A lottery scam.

But a Claryville man didn't know that. On a promise of a big lottery payout, the man sent \$7,800 to a New Jersey company. Then the company promised an extra \$750,000 if he wired \$7,100 more to them in Jersey City, N.J., via Western Union.

The Claryville man called state police and they set up a sting operation, with the help of Western Union's security department and Jersey City police. On Thursday, when two men tried to claim the \$7,100 at the Jersey City Western Union, store, Jersey City cops arrested them.

Jersey City filed charges and New York State Police lodged an arrest warrant charging Aloice A. Vincent, 28, of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and William Anderson Wheatfield, 35, of Toronto, with attempted third-degree grand larceny, a felony. Police said they're Nigerian-Canadian citizens.

The men were being held at the Hudson County, N.J., Jail.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:

<http://www.recordonline.com/archive/2005/10/01/brf373.htm>

28 SEP 2005

From The Guardian, a Nigerian newspaper:

Nwude asked me to implicate Anajemba, witness tells court
By Mustapha Ogunsakin

A WITNESS in the trial of two Nigerians over alleged \$242 million fraud yesterday told a Lagos High Court how the principal accused person, Chief Emmanuel Nwude, denied him and asked him to implicate a dead man because "dead men don't speak."

Nwude and others were accused of defrauding a Brazilian bank of \$242 million.

The witness, an Indian, Mr. Naresh Asnami gave this evidence before the trial judge, Justice Olubunmi Oyewole of the Ikeja Judicial Division in conclusion of the evidence in chief conducted by the prosecutor, Mr. Rotimi Jacobs.

Asnami started his evidence in chief last Friday. He revealed that he was used to launder \$127 million through his on-shore accounts in London and Geneva, Switzerland.

For now, the aspect of money laundering in the trial of what has come to be regarded as the biggest fraud trial in the world may be nearing completion.

It is still expected that the managing director of Banco Noroeste, the bank that was defrauded may still come before the court to give evidence on how the crime was actually committed.

When the matter come up yesterday, Asnami narrated to the court how he found out that his account was all along used for the fraud.

He said: "When I was informed that my accounts has been used for the fraud, I contacted Chief Nwude. He told me he couldn't understand what is going on and was not aware of what is happening. A few months latter, I received an e-mail on his behalf from the lawyer in Switzerland. It was a draft prepared for him to swear to by the lawyer to the effect that he did not know me. I rushed to his house at Osborne road, Ikoyi, Lagos, and asked him how he could swear to an affidavit denying me.

"He told me to inform my lawyer or anybody else that I did not know Chief Emmanuel Nwude and that I only know Chief I.K. Anajemba since he was no longer alive. He (Nwude) then added: "Dead man don't speak."

The late Anajemba was the husband of Mrs. Amaka Martina Anajemba, who pleaded

guilty to the charges brought against her and was sentenced to two and a half years imprisonment in addition to losing properties worth several millions of naira in the same fraud trial.

The other two who are still standing trial are Nwude and Chief Nzeribe Okoli. Late Anajemba was the third person involved in the scam but he died long before the long arms of the law caught up with the accused persons.

Asnami further gave a vivid account of how he transferred various sums of monies into different banks abroad and how he also used the ones he could not transfer to buy goods for his company, Royal Crest Nigeria Limited.

He also told the court how he used companies belonging to the Indian Community members. The money, according to him, was given to the members of the Indian Community in dollars. They in turn used the money to buy goods which they imported into the country after which they pay back to him the equivalent of the sums in naira. He (Nares) in turn credited the accounts of companies given to him by Chief Nwude with the monies.

He said: "The other balance was used for the payment of the supply of the goods for which I pay the equivalent in naira and another I sold to friends belonging to the Indian Community who gave me the equivalent in naira by cheques in favour of Nigerian companies given to me by Chief Nwude."

Further trial will continue on Friday when Nwude's lawyer, Mr. Olisa Agbakoba is expected to cross-examine Mr. Asnami.

ThisDay and other Nigerian newspapers also did pieces on this story.

26 SEP 2005

From The Guardian, a Nigerian newspaper:

Witness admits laundering \$127m for Nwude, others
By Mustapha ogunsakin

A year after, the trial of three Nigerians who allegedly defrauded a Brazilian bank of \$242 million resumed at the weekend with an Indian businessman revealing how he laundered \$127million for the accused person.

Since September 2004, the trial judge, Justice Joseph Olubumi Oyewole had to contend with one application or the other from defence lawyers all in a bid to stall trial of the accused persons.

Those standing trial in the scam are Chief Emmanuel Nwude and Chief Nzeribe Okoli. The third accused person, Mrs. Martina Amaka Anajemba pleaded guilty to the charges preferred against her, and was sentenced to two and half years imprisonment on July 15, 2005 in addition to forfeiting properties that runs into several millions of naira.

Within the last year, the first accused person, Nwude changed his lawyers at least three times. The high point was when Chief G. O. K. Ajayi (SAN) came into the matter and abruptly stormed out of court because the trial judge refused to stay proceedings pending an appeal he had filed before the Court of Appeal, Lagos. He eventually lost the appeal. He never came back to the court.

Also last week, September 13, there was a bomb scare at the Ikeja High Court premises where the trial is taking place. Many believed that the scare might not be unconnected with the case.

However last Friday, an Indian, Mr. Maresh Asnami, a director of Royal Oil Nigeria Limited, for five hours, pointed how he was hired into laundering \$27million for the accused persons out of the \$242 million involved in the scam.

Asnami has also paid a price for being a part of the fraud. He was convicted in Geneva for money laundering in the same scam and he spent four years in jail. Because of the fraud, his father had to relocate to India from the United States of America (USA) on the same case. Both father and son now live in India.

Led in evidence by the prosecution lawyer, Mr. Rotimi Jacobs, Asnami, told the court how he was allegedly hired into the laundering business by the branch manager of a new generation bank, Mr Babatunde Soares.

Soares was in court in July 2004 and he gave evidence on his role in the scam. Asnami told the court that when Soares introduced him to Nwude, he tried to conduct his own investigation on his (Nwude's) personality.

His investigations, he claimed, took him to a bank official, Mrs. N. B. Dosunmu, who told him that her employers never had problems with Nwude and that he is a reliable customer.

He also got words from officers of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and the State Security Service (SSS). The two agencies attested to the impeccable character Nwude.

Asnami further narrated how he after all these assurances, negotiated with Nwude through Soares. This was how he helped laundered \$127 million through his offshore accounts in Geneva, London, and Hong Kong.

The witness is expected to continue his evidence in chief today.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.guardiannewsngr.com/news/article12>

ThisDay also covered the story, here is the URL for that piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=29270>

23 SEP 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

EFCC Arraigns Female Director over N21m Fraud
By Abimbola Akosile

A 56-year old female director of Macro-Economic Planning, Ministry of Special Duties in Oyo State Civil Service, was yesterday arraigned by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) before an Ikeja High Court judge.

The woman, Mrs. Helen Bankole Laoye was brought before Justice Morenike Obadina on two separate charges.

The accused was arrested in May this year and charged to court for conspiring with four other persons (still at large) to obtain the sum of N6 million and \$105,000 totaling N21,225,000.00 (twenty-one million, two hundred and twenty-five thousand naira) from Messrs. Segun Olufunmi and Adeola Adepoju, Directors of East Atlantic Business Systems Support Services on one hand and one Pastor Samson Olatunbosun on the other hand; contrary to Sections 8(a) and 1(3) of Advance Fee Fraud Act, 2004.

When the matter came up around 10am yesterday, Laoye who was brought from EFCC office in Ikoyi, broke down in tears and pleaded not guilty to all the eight counts in the two separate charges. She added that she was the only one who was brought to court in the matter.

While lead prosecution counsel, Mr. Seidu Atteh urged the court to remand the accused in prison, her defence counsel, Mr. Obafemi Oyeneye pleaded that she should be allowed to remain within the confines of the EFCC office. a plea which was refused by the judge, who ordered that she should be taken to Kirikiri Medium Security Prisons (female wing). Obadina thereafter adjourned the matter till October 11-14 for commencement of trial.

Laoye, alongside other accused persons, were charged with obtaining the above-mentioned sums between January and February 2004, in the first charge and between May and September 2004, in the second charge.

The N4m obtained in first charge was said to represent part payment of security deposit/contract grant guarantee in respect of an Information Technology (IT) project to be financed by Department for International Development (DFID) UK; while the N2m and \$105,000 obtained from the pastor was alleged to be part payment that involved a Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) cargo transaction.

15 SEP 2005

From The Guardian, a Nigerian newspaper:

Trial of fraud suspect holds despite Tuesday's bomb scare
By Mustapha Ogunsakin

UNDAUNTED by the bomb scare that was believed to have been targeted at his court on Tuesday, Justice Olubunmi Oyewole yesterday continued hearing in the fraud case involving a Brazilian bank, believed to be the world's biggest scam.

Justice Oyewole was the only judge who sat in the whole of Ikeja High Court yesterday.

More facts have also emerged on how a witness in the trial, Mr. Seyi Ogunleye, was kidnapped in the chaotic situation that arose in the aftermath of the scare.

Sources also narrated how the trial judge escaped to safety after he was told of the possible bomb explosion.

At exactly 10.10 a.m. yesterday, Justice Oyewole was seated in his court.

And the first case he heard was the \$242 million scam against a Brazilian bank preferred against Chief Emmanuel Nwude and Chief Nzeribe Okoli.

It was the case he was hearing when the bomb scare occurred on Tuesday.

Immediately Justice Oyewole sat yesterday, he apologised to the lawyers present for what he had thought would be a short adjournment, which eventually took 24 hours. The whole court burst into laughter, thereby easing whatever tension everybody in court might feel.

The case could not, however, go on as the accused persons were not brought to court by the prison wardens. The prosecutor, Mr. Rotimi Jacobs (SAN), the defence lawyer,

Mr. Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), and the lawyer to the second accused person (Okoli), Mr. Sina Ogunlana, all agreed that the court should adjourn till tomorrow so that prison wardens could bring the accused persons to court.

A court official yesterday alleged that Ogunleye was kidnapped and put inside the same bus with a principal accused person in a fraud case.

The official, who preferred anonymity, yesterday told journalists that she saw some heftymen rough handling Ogunleye and moving him towards the gate. As they approached the gates, the unknown persons changed tactics by giving a phone to Ogunleye to give the accused person; in the process of which prison officials in company of the accused persons joined the unknown persons in beating up Ogunleye.

"This was in the glare of everybody who had run out of court but nobody knew he (Ogunleye) was a court witness. They thereafter commanded a bus, moved the accused persons and Ogunleye into the bus and sped away", she narrated.

Ogunleye was later dropped on the Third Mainland Bridge after all documents that he was to tender in court had been taken away from him.

The judge's escape from his chambers was dramatic. Someone had gone to his secretary to tell her to inform the judge that he must rise immediately. When the Secretary had something about bomb blast, she could not wait for the informant to finish as she ran into the court (where the judge was already sitting) and whispered to him the information at her disposal.

Justice Oyewole did not wait. He told the bewildered lawyers that he was rising for a few minutes. From that point, he entered his chambers, pulled off his wing and gown (the inner coat and crib were still intact) and sped out of the court premises.

His first port of call was nearby police headquarters where the judge met the State Police Commissioner Ade Ajakaiye who was at a meeting with his senior officers. It was Ajakaiye who now explained to him the intelligence report the police had, which culminated into the bomb explosion experts moving into the court complex. It was after this that the trial judge moved into safety.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.guardiannewsngr.com/news/article05>

14 SEP 2005

From The Guardian, a Nigerian newspaper:

Bomb scare at Lagos high court

Judges, lawyers scamper to safety

Exhibit in bank scam case missing

By Mustapha Ogunsakin, Tunde Alao, Alex Olise, Esther Ojo, Tutu Adeyanju and Taiwo Oludare

PANDEMONIUM broke out yesterday at the Ikeja High Court premises in Lagos State over a bomb scare. By the time the dust cleared, some vital documents in a bank fraud case were reported stolen by some yet unknown persons who were alleged to have kidnapped a key witness but later released him.

Men of the Nigeria Mobile Police had to cordon the entire Oba Akinjobi Street, starting from the junction beside the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LASUTH). Human and vehicular traffic became hectic while the pandemonium raged

Judges, lawyers, judicial officers and litigants, and even accused persons who were brought to court for trial ran helter-skelter in fear.

Most of the judges could not wait for their cars and orderlies, as they ran out of the high court premises, which is the headquarters of the state judiciary.

The incident drew the immediate attention of the Assistant Inspector-General of Police (AIG) Zone 2, Mr. Israel Ajao and the State Commissioner of Police, Mr. Ade Ajakaiye.

It all started around 10.00 a.m. when most courts had started sitting. Policemen from the Bomb Disposal Unit had arrived at the court with two vehicles, saying that they had intelligence report that a bomb, which had been planted in the court complex, might explode at anytime.

The Police team was led by Ajao and an Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of Area 'F' Command, Mr. Habila Joshak.

Ajao later gave instructions that the whole area be cordoned. There were more than 100 armed mobile policemen on the ground.

In the confusion, a witness, who was in court to testify in the biggest fraud case involving a Brazilian bank, was kidnapped and taken to an unknown destination by some unknown persons.

The witness, Seyi Ogunleye, was to testify for the prosecution, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) team led by Mr. Rotimi Jacobs (SAN).

All the documents he was to tender before the court were reportedly taken from him by the kidnapers, before he was released.

As at press time, officers of the EFCC had taken the witness to Ajao.

The police used a public address system to call on people to go out of the premises. Some judges who were sitting, hurriedly rose and made straight for their chambers, from where they took off.

Lawyers were not left out. A Senior Advocate and lawyer to Chief Emmanuel Nwude was arguing an application before Justice Olubunmi Oyewole in \$242 million bank scam when the pandemonium started.

The senior lawyer hurriedly ran out of the court and made straight for his car.

In the process, his wig fell and was picked by one of his juniors. Even accused persons were guided out of the premises by prison warders to the "Black Maria" vehicle.

For high profile accused persons like Nwude and his co-accused, Chief Nzeribe Okoli, prison warders could not wait. They commandeered a bus and took them away immediately.

Also in the chaos, most judicial officers could not wait to lock their offices, or shut down their computers before they hurriedly left the premises.

The leader of the bomb disposal unit, Mr. Henry Idiodi, later told journalists that the police had received intelligence report that a bomb had been planted in the premises.

As at 2.00 p.m., the men of the Bomb Disposal Unit were still combing the premises, from one office to another while the gates to the court remained shut.

The Chief Registrar of the court, Mr. Abiodun Dabiri, in company of some of his senior members of staff, later told The Guardian that the situation was "under control" and that the court would open today.

The Ikeja High Court has been playing host to many celebrated cases, especially cases that have to do with the EFCC and also the celebrated attempted murder of The Guardian Publisher, Mr. Alex Ibru case, against former Chief of Army Staff, Lt.-Gen. Ishaya Bamaïyi, Major Al-Mustapha Hamza and others.

Incidentally, most of these cases are being handled by Justice Oyewole. In fact, the Nwude case was on when the bomb scare occurred. Nwude's lawyer, Mr. Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), had brought an application before the court seeking to quash the 91-count charge preferred against his client. Agbakoba was in the process of arguing his case when the incident started.

Intimidating phone calls and threat letters had of late been sent to Justice Oyewole. On October 18, 2004, the judge had said in an open court that some persons were paying unusual visits to him over a case.

He had said: "There are certain visits I received from certain people on behalf of the accused persons. This is totally unnecessary, as this court would decide this case based on what happened in this court. The accused persons should be assured that this court would be fair in this trial."

On December 10, 2004, Justice Oyewole's secretary received a courier letter while the judge was sitting in open court. The letter addressed to Justice Oyewole turned out to be a warning on the various cases.

In the letter sent through DHL Courier company, the anonymous writers declared that they know the judge's home and the school of his children and threatened to deal with him at the appropriate time.

Police sources told The Guardian that the first intelligence report on the likely explosion was received early in the morning by Ajao.

A similar report was sent to Ajakaiye.

The two top officers quickly made contact and assembled a team of policemen drawn from the Force Anti-bomb Squad and made straight for the court.

Ajao and Ajakaiye said the police action was in its 'proactive' bid to tackle terrorism.

Police sources said the intelligence report was linked to a high profile case in one of the courts.

The bomb scare and police response came barely three weeks after the Senate passed the Anti-Terrorism Bill.

The Acting Inspector-General of Police, Mr. Sunday Ehindero, had in a recent interview confirmed that very soon, the force would monitor Lagos and Abuja with "Close Circuit Television (CCTV)", which would help to detect heinous crimes.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.guardiannewsngr.com/news/article01>

ThisDay and other Nigerian newspapers also did articles on this incident, here is the URL of ths ThisDay piece for as long as it is good:

<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=28180>

And The URL of The Punch piece for as long as it is good:

<http://www.punchng.com/main/article01>

Also the Daily Champion URL for their piece for as long as it is good:

http://www.champion-newspapers.com/news/teasers/article_1

13 SEP 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

Obasanjo: Some Nigerians Tried 419 on Me

...Nigeria, haven of fake drugs

From Kunle Aderinokun in Abuja with agency report

President Olusegun Obasanjo yesterday said advance fee fraudsters aka 419 once attempted to defraud him. He, however, did not disclose whether or not he fell for it.

Also yesterday in Abuja, Obasanjo said Nigeria is still a haven of fake drugs despite the efforts of his administration to stop the activities of fake drugs syndicate.

At a meeting with Spanish business community in Madrid, Spain Obasanjo said that the fraudsters are no respecter of status and advised Spanish businessmen willing to do business with Nigerians to crosscheck any dealings with the Nigerian embassy.

"We have a number of Nigerians who are engaged in 419, they even tried it on me. Can you imagine", Obasanjo told his audience.

He said that his fight against corruption would go on until the menace was reduced to the barest minimum. Obasanjo said he was "on a total war against corruption in all its forms and manifestations".

He urged the Spanish businessmen to look and perceive Nigeria in new light and "put aside all the stereotypes, misinformation, prejudice and wrong data banded about Nigeria".

Obasanjo said although the country had its share of its problems on corruption the government was doing something about it, "adding, "and we are succeeding".

[The remainder of the article does not deal with 419 matters]

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:

<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=28064>

2 SEP 2005

From The Guardian, a Nigerian newspaper:

EFCC can't find internet fraudsters, says Ribadu

From Gbolahan Gbadamosi, Jos

THE Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, yesterday admitted the inability of his commission to track down and punish those who commit advanced fee fraud through the internet.

Speaking through the Secretary to the Commission, Mr. Emmanuel Akomaye, Ribadu noted that despite the deluge of complaints flooding his commission on a daily basis, it was a matter of regret that the "culprits could not be tracked down."

He spoke at the ongoing Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) yearly general conference in the Plateau State capital, Jos. The session was on the topic : 'Review of Cases of Professional Misconduct'.

Chairman of the session, former First Vice- President of the NBA, Mrs. Funke Adekoya (SAN) challenged the EFCC on the deluge of fraud-induced letters in her mail which she copied to the commission in respect of which no action was taken. [The article continued concerning other matters not 419 related...]

2 SEP 2005

From the Daily Independent, a Nigerian newspaper:

EU sponsors team to monitor EFCC, ICPC

By Rafiu Ajakaye

Trainee Reporter, Lagos

The European Commission (EC), an arm of the European Union (EU), has voted N15 million to monitor anti-corruption agencies in Nigeria.

The money would be used to sponsor a monitoring team in the country to keep tab on the operations of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Independent Corrupt Practices and other related offences Commission.

The exercise to be coordinated by the International Press Centre (IPC), Nigeria, began on Thursday in Lagos and it is expected to span two years after which recommendations and appraisals would be made on the President Olusegun Obasanjo-led anti-graft campaign.

Representative EC and the Project Manager, Good Governance and Human Rights, Nigeria, Raheem Momodu, said the project aims at encouraging, monitoring as well as partnering with the Nuhu Ribadu and Mustapha Akanbi-led anti-graft agencies .

Nigerians alone cannot keep tab on, and end the scourge of corruption in the country, Momodu insisted, urging Nigerian journalists to double their efforts in reporting and exposing corrupt practices in the society.

The IPC said one of the reasons behind setting up the anti-graft monitoring team is to weed out corruption which has hindered transparency, accountability, openness, the factors democracy requires to flourish.

Briefing newsmen at the launch of the campaign, the Project Coordinator, Lanre Arogundade, said the first project would begin with monitoring the cases of the former Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun, Fred Ajudua and former Managing Director of the Bank of the North, Muhammed Bulama, all of whom are being prosecuted by the EFCC. This would start from this month till October 1, 2006.

Others include training workshop for journalists and anti-corruption activists reporting, the use of media in advocacy against corruption focusing, among others, on ethics of corruption reporting, role of media groups in fighting corruption, etc.

Its operation would include "publication of bi-monthly anti-corruption summary (reports, analysis, messages) in the print media to focus on judicial processes, assessment of anti-corruption agencies, public perspectives on corruption, etc.

Publication of a quarterly journal, index on corruption to focus on developments in tracking and curbing corruption, judicial, legislative and executive anti-corruption decisions and polices, gender role in anti-corruption war".

The objectives, Arogundade stressed, are that the "project shall help to contribute answers to a number of pertinent questions that are of public concern: How effective are the anti-corruption agencies in the prosecution of the anti-corruption war? What are the challenges they face and are there any obstacles militating against the effective discharge of their duties and responsibility? What is the public perception of the anti-corruption war and to what extent do the anti-corruption enjoy public confidence?"

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.independentng.com/news/nnsep020537.htm>

2 SEP 2005

From the Daily Independent, a Nigerian newspaper:

Regulate cyber café activities, US advises Nigerian govt
By Sunny Igboanugo, Assistant Editor, Politics

The Federal Government has been urged to put measures in place to arrest the rising incidents of cyber crimes in the country to curb its negative image abroad and enhance business opportunities for its nationals and a fertile ground for more local investments.

Mr. Michael McGee, Commercial Counselor at the United States Embassy in Nigeria, told reporters in Lagos this week that a lot of damage had been done to the credibility of Nigeria as a result of the negative use to which few Nigerians have put the internet, a means of communication that has brought a lot of positive changes in the world of business and other inter-personal relationships.

"A lot of criminal activities go on in the cyber cafes, not because their owners are contributors or collaborators, but because people come in and take advantage of it, anonymously almost and do these kinds of activities. But if there are means in which regulatory bodies in the country in charge of communications and Internet could utilise technology to have a better hold and grasp of what is actually going on in these cyber cafes, it would be able to clamp down on this," he said.

He said a lot of responsibilities actually lay with the greater part of the citizenry, who had knowledge of these activities to also do their best in combating them, because of the huge impact of the negative image of the country arising from the menace. "The country suffers tremendously because of the negative image that is created by few people, what we call in the United States, especially during an important period in our country, the silent majority. They do not speak out, they do not report about what they know about these kinds of things that are going on and demand that the judicial system, the law enforcement prosecute these kind of people where they do find them", he added.

Much as the Internet technology appears to have been abused and enhanced the sophistication in crimes, McGee would not support the abolition of cyber cafes in the country, arguing that the advantages far surpassed the disadvantages. "I think that the benefits that people have in communicating on economical matters, with their loved ones, who may be in another city, who may be in another country, to be able to keep in touch with them, send pictures, the internet has been able to make great impact in fostering these and drawing people together. And many legitimate entities, who want to do business in many countries, they use the medium, which is saving people money to communicate, which is saving people money to be able to do business. It also brings

up small medium sized companies, small entrepreneurs, who would never have the access to be able to grow and prosper, because they don't just have the means. It is a great equaliser in many ways.

And what we are talking about is a very small portion of what goes on through the Internet. It is getting a lot of attention. It is creating a lot of problems. Countries are finding ways to combat that. Each time they find a new way, the bad guys find another way to deal with it. But that does not mean that we should abandon it. If walked outside today, you would find all these things driving around in four wheels. They are causing a lot of problems. Should we do away with them, should we go back to horse and buggy? I don't think so. We are moving forward and not backwards. It is impossible anyway."

He admitted however that the phenomenon was not limited to the Nigeria alone, adding that a lot of the cases investigated had proven not to originate from Nigeria, adding that the problem remained that the image had stuck to the country.

The US envoy also spoke on the need to curb the menace of piracy in the film industry in the country adding that recently, he had a meeting a very prominent Nigerian who was eager or to develop the industry, where the issue of piracy featured prominently.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.independentng.com/politics/ppsep020506.htm>

2 SEP 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

40,000 Passports Seized in Oluwole Raid
10,000 blank British Airways tickets too
By Godwin Ifijeh and Eugene Agha

Acting Inspector General of Police (IGP), Mr. Sunday Ehindero, yesterday said over 40,000 Nigerian Passports, including official ones, were recovered during the recent raid on Oluwole, a notorious area in Lagos Island noted for document forgery and counterfeiting.

The IGP, who made the disclosure while briefing the press in Lagos said 1,500 foreign passports, including those of Libya, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, Senegal, Switzerland, the Gambia, South Africa, United States, Jamaica, Costa Rica and Ghana were recovered. Also recovered from the raid were about 50,000 assorted foreign cheques and over 500 printing plates.

Other seizures made, according to Ehindero, include over 500 computers, about 10,000 blank British Airways tickets, about 10,000 United States Postal Money Order and blank certificates of occupancy.

The IGP said 115 suspects were arrested. Seventy-seven of the suspects, he said, were later set free for lack of sufficient evidence to warrant their detention.

Ehindero said the police, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the State Security Services (SSS) combined to conduct the Oluwole raid aimed at dismantling the notorious criminal black spot, where all forms of stolen and forged documents were openly traded in Central Lagos.

According to him, President Olusegun Obasanjo, who was concerned with the threat to security by the nefarious activities going on in the area had directed that a committee, comprising of the Police, the FCT Minister, SSS, Immigration and the EFCC clean up the area and other similar locations, where counterfeiting and forgery were prevalent in Lagos.

While giving other identified areas in Lagos as Shomolu, Apapa, City Hall and Bristol Hotel, the IGP said these other areas were complementing, supporting and replicating the illegal activities going on in Oluwole area.

He said the crack down on all such areas continues and that 38 other suspects were arrested in Apapa on Wednesday after a container loaded with fake import clearing documents, including Customs documents, seals and stamps was discovered outside the Apapa Seaport.

He paraded all 76 suspects, including 17 ladies. He, however, indicted the Area Commander, Area 'A' Command of the Lagos State Police Command and the DPO, Ebute Ero Division in whose jurisdiction Oluwole falls. He expressed surprise that the officers behaved as if they were not aware of its existence before now.

He warned members of the public to desist from assisting the syndicate at Oluwole through patronage. He said anyone arrested in the area will be treated as an accomplice to criminal activities.

According to him, patrons of forged documents were as culpable as their manufacturers and vendors. He pointed out that carrying forged documents was a serious felony that carries 14-year jail term. [The remainder of the article deals with matters other than 419]

419 Coalition note: Although this article does not mention 419 advance fee fraud per se, of course forged documents etc. are of course part of the basic infrastructure of many 419 operations, hence we have included this piece in our News section.

31 AUG 2005

From the Daily Independent, a Nigerian newspaper:

U.S. not impressed with EFCC

By Sunny Igboanugo
Asst Editor, Politics

Going by the position of the United States on Tuesday, Abuja's high regard for the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for combating fraud appears like pouring water on the back of a tortoise.

Like the proverbial barber's chair, the achievements claimed to have been made by the commission may be nothing more than all motion and no movement as America has said Nigeria must do a lot more to clean the tar the menace has splashed on its image over the years.

The position of the U.S. was conveyed at the Public Affairs Section (PAS) of its consulate in Lagos, where its envoy, Michael L. McGee, told journalists at the weekly press briefing that merely arresting people connected with such crimes is not enough proof of the country's seriousness to combat the phenomenon.

He said a situation where the EFCC has convicted only one person from the hundreds brought to trial out of several arrests made in 419 related cases points to a flaw in the system.

His words: "The EFCC and I have talked about it. They are doing a lot of good job. But something is failing them in the entire process. I know that they have been working diligently with the limited resources and funds that they have to try and combat it. But they also need help."

"It is part of every citizen's responsibility to contribute to this - by saying we don't accept this. That, because of my identity as a Nigerian and my country and my nation, where I live and where I want my children to grow, this is not acceptable."

McGee said the image of the country would improve tremendously the moment high calibre individuals are convicted.

"When you have hundreds of cases that were brought and you have thousands of people that were investigated and you have one conviction from the EFCC, what does that tell you? What does that make you think? I am not judging. I am just giving you the findings."

McGee, the Commercial Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Nigeria, reeled out figures relating to 419.

He said the U.S. secret service receives more than 30,000 fraud cases involving Nigerians every month, which has greatly impacted on the country's image and prevented a lot of Nigerians from doing legitimate business.

He explained: "I know legitimate business people here, hundreds and hundreds of them who say I would have a new line of products to sell. I wrote to XYZ Company in the U.S. or I sent them e-mail or I called them. As soon as they heard that I am from Nigeria, they broke off communication. They are legitimate people and I had to go on their behalf to say I know them."

McGee refused to be swayed by the allegation of the culpability of the U.S. and the international community in the menace by allowing their countries as safe havens for looters of Nigeria's treasury - thereby impoverishing the citizens, who in turn rely on such crimes to survive.

He argued that just as the U.S. is accountable and responsible to its citizens, Nigeria should do the same.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.independentng.com/news/nnaug310505.htm>

30 AUG 2005

From the Associated Press:

Fake Money Orders entering the U.S. from Canada and Nigeria

Large number of counterfeit money orders are entering the United States from Canada and Nigeria, according to U.S. Postal Inspector Aaron Simon of Sioux Falls. [South Dakota]

He said \$21 million in fake money orders have been seized in the United States in the past year. Almost 300 fake money orders have been found in South Dakota, he said.

Some of them are being used to pay for goods from businesses, and some have been given to people involved in online dating to cash for their suitor in another country, Simon said.

On real money orders, USPS is not visible on the security strip unless it is held up. A picture of Benjamin Franklin will appear in the watermark.

If the money order is held down, these items will not appear. On a fake money order, USPS is legible when it is held down. And the watermark contains a picture of a man who does not look like Franklin.

27 AUG 2005

From the Punch, a Nigerian newspaper:

EFCC worried over visa lottery swindlers

Sesan Olufowobi

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission said on Friday that it was worried about the activities of some Nigerians involved in fake visa lottery schemes.

An EFCC source told our correspondent in Lagos that the agency discovered the scams through discreet investigations, adding that such was a source of embarrassment to the country.

He said that at least five or six examples of the scams had come to EFCC's notice, stating that it would readily cooperate with any nation's security agencies which desired assistance in dealing with the problem.

The EFCC source spoke in response to a red alert issued by the Federal Bureau of Intelligence (FBI) warning that some Nigerian swindlers had been using a fraudulent Spanish visa lottery scheme to dupe unsuspecting nationals of various countries, including the United States.

The red alert, which was posted on FBI's website, indicated that over \$24 million was being lost yearly to the swindlers, adding that the fake scheme, which it termed "Nigeria Letter Scam," could open a new door to future identity theft.

FBI said the swindlers usually operated by collecting the names and addresses of targets, all outside Spain, through the Internet.

"Then you, the target, get a letter from the Spanish National Lottery claiming you've won about \$730,000 in a special promotional lottery. An estimated six million letters are sent a year. The letters look legitimate, complete with official logos and contact information. They also include a form from the bank where the money is supposedly being held. You might even receive follow-up faxes and phone calls.

Then the hook: all you have to do is pay Spanish taxes - between 0.5 per cent and 2 per cent of the winnings - to get the money. Just fax your completed claim forms with personal and banking information and wire the money within a couple of days. If you take the bait, chances are you'll be asked to cover other expenses, too," the warning said.

FBI said it had pursued the swindlers relentlessly in collaboration with the Spanish National Police (SNP), disclosing that in July, Spanish security agents "launched a massive crackdown that resulted in 300 arrests, 150 searches and the seizure of nearly 2,000 cell phones, hundreds of computers and fax machines, plenty of fake documents and \$265,000 in cash."

It concluded, "We were delighted to be a part of their investigation, working through our Madrid legal attache office and with our partners in the Federal Trade Commission and U.S. Postal Inspection Service. Our task was to identify and interview possible U.S. victims by calling some 800 U.S. phone numbers from lists provided by the SNP."

12 AUG 2005

Here is a good piece on Check Clearing 419 and Employment 419 From the July-August 2005 AARP Bulletin:

Scam Alert...Wireless Bank Heist

By Sid Kirchheimer

They have high-powered names - Xian Energy, Delta Soft Labs, International Health Care, Future Tech, V-Tech Sedit Software - and they promise big rewards for little effort. But the only reward for their victims is a depleted bank account.

Identifying themselves as top firms based overseas, the "companies" recruit work-at-home representatives through e-mails and online job postings. They say that "due to the delays in clearing checks and money orders in Europe," they need "financial agents" to process payments for their U.S. orders.

It seemed the perfect job for Dick Hambrice, 67, a retired medical supplies salesman from Columbus, Ga. After responding to a posting on Monster.com, he was told that each week he'd receive checks for between \$2,000 and \$100,000 via FedEx. After depositing them in his own bank account, all he had to do was wire-transfer those funds to a foreign bank. When each

check cleared, Hambrice would get a 5 percent commission.

"Since I live on Social Security, an additional \$200 or \$300 a week would really be helpful," says Hambrice. "Especially for something as simple as going to the bank."

Instead, he lost \$4,500. The check Hambrice received and put into his account was counterfeit. So the money he transferred to a foreign account was in fact his own. "You'd think in these days, a bank would know immediately whether a check is good or not," Hambrice says. "Apparently, they don't."

This type of check-cashing scheme generates hundreds of complaints each month to the Internet Crime Complaint Center, says FBI spokesman Paul Bresson, and is one of the most common Internet scams.

And one of the nastiest. The phony companies can further bleed recruits by using the account information provided on their wire transfers. Victims in certain cases could face federal counterfeiting and forgery charges for signing or processing bogus checks, says Bruce Hammerle of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

His advice: "Be very wary of 'work-at-home' offers, especially those with any foreign connection. Anytime you receive a check or money order and someone wants money wired back, figure it's a scam."

The swindlers seem to change their corporate identities every few months. The e-mail that Delta Soft Labs sent to Diosdado Corrales, 57, of Toronto was identical to those sent to other job seekers by Atrium and Rilan Soft Labs—all professing to be Eastern Europe's leading software developer, based in Russia. Initially, Corrales thought he was recruited because his résumé, posted on CareerBuilder.com's website, indicates he's fluent in Russian. "Now I feel used," he says, after losing \$1,700 in two wire transfers.

Since being contacted by Scam Alert, CareerBuilder spokeswoman Jennifer Sullivan says postings for those firms have been removed. An alert for job seekers tells them: Never provide credit card or bank account information to recruiters, or perform any sort of monetary transaction. "You don't give the combination if you don't want the safe opened," Sullivan says.

Here is the URL for as long as it is good:
http://www.aarp.org/bulletin/consumer/wireless_bank_heist.html

6 AUG 2005

From the Associated Press:

Internet scammers keep working in Nigeria

Day in, day out, a strapping, amiable 24-year-old who calls himself Kele B. heads to an Internet cafe, hunkers down at a computer and casts his net upon the cyber-waters.

Blithely oblivious to signs on the walls and desks warning of the penalties for Internet fraud, he has sent out tens of thousands of e-mails telling recipients they have won about \$6.4 million in a bogus British government "Internet lottery."

"Congratulation! You Are Our Lucky Winner!" it says.

So far, Kele says, he has had only one response. But he claims it paid off handsomely. An American took the bait, he says, and coughed up "fees" and "taxes" of more than \$5,000, never to hear from Kele again.

Festac Town, a district of Lagos where the scammers ply their schemes, has become notorious for "419 scams," named for the section of the Nigerian penal code that outlaws them.

In Festac Town, an entire community of scammers overnights on the Internet. By day they flaunt their smart clothes and cars and hang around the Internet cafes, trading stories about successful cons and near misses, and hatching new plots.

Festac Town is where communication specialists operating underground sell foreign telephone lines over which a scammer can purport to be calling from any city in the world. Here lurk master forgers and purveyors of such software as "e-mail extractors," which can harvest e-mail addresses by the million.

Now, however, a 3-year-old crackdown is yielding results, Nigerian authorities say.

Nuhu Ribadu, head of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, says cash and assets worth more than \$700 million were recovered from suspects between May 2003 and June 2004. More than 500 suspects have been arrested, more than 100 cases are before the courts and 500 others are under investigation, he said.

The agency won its first big court victory in May when Mike Amadi was sentenced to 16 years in prison for setting up a Web site that offered juicy but phoney procurement contracts. Amadi cheekily posed as Ribadu himself and used the agency's name. He was caught by an undercover agent posing as an Italian businessman.

This month the biggest international scam of all - though not one involving the Internet - ended in court convictions. Amaka Anajemba was sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison and ordered to return \$25.5 million of the \$242 million she helped to steal from a Brazilian bank.

The trial of four co-defendants is to start in September.

Why Nigeria? There are many theories. The nation of 130 million, Africa's most populous, is well educated, and English, the lingua franca of the scam industry, is the official language. Nigeria bursts with talent, from former NBA star Hakeem Olajuwon to Nobel literature laureate Wole Soyinka.

But with World Bank studies showing a quarter of urban college graduates are unemployed, crime offers tempting career opportunities - in drug dealing, immigrant-trafficking, oil-smuggling, and Internet fraud.

The scammers thrived during oil-rich Nigeria's 15 years of brutal and corrupt military rule, and democracy was restored only six years ago.

"We reached a point when law enforcement and regulatory agencies seemed nonexistent. But the stance of the present administration has started changing that," said Ribadu, the scam-busting chief.

President Olusegun Obasanjo is winning U.S. praise for his crackdown. Interpol, the FBI and other Western law enforcement agencies have stepped in to help, says police spokesman Emmanuel Ighodalo, and Nigerian police have received equipment and Western training in combating Internet crime and money-laundering.

Experts say Nigerian scams continue to flood e-mail systems, though many are being blocked by spam filters that get smarter and more aggressive. America Online Inc. Nicholas Graham says Nigerian messages lack the telltale signs of other spam - such as embedded Web links - but its filters are able to be alert to suspect mail coming from a specific range of Internet addresses.

Also, the scams have a limited shelf life.

In the con that Internet users are probably most familiar with, the e-mailer poses as a corrupt official looking for help in smuggling a fortune to a foreign bank account. E-mail or fax recipients are told that if they provide their banking and personal details and deposit certain sums of money, they'll get a cut of the loot.

But there are other scams, like the fake lotteries.

Kele B., who won't give his surname, says he couldn't find work after finishing high school in 2000 in the southeastern city of Owerri, so he drifted with friends to Lagos, where he tried his hand at boxing.

Then he discovered the Web.

Now he spends his mornings in Internet cafes on secondhand computers with aged screens, waiting "to see if my trap caught something," he says.

Elekwa, a chubby-faced 28-year-old who also keeps his surname to himself, shows up in Festac Town driving a Lexus and telling how he was jobless for two years despite having a diploma in computer science.

His break came four years ago when the chief of a fraud gang saw him solve what seemed like "a complex computer problem" at a business center in the southeastern city of Umuahia and lured him to Lagos.

He won't talk about his scams, only about their fruits: "Now I have three cars, I have two houses and I'm not looking for a job anymore."

21 JUL 2005

This in from Ultrascan in the Netherlands, reporting the arrest of 310 West Africans, including many Nigerians, mainly for Lottery 419, in Malaga, Spain - in Dutch:

310 West-Afrikanen opgepakt bij grootscheepse loterijfraude

De Spaanse politie heeft naar aanleiding van een grootscheepse fraude 310 West-Afrikanen opgepakt. De West-Afrikanen worden ervan verdacht jaarlijks ongeveer 20.000 mensen te hebben opgelicht voor meer dan 100 miljoen euro door hen te vertellen dat ze de hoofdprijs van een loterij hadden gewonnen.

De meeste van de verdachten die worden vastgehouden in de zuidelijke provincie Malaga zijn Nigerianen, anderen zijn afkomstig uit Ghana. In totaal namen meer dan 400 politiemannen deel aan de huiszoekingen, die werden uitgevoerd op meer dan 170 adressen.

Meer dan zes miljoen brieven of e-mails

Minstens twee verdachten moesten voor verzorging naar het ziekenhuis, nadat ze in een poging om te vluchten uit het raam waren gesprongen.

Volgens de politie stuurden de verdachten jaarlijks meer dan zes miljoen brieven of e-mails naar mensen in Europa, de Verenigde Staten, Canada, Australië, Japan en Arabische landen. In die brieven stond dat de geadresseerden de hoofdprijs van een loterij hadden gewonnen. Aan hen werd gevraagd of ze geld wilden opsturen om de belasting- en documentkosten te betalen. De oplichters zouden in ongeveer 50 landen actief zijn geweest.

Vorig jaar rolde de Spaanse politie nog 31 Spaanse bendes op, 100 verdachten werden opgepakt. Begin dit jaar werden 30 andere Nigerianen opgepakt op verdenking van verschillende soorten fraud

21 JUL 2005

Here is an English version of the above story from The Register in the UK:

Biggest 419 bust in history
By Jan Libbenga

The FBI and Spanish police have arrested 310 people in Malaga, Spain in connection with a €100m bogus (email) lottery scam run by Nigerian gangs. It is the biggest 419 bust in history, and may result in drastic reductions of scam mails.

The operation, codenamed Nile, centered on a mob which operated from Southern Spain. No less than four hundred officers from the Spanish police, the FBI and the US Postal Service were involved with the investigation, which began in 2003. Officers raided 166 homes in places such as Malaga, Benalmádena, Mijas, Torremolinos and Marbella. Police seized € 218,000 in cash, 2,000 mobile telephones, 327 computers and 165 fax machines.

Besides lottery emails, they also sent over 6 million 'classic' 419 scam mails, offering rewards for people who were willing to stash away money that had been taken out of Iraq by the family of the ex-dictator Saddam Hussein or money found in the remains of the Twin Towers after the 9/11 attacks.

The scam claimed over 20,000 victims in 45 countries including Britain, France, Germany, the US, Canada, Australia, Japan and a number of Arabic countries, officials said.

As police will continue searching for more clues - officials are still trying to determine where the funds have been deposited - the number of scam emails may drop considerably. Similar raids on premises in Amsterdam early 2004 saw a rapid migration of Nigerians to other countries.

Here is the URL for as long as it is good:
http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/07/21/scammers_nabbed/

20 JUL 2005
From the Daily Independent, a Nigerian newspaper:

Anajemba: Obasanjo hails Ribadu, demands more convictions

By Chesa Chesa, State House Correspondent, Abuja

President Olusegun Obasanjo has commended the chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nuhu Ribadu, for ensuring the successful conviction of Mrs Amaka Martina Anajemba, who was involved in the country's biggest advance fee fraud case.

Anajemba and four others were dragged to court by the EFCC for defrauding some Brazilians of about \$242 Million, and was last week jailed two and half years for the crime by a Lagos High Court.

In a commendation letter to Ribadu, the President said the conviction was the result of quality leadership of the EFCC boss, which showed in quality work and dedication to duty. He challenged the EFCC team not to rest on its oars but get more convictions.

Obasanjo told the crime-buster that "the painstaking investigation and presentation of evidence before the Lagos High Court secured for you not just jail terms but the seizure by the court of all her (Anajemba's) assets".

He described the achievement as "evidence of quality work, dedication to duty, focused deployment of skills and quality leadership," adding, however, that "this victory should energise you to work harder and to attain greater heights and more conviction".

Obasanjo noted that the EFCC had within a few years of its existence "made an indelible mark in the fight against corruption. Our goal is to continue with this fight in the interest of our present and future".

He further pledged his administration's "undiluted support" to the EFCC in the "determined efforts to rid the country of all forms of corruption".

419 Coalition note: Other Nigerian newspapers, including ThisDay and Vanguard also covered this story. 419 Coalition is also glad of the conviction, of course, looks forward to the repatriation of the 419ed monies, and for more convictions and repatriations in the near future.

17 JUL 2005
From Reuters:

Nigeria jails woman, Amaka Anajemba, in \$242 mln email fraud case

A Nigerian court has sentenced a woman to two and half years in jail after she pleaded guilty to fraud charges in the country's biggest e-mail scam case, the anti-fraud agency said on Saturday.

Amaka Anajemba, one of three suspects in a \$242 million fraud involving a Brazilian bank, would return \$48.5 million to the bank, hand over \$5 million to the government and pay a fine of 2 million naira agency said.

Scams have become so successful in Nigeria that anti-sleaze campaigners say swindling is one of the country's main foreign exchange earners after oil, natural gas and cocoa.

Anajemba's sentencing by a Lagos High Court on Friday is the first major conviction since the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) was established in 2003 to crack down on Nigeria's thriving networks of email fraudsters.

The agency said in a statement that the judgment was "a landmark achievement by EFCC in the fight against advance fee

fraud, corruption and other related crimes."

Typically fraudsters send out junk e-mails around the world promising recipients a share in a fortune in return for an advance fee. Those who pay never receive the promised windfall.

Anajemba, whose late husband masterminded the swindling of the Sao Paulo-based Banco Noroeste S.A. between 1995 and 1998, was charged along with Emmanuel Nwude and Nzeribe Okoli.

The prosecution said the three accused obtained the \$242 million by promising a member of the bank staff a commission for funding a non-existent contract to build an airport in Nigeria's capital Abuja.

All three accused pleaded not guilty, but Anajemba later changed her mind to enter a guilty plea in order to receive a shorter sentence was backdated July 2004 when she was first taken in custody. The trial of the two others who maintained their not guilty pleas was adjourned to September.

Ranked the world's second most corrupt country after Bangladesh by sleaze watchdog Transparency International, Nigeria has given new powers to the EFCC which is prosecuting about 200 fraud and corruption cases.

The anti-fraud agency has arrested over 200 junk mail scam suspects since 2003. It says it has also confiscated property worth \$200 million and secured 10 other convictions. (\$1-132.70 Naira)

Most Nigerian papers also covered this, including:

Thisday: <http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=22775>

419 Coalition Comment: Kudos to the EFCC Team, including Nuhu Ribadu, Ibrahim Lamorde, Rotimii Jacobs, and all the many others who worked to get this conviction. We're hoping, of course, for many other convictions to follow and for the repatriation of the monies 419ed by those convicted of their crimes.

11 JUL 2005

From The Citizen, Auburn New York, (edited):

Money scams abound on Web

By Louise Hoffman Broach / The Citizen

"My name is Engr Dantata Williams," the e-mail begins. "I am the chairman of a contract awarding committee for the past three years, with patrol Ivoire, which is a national oil firm.....the late military head of state asked me to prepare a voucher for \$45,500,000 US....."

The unsolicited correspondence and dozens of similar e-mails endeavor to entice the recipients to assist the senders in getting money into the United States and offer a cut for the help. Williams purports to be from the Ivory Coast, but pleads for assistance to come from virtually every African country, the majority from Nigeria.

Williams' letter is a scam, according to local and federal law enforcement authorities. It is a variation of letters proliferating the Internet authored by the alleged wives and children of deceased dictators, lawyers left in charge of large sums of money by people with no next of kin, business officials who suddenly find themselves with access to bank accounts belonging to past clients, and even people on their deathbeds, wanting to atone for past wrongdoing so they can earn a place in heaven.

"They are all scams," said Michael Kaste, a special agent with the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Albany who works on Internet crime. "I am not aware of any of these paying anyone any money. They just don't."

Law enforcement agencies categorize the e-mails as Nigerian 419 scams. Most of them originate in that West African nation. They used to come through the mail, then by fax machine, and with the technology the Internet allows, they come most frequently over e-mails. Scammers buy lists of millions of addresses and send the letters. The majority of people who receive them recognize them for what they are, but there's a segment of the population who respond, get hooked in and bilked out of money, Kaste said.

Nigeria - The 419 Coalition Web site, has been monitoring the scams almost 10 years. Its coordinator, Charles A. Pascale, a Virginia security officer, estimates the scam has run since the 1980s and has cheated people out of billions.

Auburn Police Deputy Chief Thomas Murphy said the department doesn't get a lot of reports about the letters, but when they do, they tell people not to respond and to delete them.

"It's been said many times, but if something sounds too good to be true, it is," Murphy said.

Dale Miskall is a supervisory special agent in charge of an FBI cybercrime squad in Birmingham, Ala. He's been working Nigerian scams for the Internet Fraud Complaint Center for years and has been in Nigeria several times to help officials in that country set up procedures to catch and prosecute the scammers.

Cooperation in that country is just beginning, although the scam letters have been around for decades. Nigeria is finally waking up to the fact that the fraud has become so pervasive that legitimate companies in that country are having trouble attracting overseas investors, law enforcement officials said.

In 2002, the Nigerian government created the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, according to its Web site, fight "the menace of these crimes." The commission has high-level support from the presidency, the Legislature and key security and law enforcement agencies in Nigeria.

Cayuga County Sheriff Rob Outhouse said a Weedsport firm fell for an electronic overseas fraud, but it wasn't a solicitation letter. Outhouse said the company received a large order for parts that originated from a Third World country. The credit card number given was valid, so the company filled the order. But shortly after, the card was reported stolen and the company was out the money, and the parts.

"They should have been suspicious," Outhouse said. "Why would someone in a Third World country be contacting someone in Weedsport?"

There are many variations to international Internet scams. Miskall said the biggest one is the repackaging scam where a bogus company will advertise on Monster.com for someone to receive packages from overseas and then mail them along to someone else. When the "employer" makes payment, it comes in a check for more than the amount owed. The check writer will ask that the "employee" write a check, or wire money back for the difference, even offering that person a chance to keep a little of the overage. After that occurs, it ultimately turns out the original check was bad.

A recent variation is a letter from so-called lottery officials in Spain or the Netherlands, notifying the recipient they have won millions, but there was a mix-up that must be cleared up first. Usually, it involves sending money.

While no one has reported falling for the scam in Cayuga County, it doesn't mean it hasn't happened.

People may be too embarrassed to admit they were victimized or in the case of the 419 letters, they don't want to admit they may have attempted a felony and got bilked instead.

Even the people who work for law enforcement aren't immune from receiving scam e-mail. Murphy said he regularly gets 419-type letters. He can tell what they are from the subject line, and promptly deletes them.

Miskall, in spite of all of his work to expose Nigerian Internet scammers, also gets solicitation letters, including one from an agency purporting to be the Nigerian space program.

"Did you know the first person in space was a Nigerian, and that he's still up there?" Miskall said.

"They want money to help bring him home. He's in their space station and they shoot him up food and supplies once in a while."

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7 JUL 2005

From The Guardian, a Nigerian newspaper:

Nigerian fraudsters have moved to W'African nations, says EFCC

By Alex Olise

CHOKING under the onslaught of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Nigerian fraudsters have shifted their operations to nearby West African countries.

According to sources in the EFCC, in the last two months, detectives arrested 250 youths on their way to Togo and Burkina Faso with various documents belonging to the Federal Government.

They normally used these documents to defraud foreigners.

A senior official of the EFCC said that efforts were on to work with the crimes departments of those countries with a view to arresting Nigerian fraudsters there.

He said the Chairman of the EFCC, Alhaji Nuhu Ribadu, an Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP), had directed crack detectives to monitor fraudsters who move into nearby countries for nefarious businesses.

An investigation by The Guardian revealed that fraudsters who have made huge sums of money in Nigeria now send their boys to other West African nations and open offices with sophisticated computers and Internet facilities which they use to dupe foreigners.

In the 1990s, one of the major strategies used to trick foreigners was to write different companies through their managing directors or chief executives, offering various contracts.

But fraudsters now use the Internet to dupe their victims. They sell oil blocks and buy computers and cars with fake credit cards.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has been placing international adverts, advising foreigners to avoid communicating with any Nigerian who gives big proposal of contracts on the Internet.

419 Coalition note: Not exactly sure what the EFCC was trying to say here, but Nigerian 419ers have been operating from neighboring African countries and indeed from Europe - notably Amsterdam and London - and from Canada and elsewhere for many years. No matter where the 419ers operate "branch offices" from, the Home Office for them remains Nigeria. However, the arrest of these 250 alleged young 419ers is of course good news to be sure.

14 JUN 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

\$242m Scam: GOK Ajayi Returns to Trial

Appeal Court strikes out EFCC application

By Abimbola Akosile and Wunmi Yusuf

Twenty-seven days after walking out of an Ikeja High Court-room in protest, Chief Godwin Olusegun Kolawole Ajayi (SAN) lead counsel to one of 3 accused persons standing trial in a \$242 million advance fee fraud yesterday re-appeared before trial judge, Justice Olubunmi Oyewole.

Though his application for stay of proceedings in the lower court was struck out at the Court of Appeal. Further hearing was adjourned till Tuesday, June 21. Accused persons, being prosecuted by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) include Chief Emmanuel Nwude, Mrs. Amaka Anajemba, (2nd accused) and Mr. Nzeribe Edeh Okoli (3rd accused), who are facing a fresh trial in a 9-month case, which began on October 5 last year and was stalled over the ill-health of the 1st accused.

Upon resumption of proceedings at the court yesterday, Mr. Rotimi Jacobs, lead prosecution counsel said "today's matter was adjourned for report on proceedings at the Court of Appeal. Application for stay was refused by the court and accordingly struck out on Monday, June 13. The only impediment against the hearing of this case has been removed. We therefore demand accelerated hearing dates".

Jacobs' application on the trial dates resulted in various responses from the defence counsel present. While Chief Ajayi concurred to his request in a quiet voice saying, "if that is the understanding, then let trial dates be fixed", Chief Chris Uche (SAN) counsel to Anajemba (2nd accused) however urged the court to adjourn further hearing till Wednesday (today), while pointing out the plight of his client.

However, both Mr. Adeshina Ogunlana, counsel to Edeh-Okoli (3rd accused), and Chief Emmanuel Ofolue, who appeared with Ajayi and also represented Emyrus Nigeria Limited (5th accused person), sought a longer adjournment for different reasons. Ofolue, who moved and withdrew the motion at the appellate court, wanted a date in July for convenience, while Adeshina claimed he was yet to get records of proceedings in the matter, and wanted time to go through before trial resumes.

Justice Oyewole, who sought clarification on the case at the Court of Appeal among other things, thereafter adjourned the matter till June 21 and reiterated an order for accelerated trial; calling on all counsel in the matter to cooperate to ensure a speedy trial.

First arraigned in Abuja on February 4, 2004, the accused persons were alleged to have defrauded a Brazilian banker, Mr. Nelson Sakaguchi of the sum of \$242 million over a three-year period, from April 2, 1995 to January 20, 1998 at Opebi, Ikeja, Lagos State, contrary to Sections 1(1)(a) and (3) of the Advance Fee Fraud Act of 1995 as amended by Act 62 of 1998.

Obtained amount was said to represent payment due to the Federal Government on the alleged contract No. FMA/132/019/82 for the construction of Abuja International Airport, Nigeria. Penalties for each of the counts range between seven and ten years. The accused persons are facing a fresh 98 count charge, with twelve additional counts.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=20071>

The Nigerian newspapers Vanguard and the Guardian, among others, also covered the story.

10 JUN 2005

Dateline NBC did an excellent and lengthy piece on 419 in a segment called Dateline: On the Hunt.

In this piece, the reporter followed a 419 scam from the receipt of the 419 solicitation letter to arranging and attending a meeting with the 419ers which was recorded on video and presented on the program. These sort of sting operations have been done before, of course, by both the electronic and the print media (Brian Wizard's novel Game Over is a particularly good example of this) and of course it is riveting each time since each time is unique in its details. This Dateline piece was exceptionally well done both in content and in video production in the view of 419 Coalition. Kudos to Dateline and NBC for this excellent work!

There was one puzzling aspect in the piece, however. It was stated several times that Dateline had been told by authorities etc. (we were not clear on whom) that running sting operations from receipt of 419 solicitation through meet with the 419ers was not possible. This is, quite simply, not the case as anyone who deals with 419 on a regular basis knows quite well.

In fact, sting operations like the one run by Dateline are very possible and could be run Daily by any authority in any country with the desire to do so and by any media in any country with the desire to do so. Victims meet with 419ers quite often, and anyone pretending to be a victim can do the same. (The USSS does not recommend that "regular people" meet with 419ers for any reason, as 419 is no game and one could end up dead). But can meetings be Arranged without any problem and media or law enforcement ringers used at those meetings? You betcha. It's been possible since day one.

The problems with this approach, which 419 Coalition has been recommending for 13 years now, are that the authorities say that they do not have the budget or the manpower to do these things. They also say they are worried about the safety of their agents. They also imply that in this post 9/11 world they have other things to do with the limited resources they have, which is true enough.

But, to say that it is "not possible" for law enforcement in the US and elsewhere to run sting ops and takedowns on 419ers and "catch" the 419ers (as indicated in the Dateline piece) is neither accurate nor true so whoever told them that is either "blowing smoke" for one reason or another, or there has been some confusion somewhere along the line on this point.

If the G would like these things done regularly, it can feel free to charter 419 Coalition to do such stings, we'd be very happy to run such ops on a daily basis for it :) We told them that over a decade ago. It is not a problem. South Africa already does something rather like that with its 419Legal program.

The video news piece also had a very good companion print piece posted up on the Dateline MSNBC web site, here it is:

Nigerian scams keep evolving

How to spot the latest variations and avoid being duped

By Bob Sullivan
Technology correspondent
MSNBC

Pam Krause of Almond, Wis., thought she was helping out a desperate mother in West Africa. Instead, she lost \$18,000 to an elaborate, high-tech swindle, one of the many variations of the so-called "Nigerian scams."

The most familiar Nigerian scam is an e-mail offering lots of free money in exchange for helping someone with a name like Barrister Richard Okoya. The offer varies, but the theme is the same help a downtrodden victim recover a large sum of money trapped in an overseas bank, and you will be rewarded handsomely.

For most, the e-mails are the butt of jokes and evoke a "Who would ever fall for that?" reaction.

You'd be surprised, says Dale Miskall, supervisory special agent in charge of an FBI cybercrime squad in Birmingham, Ala. He's been working Nigerian scams for the Internet Fraud Complaint Center for years; in January, he went to Nigeria to testify against suspects after a rare arrest.

There are now so many flavors of Nigerian scams, they are harder and harder to recognize, he said. Many even avoid the trademark details: the barrister, the overseas bank, or even the typical up-front wire payment.

"(Nigerians) are just great at social engineering. They keep finding new victims," Miskall said. "And Americans are very gullible."

There are plenty of variations on the traditional scam. Nigerians apparently keep up with the news. In 2001, instead of a Nigerian barrister, the missing money belonged to an Iraqi national, persecuted under Saddam Hussein. The year before, it was family of victims of the Concorde plane crash. Earlier this year, it was a tsunami victim; then, a U.S. soldier killed in Iraq during the war on terror. Anything to get an edge, or to catch victims with their guard down.

"This really is one of the worst e-mail scams we've ever seen, targeting the families of American soldiers killed in Iraq," said Michael Garcia, an assistant secretary with the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, about the Iraq soldier e-mail. "This is really despicable."

Can't count on cashier's checks

But Nigerian scams stretch far wider than e-mails asking for help moving money out of international accounts. In a much more elaborate version of the crime, scammers participate in legitimate online auctions, finish with the high bid, and send along a check to pay for the winnings.

The payment often arrives as a cashier's check, thought to be good as cash by many U.S. residents. It's not.

The criminal sends more than the winning amount and asks for some to be wired back. When victims apparently successfully deposit the cashier's check, they figure the buyer is legit, and wire the overage, often to a bank account in Nigeria. Weeks later, the bank discovers the cashier's check is bogus, and the depositor is responsible for the missing funds. Often, the victim is out both the merchandise and the money.

In another variation, Nigerians offer to donate money to charities they find online; then, they follow the same tactic. A too-big check is sent and a partial refund requested.

The key to the continuing Nigerian success, Miskall says, is the ingenuity and adaptability of the scam artists. Many Americans have come to realize that wiring money overseas is a bad idea. So several years ago, Nigerians started recruiting U.S. residents as go-betweens, so they'd be able to ask victims to send money or packages to U.S. addresses.

Online classified services like Monster.com are now full of job offers for what are listed as "re-shipping" firms. Requirements of the job are simple: accepting goods or money and transferring them out of state. Employees get to keep a whopping 10 or 15 percent of everything they ship. But of course, it's a scam. Thousands of people have fallen victim to re-shipping scams, according to the United States Postal Inspection Service.

Nigerians have adapted to the popular Craigslist service, too. Landlords are contacted by potential tenants, who offer to pay an up-front deposit by check. Once the bait is taken, the renter asks for a return of some of the money or, at times, all of it, claiming a promised visa from the U.S. government didn't arrive in time. Colleges around the country have warned students about the scam.

Seduction for money

An even more insidious version involves Internet seduction. Scam artists lurk in chat rooms with names like "40 and single," or "Recently dumped." They reach out to a lonely woman, send flowers or candy, purchased with a stolen credit card. Eventually, they convince the new girlfriend to do them a big favor - help transfer funds out of the bank.

A recent scam revealed by MSNBC.com combined several of these elements. A California non-profit agency received a \$3,000 check as a donation, but the donor asked for \$2,000 to be wired back to Nigeria. Meanwhile, the con artists used the non-profit's bank account information to draft nearly \$10,000 in fraudulent checks. They were sent to a woman in Alabama, who cashed them at her bank and wired the money to a person she thought was her new Internet boyfriend. When MSNBC called the woman, she was still convinced the man was simply working on assignment in Lagos, Nigeria, where she had sent the money. The woman had recently gotten divorced.

"There are a lot of lonely people out there," Miskall said. "And love on the Internet is blind."

Con artists from Nigeria even take advantage of the Internet Relay system for the deaf to trick consumers and merchants. Special services allow the deaf to use Web pages to connect with specially trained operators, who place telephone calls on their behalf and act as translators. Several relay operators say the system is often abused by criminals - many from Nigeria - who use it to place free international phone calls. Also, the fact that a relay operator is placing the call can put merchants off their guard. Some fall for the ploy, and find themselves shipping Bibles or wedding dresses to Nigeria, anything that can be sold for a small profit.

Nigerians have even gone so far as to create fake banks on the Internet, which appear to be loaded with the alleged missing money. The sites might convince a skeptical consumer that there really is \$4 million sitting unclaimed in an account somewhere.

The Postal Inspection Service says authentic-looking fake money orders are also becoming common.

The Nigerians' persistence seems to know no bounds. Ad-hoc bands of consumers frustrated by the ongoing scams are fighting back by answering scam e-mails and sending criminals on false leads, a practice known as scam baiting. But Nigerians have even used fraud fighters to commit cons. In a recent e-mail, scammers have tried to trick people who want to support the activities of anti-scam site 419legal.com.

"It has come to the attention of 419legal that a group of scammers have been using the name of 419legal and the South African Police Service (SAPS) in scam letters," the site says. Of course, the e-mail says the agency is trying to raise funds to fight ... Nigerian scams.

While many of these tricks might sound obvious, Miskell says, the key to Nigerians' success is persistence. Their plot keeps morphing, and as consumers become educated, the storyline is altered. But there is one constant theme: an overseas wire transfer.

Ultimately, whatever yarn is spun, all the scams come down to getting a consumer to send money via a wire transfer overseas - often to Nigeria, but sometimes to Canada or another foreign country. It's never a good idea to wire money, particularly out of the country, Miskell said.

Avoiding wire transfers would put a big dent in the success of Nigerian scams

Other advice for consumers:

- * Use Google. Dozens of sites now index large lists of names and other elements of Nigerian scams. If unsure, put parts of the story into the Google search engine and click. If it's a scam, it's likely someone else on the Internet will have published a complaint.
- * Use the telephone. Nigerians will be very reluctant to give out a phone number and will try to negotiate most of the transaction over e-mail. That buys them time to answer hard questions. Asking for a phone number up front, along with other specific contact information that can be verified, will short-circuit many scams.
- * Verify the legitimacy of a bank. The FDIC maintains a database of federally insured banks on its Web site.
- * Always use a credit card. Consumers have wide protection when paying for Internet-based transactions with a credit card. Checks are easily forged - even cashier's checks, sometimes

called bank checks. U.S. consumers think they are guaranteed. Banks can take up to two weeks to confirm authenticity of a cashier's check, according to the American Bankers Association - even if the funds are made available to the depositor. If a check doesn't check out, the bank will take its money back. The consumer will be on the hook for any withdrawals made against that deposited amount.

Here is the URL of this piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8171053/>

8 JUN 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

419: Court Grants Ajudua Bail on Health Grounds
By Gboyega Akinsanmi,

Justice Sybil Nwaka of the Lagos High Court, Igboere, has finally granted Chief Fred Ajudua bail, at the instance of his deteriorating health condition.

Justice Nwaka said it was necessary and indispensable to grant the accused person bail, because his state of health grew worse daily and Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) was not good enough to ensure and guarantee him sound health.

"Having listened to the submissions of both counsels, I personally visited LUTH and observed with dismay, the deplorable condition of the hospital. And such will not promote the accused person's good health in any sense.

"This is the third time bail application is brought before this court. I will rather prefer a healthy person to stand trial before me and in this circumstance, it is reasonable enough to temper justice with mercy," she said.

While the judge adjourned the matter till September 22, she said the accused person was granted bail to the tune of N10 million with two sureties, and his wife who has landed property within the jurisdiction of the court.

Counsel to the state, Mrs Omotola Rotimi, however, argued at the proceedings that the court should deny Ajudua bail, because the offence he committed was so serious that he might jump bail in the long run.

She said in the alternative, the state had consulted management of St. Nicholas Hospital whether it would admit the accused with the condition that security operatives would keep surveillance on its premise for the period he would be treated.

She said the doctor, who signed the medical report attached to the counter affidavit denied the averment in the affidavit of the accused person that management of St Nicholas was averse to the presence of security men around its premise.

"The management of St. Nicholas Hospital has obliged us this request, and shown a high level of willingness to admit and render qualitative medical treatment. So the applicant does not have to be on bail before he can undergo or access first-class treatment while in custody.

"Since St. Nicholas is not averse to the presence of the security men around the hospital, the accused person does not deserve bail before having access to standard medical treatment in the country or elsewhere.

"My lord, our position is very clear. St Nicholas did not say they cannot treat him while in custody. Since its management has conceded to this condition, does not deny access to standard medical treatment. I urge your lordship to dismiss his application detention", She argued.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=19541>

Similar articles also appeared in the Guardian and other Nigerian newspapers.

419 Coalition Comment: Fast Freddie strikes again....

1 JUN 2005

From the Philippine Star newspaper:

Manila, Phillipines: 4 Nigerians caught in bogus money scam

By Nestor Etolle

The Western Police District (WPD) scored a major victory against organized crime with the neutralization of counterfeit and drug syndicates in separate police operations.

In a media presentation yesterday, WPD director Chief Superintendent Pedro Bulaong identified the foreign members of a counterfeit syndicate as Nigerians Friday Nwoke, Ikenna Agbaegbu, Ugum Igbunam and Henry Obina Nwani.

The foreigners are accused of luring prospective victims in bogus business deals using counterfeit money as their capital, Bulaong said.

The arrested members of a drug syndicate were identified as Nassif Abbas, Jamal Bubong

and Binladen Pangandamu, all natives of Mindanao. Seized from the group were 35 plastic packs of suspected shabu weighing two kilos with a street value of P2 million.

Bulaong said the arrest of the Nigerians was based on the complaint of Josefina Espino, a hardware store owner in Quiapo, Manila.

Espino told police that Igbanam came to her store and ordered a container load of welding rods worth P8.9 million, instructing her that the finance minister of Nigeria would pay for the cargo.

A phone call supposedly coming from the Nigerian finance minister asked the victim for her bank account number where the payment will be coursed through.

The victim sensed the sting when another call was made, this time coming from a diplomatic agent from Nigeria, telling her that a package from the finance minister of their country is arriving and that the victim has to shoulder the \$1,800 airfreight.

Police soon conducted a stakeout operation at the Manila Hotel where the delivery of the package would take place, resulting in the arrest of the four Nigerian suspects. Authorities recovered from the foreigners a box containing bundles of blackened cut-out bills, chemicals, instruction manuals and an authentic \$100 bill.

Police said the suspects tell their prospective victims that the chemicals could change the paper into genuine dollar bills.

21 MAY 2005

From The Punch, a Nigerian newspaper:

EFCC records first conviction

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission on Friday recorded its first conviction when Justice Morenike Obadina of an Ikeja High Court sentenced one Mike Amadi aka Nuhu Ribadu to 10 years imprisonment for advanced fee fraud.

A statement faxed to Saturday Punch by EFCC said Amadi was arraigned on a five-count charge consisting of attempt to obtain money by false pretence, obtaining money by false pretence, uttering and forgery.

He was also said to have attempted to swindle one Fabians Fajans of the sum of \$125,000 last year in Lagos and forged some documents, including the Central Bank's International Payment Schedule.

[The article goes on to discuss unrelated matters]

419 Coalition Comment: At last! We hope it is the first of many convictions of 419ers, and also that the monies Amadi stole have been recovered and repatriated to his victims. This is, of course, the first new conviction in Nigeria of a 419er since at least 1999; there have been only a couple of dozen in the entire 20 year run of 419 advance fee fraud operations. However, there are several more cases brought by the EFCC currently in the courts, let us hope that this conviction sets a precedent for those cases as well. Kudos to the EFCC for getting its first 419er conviction!

17 MAY 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

'Medical Report on Ajudua's Health Unreliable'
By Gboyega Akinsanmi

On-going hearing in the charge of advance free fraud against Chief Fred Ajudua was yesterday stalled as the prosecution counsel, Mrs. Omotola Rotimi, told the court that the medical report tendered before it over the state of health of the accused person was not reliable enough.

Rotimi said while responding to Ajudua's application for bail, that the state could not hinge its defence on the said medical report because there was no proven evidence to show that the accused person's health was actually debilitating and worsening as portrayed before the court. "We cannot," according to her, "depend on this report for lack of hard facts. As a result of this, the state has concluded to conduct a more independent, reliable and dependable medical test in order to know the truth about the accused person's state of health."

"The report of the yet-to-be-conducted medical test will no doubt determine our response to Ajudua's application in which he is asking the court for bail on health ground. My lord, we are asking for a return date to enable us conduct our own test and respond accordingly to the bail application," she said.

Counsel to the accused person, Mr. Richard Oma Uhanaruogho, however said the response of Rotimi constituted an infringement on the right of the accused person to bail because the current 18-count charge preferred against him was a bailable one.

"My lord, the state of health of the accused person is continually worsening and debilitating because he is suffering from chronic kidney problem or failure.

He deserves bail at this point in time to enable him go for more intensive and comprehensive medical treatment.

"The life of the accused person is very central to this suit. If the court continues to deny him access to a more intensive and comprehensive medical treatment, it may result in anything since he can no longer stand the pains he is currently undergoing. The court is expected to move fast on this issue irrespective of any constraint," he said.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=17482>

17 MAY 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

\$242m Scam: New Counsel Stalls Trial
By Abimbola Akosile

Continuation of trial in a \$242 million advance fee fraud case involving three accused persons was yesterday stalled for two days before an Ikeja High Court judge, Justice Olunmi Oyewole to allow a new defence counsel prepare adequately for the trial of his client.

Accused persons being prosecuted by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) include Chief Emmanuel Nwude, Mrs. Amaka Anajemba, (2nd accused) and Mr. Nzeribe Edeh Okoli (3rd accused), who are facing a de novo (fresh) trial in an 8-month old matter, which began on October 5 and was stalled over alleged ill-health of the 1st accused, Nwude.

Upon resumption of trial yesterday, Mr. Adeshina Ogunlana, new counsel to Okoli (3rd accused), pleaded with the presiding judge on the newness of his brief (enlisted on May 10) but urged court to grant him a short adjournment to enable him peruse the charges filed against his client and prepare before a new date.

His application was supported by Chief G. O. K. Ajayi (SAN), counsel to Nwude, who informed court about a new application he has filed on May 13, asking for stay of proceedings in the lower court pending the determination of an appeal filed at the Court of Appeal on the instant matter.

Opposing both applications, Mr. Rotimi Jacobs, prosecution counsel, insisted that the applications were part of defence team's moves to further delay trial in a matter which has been stalled since October last year.

He expressed his readiness to go on with the trial as planned and that his witnesses, who were bankers, were in court to testify on the alleged fraud.

Justice Oyewole, in his ruling, refused to grant a stay of proceedings in the matter pending an appellate court decision as canvassed by Ajayi, though he agreed that Okoli has a right to new counsel who must be adequately prepared for trial. He however granted a short two-day adjournment in continuation of trial till May 18. The trial was earlier scheduled to run for a whole week from May 16 to 20.

First arraigned in Abuja on 4 February, 2004, accused persons, were alleged to have defrauded a Brazilian banker, Mr. Nelson Sakaguchi of a sum of \$242 million over a three-year period, from April 2, 1995 to January 20, 1998 at Opebi, Ikeja, Lagos State, contrary to Sections 1(1)(a) and (3) of the Advance Fee Fraud Act of 1995 as amended by Act 62 of 1998.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=17483>

11 MAY 2005

From WBAL TV Channel 11 Baltimore, sent in
by an associate:

'Deaf' Phone Calls Bilk Businesses Out Of Money

Innovative scam artists have a new way of shopping for victims by pretending to be deaf to dupe Maryland businesses out of tens of thousands of dollars.

WBAL-TV 11 News I-Team reporter Barry Simms said women's clothing store M. Randall and Company has been in business in Easton for 12 years and it isn't unusual for customers to place orders by phone. But last November, Marc Del Pino wasn't sure if a large phone order was a blessing or a joke.

"I laughed at him at first until I got it approved," Del Pino said.

Simms said it was a \$3,400 credit card transaction, and once it was approved, all seemed good.

"I didn't get a feel for it," Del Pino said. "I didn't feel I was being ripped off."

In fact, Del Pino received three more orders by phone totaling more than \$12,000 and shipped the merchandise to Nigeria before he discovered the caller had used stolen credit cards.

Simms reported that what was so unusual about the story is the way the orders came in. Del Pino never spoke directly with the purchaser; instead, he spoke to an operator used by deaf consumers to help them shop.

The service is called Internet Protocol Relay. Federal investigators now know that criminals are finding IP Relay an easy way to shop for new victims.

In Maryland, IP Relay is supposed to work like this: the deaf customer types a message to the relay operator. The operator calls the business and reads the message. The business responds. The relay operator then types a response back to the deaf customer. But by law, the operators aren't allowed to reveal information that would disconnect the sale -- even if they feel there's a scam going on.

"In many cases, the subjects are trying multiple credit cards to see if they will work, so the operator will be putting credit card number after credit card number to see if it hits and quickly recognize it's a scam," said FBI Internet Crimes Agent Dan Larkin.

Merchants like Del Pino don't find out it's a fraudulent sale until weeks later.

Simms reported this scam has affected small businesses here on the eastern shore, in Baltimore and across the country and those business owners who have been targeted find they have no recourse. He said they have to recover the costs.

Del Pino thought he had fraud protection from the credit card company, but it was voided because there was no customer signature and no way to prove he talked to the real card holder.

"I think I'm abused by both sides of the fence," Del Pino said. "I'm the one who ends up with nothing."

Except, Simms reported, the \$16,000 he now owes the credit card company.

Over the past year, federal agents have seized more than \$1 million worth of merchandise and made 17 arrests in Nigeria and Ghana.

The I-Team contacted AT&T about the scam. The company said the IP Relay service is for use only within the United States and it's trying to keep some calls from reaching operators by blocking IP addresses from foreign countries.

Here is the URL of the story for as long as it is good:
<http://www.thewbalchannel.com/news/4474999/detail.html>

1 MAY 2005

From Vanguard, a Nigerian newspaper:

How crooks became honourables, distinguished senators, by ex-DIG Nuhu Aliyu

In this interview, Senator Nuhu Aliyu, a former deputy inspector-general of police (DIG), elaborates on his claim that some National Assembly members are people he had arrested in the past for grave criminal offences including advance fee fraud.

AGAINST the background of your experience, one would like to know the role expected of the police during political campaigns and elections?

Well, the Police role is very clear as there are guidelines as provided for in the law. It is the responsibility of the Police to make sure that campaigns are conducted under strict obedience to the law.

That is to say that it is conducted under an atmosphere where people respect the law, free of violence. It is the responsibility of the Police to make sure that during campaigns, no dangerous weapons like knives, spears, guns or anything that could accelerate violence are carried by the parties concerned. It is the responsibility of the Police to make sure that campaigners don't carry these dangerous weapons. It is also the responsibility of the Police to make sure that during campaigns, permits are issued in such a way that rival parties don't clash. That is to say that if you are giving license to party Y on a particular day, you do not give another permit to another party on the same day.

Permit for campaigns

Also, before you go to any campaign as a party or a candidate to any place, you must notify the Police who will have to issue a permit for the campaign. Also if you are going out on a rally on a particular day, it is the Police that will give you permit to carry out that rally and the Police will also accompany you during the rally.

Do you believe that the police carried out these roles creditably before and during the 2003 elections?

Well, I am no longer in the Police and as far as I am concerned, I know that during our campaigns in Niger State, apart from the disturbance in January 2004, during the local government election campaigns, elections were conducted very well, free of violence, free of intimidation.

But you must have heard of police collaboration with some political interest groups in other states?

I don't follow the Police any more, what I am following is the progress of my party, the progress

of my campaigns and the progress of my state.

You said you met some people you apprehended as criminals as your colleagues in the National Assembly. How really did you feel seeing them?

I felt very bad. I felt really bad because these people knew that they were experts in 419 cases. A lot of them were apprehended and detained by the Police a number of times and to find those people in the National Assembly, it can be very disturbing. I was really disturbed.

Are you not also disturbed that these people were not convicted?

Conviction was not my responsibility. It is the responsibility of the courts to convict and the courts convict when they have sufficient evidence to prove a case beyond all reasonable doubts. I don't know if there were sufficient evidence adduced before the courts for the conviction of these people. But there is one thing you will have to understand and that is that 419 is an offence that was at that time very, very difficult to prove. I think it was virtually impossible to prove. I think these people I am talking about took advantage of those lapses.

Now as a lawmaker, have you identified those lapses?

Yes, they have been corrected. There is a law now about EFCC (Economic and Financial Crimes Commission), money laundering law. Now it is a very difficult thing, a very difficult offence for anybody to commit this kind of economic crime without being prosecuted. Of course the chairman of EFCC, Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, did say that he had arrested a number of 419 suspects and that they are now before the courts.

Have you had opportunities of relating with these your former detainees, say in Committee assignments?

No. I have never had relations with them, other than they are members of the National Assembly.

Are they in the Senate?

They are members of the National Assembly.

Don't you think you have a moral responsibility to expose them?

Moral responsibility? All I am saying is that I am alerting the nation, that we have to be very careful about the kind of persons we elect to political offices.

How do you think these people were able to enter into the National Assembly even as recent as 2003?

I think what it is here is that to be a member of the National Assembly is an honour and to be a member of the National Assembly is a privilege. If one is a member of the National Assembly, one becomes relevant in the scheme of things in Nigeria. If you have money especially when you have loose money (I consider anybody who has made money through 419 to have loose money), you could play around with it, could play politics. Politics, as it is today, is politics of money. If you have money, people don't care, they will elect you and I think this is how these people came about to be in the National Assembly. Even though they were people who have had criminal activities behind them, they still want to be relevant and this is how they came to be relevant as members of the National Assembly. They are now Honourables and Distinguished Senators.

Do they ever greet you?

As colleagues in the National Assembly we greet each other whenever we see one another, we say Honourable or Distinguished, that is what we do.

How did you react seeing the former Inspector-General of Police in chains when he was taken to court?

It is very sad, very sad to see somebody of Tafa Balogun's standing, a former Inspector General of Police to be handcuffed. It was a very big shame to the entire Nigeria Police and indeed the nation. Now that Tafa Balogun is facing trial in court, I hope and pray that he will be able to convince Nigerians that he had no hand in any criminal activity, especially when it relates to siphoning of funds. Don't forget the amount being mentioned. N13 billion. N13 billion is a hell of money that could turn the Nigeria Police into an active service and that could provide the wherewithal for good performance. But if it is alleged that Tafa Balogun took away that money, it is unfortunate.

27 APR 2005

From The Punch, a Nigerian newspaper:

US urges tougher action against 419 suspects

The United States on Tuesday urged the Federal Government to remove impediments militating against the speedy trial and conviction of suspects standing trial for advance fee fraudsters and other forms of electronic crime.

The U.S Commercial Attache, Mr. Mike McGee, at a news conference in Lagos said speedy conviction of such suspects would attract foreign investors to the Nigerian economy .

McGee, who was briefing newsmen on the forthcoming four-day CTO 2005

exhibition, said it was heartwarming to note that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission had made some arrests. noting that fraud had become a serious issue which the government should join hands with the private sector and the media to tackle.

He said the U.S government was desirous of supporting the EFCC in its efforts because it wished to expand capacities for joint ventures between American and Nigerian businessmen.

He said, "There has been a lot of focus, a lot of attention, a lot of talk about this subject in your country. Just about every day, you can pick up the paper and see it. I can guarantee that my office gets e-mails about this subject every day. We get phone calls; we get letters from the United States about this and companies here in the country. So, it is something that we know is extremely serious because people want to do business here. There are a lot of opportunities for joint ventures, for representations or to buy and sell products between our two countries. But electronic crime is a very, very difficult inhibitor that we must talk more about."

" So, it doesn't really matter how much we talk about it or how much your country puts into the EFCC; if these people don't know that they are going to jail and that their products and their possessions are going to be confiscated, it is going to be difficult to turn the corner. There are a lot of decent people in this country; honest people who are trying to do business in the country and around, with the rest of the world. It is very difficult, if they don't know that they are being protected in the fair way of doing business."

He said that the CTO, which is scheduled for May 16-20 at the Muson Centre in Lagos, would attract high-profile personalities from the public and private sector and is expected to discuss issues such as the protection of intellectual and property rights; e-Commerce and emerging markets in West Africa; securing the information highway; and the role of technology in healthcare, education and social development.

20 APR 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

419: Ibekwe's Co-accused Told to Seek Medical Attention

By Abimbola Akosile

An Ikeja High Court Judge, Justice Olubunmi Oyewole, yesterday told Mr Augonous Okoro, co-accused person to late Chief Maurice Ibekwe (House of Representatives member), in an on-going advanced fee fraud a.k.a. 419 trial, to seek adequate medical attention and fixed new dates for continuation of trial in the matter.

Accused person, who was given bail in the sum of N100million with a surety in like sum on November 15, last year, is facing an amended charge filed by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the prosecutor, for allegedly swindling a German businessman, Mr Klaus Richard Munch, of \$330,000 and DM75,000 10 years ago.

Okoro, a hotelier, said to be seriously ill from kidney complications, was present in court yesterday, when the matter came for up trial. His co-accused, late Ibekwe, died on March 20, 2004, of kidney complications before the matter could be concluded before another judge. Sporting a yellow turtle-necked sweatshirt under a blue shirt, he was accompanied by a lady dressed as a nurse, who held a drip containing some yellow liquid connected to his arm.

The matter was earlier stood to allow his counsel, Mr Kemi Pinheiro, to appear in court for trial to continue. Pinheiro wrote a letter to court, urging a stand-down till later in the day, but failed to show up.

Mr Rotimi Jacobs, EFCC counsel, told court the matter was fixed for trial and that his major witness, Munch, was around to give evidence. He sought new trial dates, which were later fixed for June 20, 21, 22, and 23, within which period Okoro was expected to have obtained adequate medical attention for his ailment.

Justice Oyewole, in his ruling, said, "bail was granted to the accused person on November 15 on health grounds. Accused there-after appeared in court with improvement in his condition, only for him to appear again with two persons, one of them a lady dressed as a nurse, albeit with no positive identification."

"Till date, there is no medical report before me supporting the ailment. There is a witness from Germany who is here to testify. Accused person should not be seen as the one delaying trial. His application for a stay of proceedings was refused in this court. He is hereby advised to seek adequate medical attention since he has been granted bail. Case is hereby adjourned till June 20, 21, 22, and 23."

Okoro, in a suit with Charge No. ID/40C/2003, filed by State, is being charged with conspiracy with intent to defraud, an offence punishable under Sections 419, 516, 472(2) of the Criminal Code; for obtaining the sum from Munch, on the pretence that such monies were sundry payments to various government officials for the payment of \$30 million on contract No. FMT&AV/PED/5152/82.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:

<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=15115>

19 APR 2005

From the Punch, a Nigerian newspaper:

\$242m scam: Nwude not suffering from terminal disease

Kayode Ketefe

An Ikeja High Court, presided over by Justice Joseph Oyewole, on Monday, accepted a medical report which claimed that Emmanuel Nwude was not suffering from any life threatening disease, contrary to his claim.

Nwude is one of the three accused persons standing trial for allegedly defrauding a Brazilian bank of \$242million. Others are Amaka Anajemba and Nzeribe Okoli.

At the resumed hearing of the matter, the lawyer to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Mr. Rotimi Jacobs, tendered two medical reports, one of which established that the accused was not suffering from any terminal ailment.

In the first report from the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital, dated April 13, 2005, it was stated that Nwude was not suffering from any neurological problem constituting a threat to his life.

In the second report from Radmed Diagnostic Centre, Ikoyi, Lagos, it was stated that Nwude refused to cooperate with the medical personnel who wanted to conduct medical investigation on him. He was said to have refused the insertion of any medical instrument into him.

Based on this, Jacobs urged the court to order "immediate and expeditious trial" of the matter, which had been stalled since October, last year. He said the new evidence showed that Nwude was fit enough to stand trial together with other accused persons.

The court granted the prayer and set down the matter for definite trial, despite the prayer of Nwude's lawyer, Mr. Rickey Tarfa (SAN), that the matter be adjourned "for mention" instead of "setting it down for trial."

Tarfa had urged the court not to hold that the medical report had disproved the alleged ailment of his client.

According to him, the last paragraph of the report showed that there were more examinations to be conducted. "The report is not conclusive," he said.

Oyewole also dismissed the application of Nwude praying the court for a stay of proceedings until the determination of an appeal before the Court of Appeal.

The court adjourned hearing till May 16-20.

ThisDay and other Nigerian newspapers also covered this story.

Here is the ThisDay URL for as long as it is good:

<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=14967>

13 APR 2005

From the Punch, a Nigerian newspaper:

Money laundering: EFCC seizes \$700m

Ademola Oni

The Economic and Financial Crime Commission on Tuesday in Lagos claimed that it had confiscated about \$700million from money launderers.

The Secretary to the EFCC, Mr. Emmanuel Akomaye, who stated this at a seminar on the Money Laundering Act, organised by the commission and the Financial Institutions Training Centre, did not, however, state the period within which the money was confiscated.

According to him, the activities of money launderers have drawn the ire of Western nations, leading to the promulgation of anti-419 laws in the United States of America.

The US, he stated, realised that over 80 per cent of scam mails into the country originated from Nigeria and had deemed it necessary to take tougher actions against not only individuals but against the country.

Though, Akomaye could not supply latest statistic on the crime, he said that the policies and legal framework adopted to combat the incident would expose more culprits and salvage the country's image.

He explained that the seminar was targeted at banks to enable them detect the methods of money launderers and report same to regulatory authorities.

For there to be any attempt to conceal money, there would have been a perpetration of acquiring such money illegally. So, we must fashion out a way of detecting those avenues through which such crimes could be perpetrated and how the banks could nip the fraud in the bud, he stressed.

Akomaye expressed delight that the banks had been cooperating by reporting

cases to the commission, adding that time has come for concerned agencies to ask questions about the sources of money that enter into banks' vaults. When people buy shares with stolen or drug money, we must be able to unravel the source and that is bound to ensure some sanity in our system.

He lamented that the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency was incapacitated to deal with money laundering as its enforcement was limited to drug money alone.

The Director-General of the FITC, Dr. Oladimeji Alo, described the over N9billion reported cases of money laundering as mind boggling.

According to him, Money laundering is an attempt to hide what is illegally derived through drugs, embezzlement, smuggling, and forgeries. The magnitude is such that there is an urgent need to combat and curtail it with its attendant impact on the economy.

The Nigerian newspaper This Day did a piece on this as well.

419 Coalition Comment: Things will improve further when there are convictions of 419ers and repatriations of recovered monies, starting with the Ghasemi case recovered funds which have been sitting in Central Bank of Nigeria for years now with CBN refusing to repatriate them, though it can do so any time it likes according to the US Government.

8 APR 2005

From the New Zealand Herald:

Woman defrauded lawyer of \$1.2m

by Tony Stickleby

A personable, 65-year-old conwoman dubbed "the queen of greed" duped 10 people out of more than \$2 million before losing the money to a classic Nigerian scam.

Among her victims was a lawyer, formerly a senior member of a well-known Auckland practice, who lost \$1.2 million.

The woman, Patricia Lenine Mabel Walsh, of Howick, was found guilty in the Auckland District Court yesterday on 47 counts relating to the Nigerian fraud and a further three fraud charges over the purchase of a \$1.8 million home at Whitford.

A cousin, 78-year-old Elva Mary Medhurst, also of Howick, faced two charges of misappropriation but died partway through the trial.

The jury heard that the 10 people who lost just over \$2 million also put money into a failed upmarket apartment project initiated by Walsh.

She and her fellow investors were conned out of their money by American fraudster Greg Dutcher, who offered to provide finance for the project - but they had to pay fees and expenses upfront.

When Walsh approached the investors with a rescue package, they threw good money after bad.

The lawyer, whose name was suppressed, lost \$400,000 on the building project and \$1.2 million trying to recoup his loss. A 90-year-old woman lost \$337,000 in the Nigerian scam.

Serious Fraud Office lawyer David Jones said Walsh concealed the Nigerian connection when discussing the rescue package with the other investors.

She told them a Middle East benefactor was setting up a trust to help people who had fallen on hard times through no fault of their own. She was the trust's New Zealand representative and the funds would be under her control to dispense to people who fitted the criteria.

As in the Dutcher fraud, the investors were told that before the rescue money could be transferred to New Zealand, they had to pay set-up costs, taxes, bank fees and legal costs.

The Crown said that Walsh, who was expecting US\$28 million, was telling the victims what the Nigerians were telling her. But when asked, she denied any Nigerian connection. Inevitably, the US\$28 million never arrived.

The Crown said that on a trip to Amsterdam, Walsh was shown boxes said by the Nigerians to contain the money.

According to the SFO, she manufactured a large number of letters from banks, law firms and other institutions to confirm that the money would arrive soon.

Mr Jones told the jury Walsh was the queen of greed, "a serial liar and a serial forger".

Walsh, an undischarged bankrupt, was remanded in custody for sentencing next month.

Victim wants clampdown

An Auckland lawyer, conned out of \$1.6 million in two separate classic Nigerian scams, is

calling for banking restrictions to defeat overseas fraudsters.

The man, who has name suppression, lost his \$400,000 investment in an upmarket apartment complex in St Stephens Ave to an American conman.

He then lost a further \$1.2 million in another Nigerian fraud involving Patricia Walsh in a vain attempt to recover the money.

The lawyer trusted and believed Walsh when she said that an overseas benefactor was going to help them in their financial distress.

He told a depositions hearing last year that he expected to receive \$8 million. No money arrived.

After Walsh's conviction yesterday, the lawyer said the Government should act to counter the activities of overseas fraudsters by severely limiting the amounts and frequency which individuals could use organisations such as Western Union and Travelex to transfer money out of the country.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:

<http://www.nzherald.co.nz/index.cfm?ObjectID=10119174>

5 APR 2005

From the BBC News website:

S Africa fraudsters find new lure

By Justin Pearce

Organisers of a new "419" style e-mail scam are trying to extort money by pretending to be involved in the fight against fraud.

The self-styled "Anti-Scam Crusaders" lured victims using a genuine South African-based anti-fraud website.

This latest scam attempts to solicit money for the publication of a book with instructions on how to beat scams.

Named after a Nigerian anti-fraud law, 419ers typically use mass e-mails to trick people into parting with money.

The writer of the e-mail claims to have "understudied the Nigerian 419 actors", who "have been able to get some morally weak citizens of other countries to collaborate with them".

The e-mail pretends to be promoting a book that "contains all it would take to knock the 419ers out of business".

Website ban

Then comes the catch: "However, a little premium will be required from you, if you are interested to obtain the manuscript for publication in your country."

The fraudsters registered on the 419 Legal website, a genuine anti-fraud initiative, and used the site's private message facility to contact other subscribers.

"They approached our website last year offering help with tracing offenders in Nigeria," Inspector Rian Visser, the founder of 419 Legal, told the BBC News website.

"We then launched an investigation, found they were involved in fraud and banned them from our website."

But in March this year the fraudsters reappeared, operating from a different server in Nigeria and registering new bogus user identities.

Inspector Visser, an officer in the South African Police Services (SAPS), started 419 Legal last year on his own initiative.

"We wanted to close down the communications networks of these criminals," Inspector Visser said.

"We decided we would inform the internet service providers and tell them we could provide all the proof that was needed."

Inspector Visser said 419 Legal now had the backing of the SAPS and benefits from a network of 5,000 informers around the world. The organisation works in co-operation with investigating authorities in Nigeria, the UK, the US and Australia, among others.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4412737.stm>

1 APR 2005

From Vanguard, a Nigerian newspaper, and no this is not an April Fool's joke, we wish it were:

Court orders EFCC not to seize Nwude's shopping complex

AWKA - ANAMBRA State High Court sitting at Ogidi has ordered the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Inspector- General of Police not to take possession and management of the multi-million Naira shopping complex at No. 9, Awka road, Onitsha belonging to Chief Emmanuel Nwude currently standing trial for alleged 419 scam. Nwude and others are being tried under the EFCC laws.

Nwude's Lawyer, F.A.R Okafor had instituted a legal matter at the Ogidi High Court before Justice. C.O Amaechi praying the court to among other things:

- Give a declaration that the attempt by the respondents (EFCC, Police etc) to take over the control of properties of the applicant (Nwude) in Anambra State while he (Nwude) is still facing trial, having not been convicted of any offence by any court of competent jurisdiction in this country amounts to an infraction and /or infringement on the fundamental rights of the applicant as enshrined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999.

- An order of the court espondents or theirng, molesting, detainant's agents an applicant's properties until the determination of the criminal charges against the applicant now pending at the Lagos State High Court.

- N5 million damages against the respondents jointly and severally for infringing the applicant's rights to own properties anywhere in this country.

After hearing the Motions Ex-parte, the presiding Judge, Justice C.O. Amaechi granted the prayers of Nwude and made an order restraining the EFCC or its agents from "taking over the control of the management, asking for an account from the applicants agents and / or interfering with the management of any of the applicants properties situated anywhere in Anambra State including the PACIFIC Complex situated at No. 9 Awka Road, Onitsha and E.M. Petroleum situated at Nnamdi Azikiwe avenue, Abagana, Anambra State of Nigeria until the determination of the motion on notice". However, contrary to the court order the respondent allegedly took possession of the applicant's property by appointing an agent to manage the shopping complex and hiring a security outfit to replace the one employed by the applicant.

Not happy with this development, the applicant filed for and obtained Form 48 (Notice of consequences of disobedience of court order), which he has already served on the respondents.

29 MAR 2005

From the Daily Independent, a Nigerian newspaper:

419: Slain Nigerian diplomat's family demand \$730,000 compensation

By Tokunbo Oloruntola, News Editor, Lagos

The family of a Nigerian diplomat, Michael Wayi, killed by a victim of a 419 deal at the Nigerian embassy in Czech, is demanding \$730,000 compensation from his alleged killer.

It also asked for a public apology from the Czech Government for the fatal shooting of the diplomat in November 2003 over a financial scam allegedly perpetrated by some people believed to be Nigerians.

A retired Czech military doctor, Jirl Pasovsky, who shot the diplomat was charged to a court in Praque, the Czech capital. When the case came up for hearing on March 8, counsel to the accused told the court he was indisposed to appear.

The counsel said his client was in final stage of cancer. The tragic event started unfolding in November 2003, when the accused, 73, moral to unidentified person, claiming to be a Nigerian, who offered him a lucrative investment opportunity in an oil pipeline project.

Unlike other victims of internet scam, the accused held the Nigerian Government responsible and paid several visits to the Nigerian embassy in Praque, demanding for refund of the lost money.

When the accused failed to get the money, he walked into the Nigerian embassy and shot the diplomat. The diplomat's family is claiming the \$730,000 compensation to provide financial support for his aging family in Nigeria.

419 Coalition Comment: Nobody deserves to die over 419, not the 419ers, not their victims, not anyone else. However, given the above, we wonder who is being sued for compensation regarding dozen plus victims murdered by the 419ers? (Answer, nobody, because nobody has ever been charged with those crimes). And just how many official apologies has the Nigerian Government extended to the families of those victims who were murdered in Nigeria? (Answer, none that we know of). Just thought we might put the above situation into perspective, Big Picture-wise.

23 MAR 2005

Although 419 Coalition does not customarily deal with "Institutional 419" (corruption) we have decided to put up the following piece because it represents, our view, a major policy change on the part of the United States Government concerning Nigeria and also because over the years it hashe officed by the new policy also "double-dip" in both

Institutional 419 and the Regular forms of 419 that 419 Coalition customarily deals with. Here is the piece, from the Daily Independent, a Nigerian newspaper:

U.S. to ban corrupt Nigerian officials

By Chinedu Offor, Correspondent, Washington D.C.

Nigerian public servants who buy choice estates and invest in the United States through shady means are to be kept out of the country, as tales of the alleged sleaze by the just dismissed Education Minister, Fabian Osuji, and some lawmakers have spread across the Atlantic to jolt Washington.

American officials said the scandal is one more justification to ban Nigerian officials and their families.

Checks at the Immigration and Naturalisation Service (INS) showed that on the average, over 15 Nigerian government officials, including governors, visit the U.S. every week.

Most of them have no reason for coming, the authorities insisted, except to buy choice estates or make investment and those suspected to be involved in corruption will from now be banned from entering the U.S.

Plateau State Governor, Josuah Dariye, and his associates are already in the bad books.

State Department sources said when the current investigation of several officials is completed, the U.S. will no longer be a safe haven for serving or former governors and other government officials implicated.

Investigation showed that American authorities are quietly investigating several governors and members of President Olusegun Obasanjo's cabinet, which could lead to the withdrawal of their visas and cancellation of other documents they need to enter the U.S.

"We intend to serve notice that the U.S. will not condone corruption by Nigerian officials who take advantage of their positions to loot public funds", officials stated.

The tougher stance followed a personal message Obasanjo sent to President George Bush to assist Nigeria in curbing corruption.

A source said: "Prior to now, these officials took advantage of our laws to hide their wealth and where such cases go to court, they tie up the system for several years. A proclamation signed by the President, which sealed Dariye's fate, is all that is needed to keep these officials out".

Investigation of Nigerian officials started when it was discovered that several of them own real estates in posh areas of the country.

They allegedly use fronts to set up businesses, and are major shareholders in banks, insurance, medical and oil related enterprises.

"An audit of the assets of present and past Nigerian government officials showed a staggering conservative value running into trillions of dollars.

"Owners of these businesses have no other visible sources of wealth except that they are either government officials or have been in government previously", senior administration sources said.

The investigators are liaising with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and British officials to have an accurate picture of the spread of investment by Nigerian public servants.

Those already in the frame, sources said, include two former heads of state, serving and former lawmakers, ministers, governors and heads of agencies.

The source added: "We are getting active co-operation from Nigeria and of course will pass on the result of our own efforts to Obasanjo".

A preliminary dossier on the "dirty officials", as our sources called the document, is on its way to EFCC Chairman, Nuhu Ribadu.

Administration officials said the move is also to prevent the criminals from using their wealth to influence the political environment.

"The only way to break the circle of corruption in Nigeria is to ensure that those who are elected did not achieve their ambition in a corrupt manner and are not beholden to any person or group in the discharge of their duties and in America. Nigeria will find a willing partner in this fight".

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.independentng.com/news/nnmar230504.htm>

419 Coalition: We think that the new policy is excellent and trust its implementation will match the intent. We think that perhaps USG should consider "banning" other wealthy Nigerians who have no apparent legal basis for their wealth (419ers, in short) in addition to the "corrupt government officials" cited in the above article. We also think that perhaps USG should consider extending these policies to all nations. But then, we are not diplomats or lawyers and have no particular expertise in such matters, we'll leave

that to the experts.

19 MAR 2005:

From the American Medical News:

419: New scams focus on familiar target: Physicians

By Bob Cook

Authorities say the best defense for "419" advance-fee scams is skepticism

It's amazing the number of people who want to share millions with you. Nigerian generals, exiled Liberian government ministers, foreign lottery operators, banks trying to find heirs of someone who died in a car crash -- the offers are all there, in your e-mail, fax machine, answering machine and even the good old-fashioned mailbox. Why do all these people want to share riches with you?

The short answer is: They don't. Law enforcement authorities say they're scammers, participating in a common kind of fraud known as an advance-fee scheme. And its practitioners, authorities say, are increasingly targeting physicians.

Often, advance-fee fraud is referred to as "419" fraud, after the section of the Nigerian criminal code that outlaws such scams. Nigeria is the country that popularized such scams, starting in the early 1980s.

They seek to lure people into sending money or banking information on the pretense that it's needed to share in the booty the scammers, posing as dignitaries or financial agents, say is available. They also might seek to have victims travel to a foreign locale to deliver the information -- which in some cases has resulted in the victim's kidnapping or murder.

Peter Tachauer, a detective sergeant with the City of London police, is investigating a case in which American doctors are receiving letters, e-mails or faxes that go like this: A previously unknown member of your family has been killed in a car crash overseas. You are the only person left who could be related to the deceased, and you might be the sole inheritor of millions of dollars left in an account.

The person contacting you will have details of genealogical research. All you need to do is send money and bank account information, and the process of getting your money begins.

The missive looks good. It's got names of real Swiss banks on it, and scammers have an amazing amount of personal data about the doctor who gets it, Tachauer said. Of course, an American physician couldn't know that 100 Fleet St. in London, one return address, is the location of a cobbler's shop, not a bank branch.

Tachauer said the Swiss banks contacted him because they were getting inundated by calls about the note's "bona fides" from American physicians who had received it.

Tachauer said he didn't know how many physicians received the note, but he does know that at least two physicians lost a collective \$100,000. The doctors, whom Tachauer did not identify, traveled to Amsterdam to deliver cash to the scammers, who said such a meeting and transaction was necessary to pay the fees and charges for the money transfer, and legal costs for "complications" related to it.

"What [these scammers] can do knows no bounds," Tachauer said. To the unwitting and unwary, such a scheme "sounds plausible."

The U.S. Secret Service, which investigates financial crimes, estimates that Americans are taken for hundreds of millions of dollars per year from such scams, though the total could be more. Often, the agency says, victims are too embarrassed to admit they fell for it, or victims figure -- correctly -- that catching the scammers is just about impossible.

Among the few victims speaking out is a Tampa, Fla., family physician and his wife, a nurse. In August 2000, Ali-Reza Ghasemi, MD, and his wife, Shaleh, got a call from a man identifying himself as a director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corp., a real group that oversees the country's oil and gas industry. The man said an Iranian businessman had died in Nigeria and left \$27 million to Dr. Ghasemi. The call was plausible because the Ghasemis had abandoned investments in their native Iran when they fled after the Shah of Iran's 1979 overthrow.

As Shaleh Ghasemi tells it, the deal sounded even more legitimate when the call was followed by a fax of official-looking documents and instructions on how to transfer the money to a bank account in Atlanta. But somehow there always was some glitch, fee, tax or other problem that needed the Ghasemis' money, which they had to borrow to try to seal the deal.

Eventually, Shaleh Ghasemi called the U.S. State Dept., who told her she and her husband were victims of fraud. All told, they lost \$400,000. No arrests have been made in their case, which Shaleh Ghasemi, a frequent poster on anti-419 Web sites, has likened to "financial terrorism."

The difficulty in tracking down 419 scammers is the international nature of the crimes. In Tachauer's case, the banks are in Switzerland, the physicians are in the United States, the meetings are in the Netherlands, and the scammers' cell phone numbers are registered in the United Kingdom (that's how Tachauer got involved).

"There have been arrests, but it is difficult to pin down who is doing this," said Brandon Bridgeforth, a special agent for the U.S. Secret Service in Chicago.

One of the advances 419 scammers have made is going beyond random e-mails by trying to find specific targets, in hopes that their pitch will be more believable and personal.

Bridgeforth said 419 perpetrators have geared letters to many specific professions, not just physicians. But in the case Tachauer is investigating, the diversity of ethnicities in U.S. doctors is the reason for their targeting. The notes are sent to "a lot of foreign-sounding names," he said, figuring that those physicians would be the most likely to think they might have a long-lost relative in another country.

The Secret Service, the FBI and the Federal Trade Commission -- as well as private citizens and foreign governments -- all have Web sites warning about 419 fraud and how to spot it. The Secret Service recommends that anyone who gets such a note or call, or thinks they've been a victim of a 419 scam, contact their local Secret Service office. Offices are in all 50 states.

But the best defense against 419 schemes is skepticism. "If you're getting money, then why do you have to send money?" Bridgeforth said. "If it's somebody you've never heard of, how did they get your name?"

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.ama-assn.org/amednews/2005/03/28/bil20328.htm>

419 Coalition Note: On the Ghasemi case, Central Bank of Nigeria announced publicly with much fanfare several years ago that the Ghasemi's money had been recovered, but CBN has never sent the recovered monies on to the Ghasemi's. CBN says the delays are because of the US Government, but the US Government denies these allegations and says that CBN is free to repatriate the monies. Bottom line is that CBN still has the recovered funds and refuses to repatriate them to the Ghasemis to date.

19 MAR 2005
From the Nigerian newspaper, Vanguard:

EFCC recovers 5,000 forged foreign bank cheque leaves from fraudsters

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has seized several financial documents from a syndicate of master forgers in Lagos. The estimated 5,000 forged cheque leaves, postal and international money orders of various banks in Europe, the U.S and South America were seized during an over night raid.

Mr Ibrahim Lamorde, EFCC's Director of Operations, told reporters in Lagos that other items such as printing plates, diskettes, a rubber stamp for an Irish bank as well as printing papers, allegedly used to perpetrate the crime were also recovered. Lamorde explained that this development was sequel to the transfer of a case involving suspects from the Lagos State Police Command on March 14, 2005 to the commission.

He said the suspect, upon interrogation, made useful revelations that culminated in the arrest of two men described as master forgers of foreign cheque leaves.

He said the first suspect was arrested based on information received by the state commissioner of police's monitoring unit at his Palm Groove abode on Feb. 23, 2005. Forged cheque leaves, postal money orders and the printing plates were recovered from his room.

The third suspect, was later arrested on March 16, 2005 at a printing press in Shomolu, Lagos, where a printing plate for DHL was recovered.

The three suspects are printers and main suppliers of forged cheque leaves and other bogus documents being fraudulently used by advance fee fraudsters, Internet fraud as well as those seeking visas to foreign countries, said Lamorde.

In another development, Lamorde said one Hassan Satoohi, a Saudi residing in Medina, Saudi Arabia had the misfortune of being contacted by a syndicate, which fraudulently obtained over \$400,000 by means of money transfer between 2002 and 2004.

The victim lodged a formal complaint at the commission late in 2004, sequel to which he was invited to Lagos, he said. The masterminds of the scam were arrested at a Hotel along Airport road on Feb. 10 2005 while about to collect an additional \$32,000 from the victim.

He alleged that Obinna Oguinne, 38-year old, posed as Malik Mohammed, a senior accountant of the NNPC, in the course of the crime. The second suspect, 33 year-old Michael Mbagwu, used the name of Duru Chinedu in collecting most of the money transferred.

Lamorde said several forged documents, purportedly emanating from the CBN, NDLEA and NNPC featured prominently in the scam, saying computers were recovered from the abode of the first suspect at Festac town, Lagos.

Similarly, the commission arrested at least three secondary school students, involved in a credit card fraud and obtaining goods under false

pretences. According to him, one Abiodun Shittu a 21-year old allegedly bought life jackets and Sony Ericson phones, worth over 16,000 Australian dollars by means of stolen credit cards in late 2004. He said the suspect used 'Hammed James,' of Symbernet Nig. Ltd, 4 Jenrola Street, Mafoluku Oshodi to procure the goods, adding that the case was reported to the EFCC by the Australian High Commission in Abuja on Jan. 12, 2005.

The suspect on his part allegedly ordered for goods from the victim, unknown to him that his activities were being monitored, Lamorde said.

17 MAR 2005

Our associate Ultrascan in Holland is looking for information from victims of these four alleged 419ers. Please contact Monica immediately at:

419unit@ultrascan.nl
or
ultrascanphotos@yahoo.co.uk

Here they are:



Additional photos of alleged 419ers for whom Ultrascan is looking for information from their victims can be found of the following URL:

<http://www.geocities.com/ultrascanphotos/>

16 MAR 2005

News release from the Government of Hong Kong:

Hong Kong: First Nigerian email scammer jailed

Hong Kong has successfully prosecuted its first Nigerian email scammer. A 30-year-old Nigerian man was jailed four years today for a US\$26 million scam, in which he was convicted at the District Court of attempting to obtain property by deception and possession of a false travel document.

Last March, emails were spammed to a large number of recipients telling them that after the death of an African official, a US\$26 million fund left unattended was in Hong Kong pending transfer via a local bank account to a foreign one.

The case was reported to Police on April 29, and arrangements were made to hold a meeting in a Wan Chai hotel on May 14 between the swindler and two undercover officers.

After he demanded an administration fee of US\$24,000, the swindler was arrested, and two fake passports and three forged rubber stamps were found in his Yuen Long residence.

Police reminded web users to beware of email fraud.

13 MAR 2005

From the New York Daily News:

Net scammers exploit Iraq, tsunami

By Helen Kennedy

A wounded former military aide to Uday Hussein has the secret codes to foreign bank accounts where millions worth of Saddam Hussein's loot is stashed.

And he wants to give half to you.

British soldier Jerry Smith found \$35 million in one of Saddam's palaces and wants you to help smuggle it out.

Qusay Hussein's ex-mistress, writing from a refugee camp, wants to give you the PIN number of his Spanish bank accounts so you can get her the money.

The 20-year-old Nigerian scam has been tarted up with a shiny, newsy gloss. "The scammers have always used current events as the basis for their 'tales' in order to give them more credibility," says C.A. Pascale, an expert in the Nigerian scams.

It only took a week for the first tsunami-related scam E-mails to start flowing after the Dec.

26 Indian Ocean tragedy. In that one, bogus survivors said they needed help getting dead relatives' money out of the country.

Nigerian scam spam fills up nearly everybody's mailbox these days, and many people assume no one falls for the badly spelled come-ons. But experts estimate thousands of Americans pay \$100 million to \$300 million a year to the crooks. The number could be much higher because many victims are embarrassed or worried they broke a law.

There are few hard statistics because no one agency is in charge of battling the scammers, but Nigerian complaints to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center were up 66% last year.

Marks have lost more than money. The State Department tied 15 murders in three years to the scam. In December, a Cypriot was tortured and burned to death in South Africa, allegedly by Nigerian scammers.

Also known as "advance fee fraud" or "419 fraud" after the relevant section of the Nigerian Criminal Code, the scam began in the 1980s with handwritten letters, graduated to faxes and is now an E-mail scourge. It is estimated to be Nigeria's third-largest industry.

"For some reason, 419 is primarily a Nigerian thing, why we do not know, and nobody else does either," said Pascale, who heads the 419 Coalition.

The fleecing has so sullied the image of legit Nigerian business, the government issues periodic warnings. Cops aren't the only ones trying to shut down the scammers. Calling themselves "scambaiters," online vigilantes string them along and try to get the con men to send THEM money.

On a Web site called 419eater.com, Mike (he keeps his last name off-the-record to protect himself) posted a clip of his cell-phone call with a scammer posing as a rich dead oilman's lawyer, whom he had convinced to send \$718 as a goodwill gesture before a large fund transfer.

As Mike assures the Nigerian he is just arriving at the Western Union office to send his life savings, one hears a realistic squealing of tires, a giant crash and Mike moaning, "I don't want to die." There follows long minutes of sirens while on the other end, the scammer, \$718 in the hole, just keeps uncertainly repeating, "Hello, hello, hello?"

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.nydailynews.com/front/story/289574p-247759c.html>

12 MAR 2005
From the Philippine Star:

Filipino ship captain duped, loses P250,000 (\$5,000) to Nigerian

By Nestor Etolle

Police and immigration officials have issued an alarm against a Nigerian national who reportedly duped an overseas Filipino worker (OFW) of P250,000 in an easy-money making scheme.

In a complaint filed before the Western Criminal Investigation and Detection Group, Jaime Inocencio, 45, a captain of a foreign-based vessel, identified the suspect as one Freeman Kingsley.

According to the victim, he met a Nigerian named Garuba when his ship made its port call in La Goulette, Tunisia last month.

The Nigerian offered him a business partnership, naming his brother Kingsley as his contact in the Philippines.

Upon arrival in the country, the victim said he got a call from Kingsley with instructions to meet him at a hotel in Pasay City. During their meeting, the Nigerian asked for \$5,000 (roughly P250,000) as his share in the business venture. The suspect also told him that his own cash is contained in a briefcase which they claimed at the hotel's diplomatic courier.

The duo then proceeded to the suspect's room at Amazonia Hotel along M.H. del Pilar street in Ermita, Manila.

Once inside the room, the suspect opened the briefcase which contained bundles of blackened paper bills covered with white powder and wads of cotton. The suspect said the blackened paper bills are genuine dollar bills which underwent a camouflage process to hide its value worth millions. The suspect even showed what looked like a genuine instruction manual from the US Embassy on how to remove the black powder from the bills.

The suspect got one of the blackened paper bills and poured a special liquid on it, revealing a genuine \$100 bill. The victim said he was able to exchange the bill into pesos at a nearby money exchange shop.

The suspect then told the victim that he needed to secure more of the special liquid since what he carried was not enough to erase all the black powder from all the bills. He then left the room.

The victim said the suspect never returned. He tried to examine the blackened

bills inside the brief case and found out that they were only pieces of cut-out cartons.

Western-CIDG chief Superintendent Nelson Yabut said the US Embassy confirmed the instruction manual was fake and denied having issued any such manual.

Yabut also requested the immigration bureau to issue a hold departure order against the suspect.

He warned the public, especially OFWs, not to be deceived by any money-making scheme by foreigners.

11 MAR 2005

From SFGate.com (the San Francisco Chronicle):

Eight years prison for Sacramento man in \$2 million Nigerian bank scam

A Sacramento man of Nigerian descent was sentenced to more than eight years in federal prison Friday for running an international investment scam that defrauded investors of more than \$2.1 million through a Nigerian advance fee scheme.

Roland Adams, 38, admitted that he conspired with others in Nigeria, South Africa and Canada to run the scheme. Potential investors were mailed letters supposedly from African government officials who wanted help in diverting millions of dollars held in bogus trusts or accounts.

In exchange for a future share of the fictitious money, the victims were persuaded to send in fees of several thousand to several hundred thousand dollars to individuals or accounts around the world.

Adams, who owned Adams Business Services, gave the scheme an illusion of legitimacy by setting up Web sites such as Afribankcorp.com, Bancoafrica.com and Bancofeasterncaribbean.com where victims could track the false transactions.

He pleaded guilty in August 2003 to conspiring to commit mail and wire fraud, and conspiring to launder money, and was sentenced to 97 months in prison.

He also was ordered to pay more than \$1.2 million in restitution to victims, a portion of which will be paid from the forfeiture of his Elk Grove home and \$87,000 in various bank accounts.

He was separately convicted in April on charges of making false statements during his naturalization interview, and sentenced to an identical prison term to be served at the same time. As a result, he was stripped of his U.S. citizenship Friday and will be deported back to Nigeria after he completes his prison sentence.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/n/a/2005/03/11/financial/f183204S35.DTL>

10 MAR 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

\$242m Scam: Anajemba Decries Delay

By Abimbola Akosile and Faith Ayangbeso

Second lead counsel to Amaka Anajemba (Mrs), Chief Chris Uche, (SAN), has decried continued delay in a six-month old trial involving \$242 million Advance Fee Fraud a.k.a. 419 scam, in which his client, insisted that she was suffering in prison and ought to be set free of the charges against her.

Amaka is standing trial alongside Chief Emmanuel Nwude and Mr Nzeribe Edeh Okoli, in a de novo (fresh) trial, which began on October 5.

Speaking yesterday before presiding judge, Justice Olunmi Oyewole of the Ikeja High Court, Uche claimed Anajemba has become a victim of circumstance as a result of several adjournments of the matter.

"This cannot continue. It is like we are no longer necessary in this matter. We do not know what is happening. I apply that the charges against second accused be struck out. I want the court to take note of the fact that we are suffering," he submitted.

However, Oyewole, ordered that first accused person in the matter, Nwude (whose health status had led to adjournments in trial), should be taken by a team of officials of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and his defence counsel, Chief G.O.K. Ajayi (SAN), to Rad-Med Special Diagnostic Centre in Victoria Island, Lagos, for proper test on his ailment, before treatment continues at Lagos University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), Idi-Araba, Lagos.

According to a LUTH report dated February 10 and investigation carried out by Mr F.O. Adetayo, Consultant Surgeon and Urologist, Nwude, aged 51 years, with Hospital No. 460933, was diagnosed with benign prostatic hyperplasia and chronic prostatitis, while he complained of haematuria, a serious symptom which requires proper investigation to determine its cause.

419 Coalition Comment: It is the Defense in these proceedings which has continually delayed them, so in this matter we'd suggest that the attorney from the second defendant speak to the attorney

of the first defendant and get things underway. We do agree that it is way past time to get matters moving against Both defendants, let's get the show on the road.

9 MAR 2005

From the International Transport Workers Federation:

Nigerian fraudsters use 'UK' connection to scam jobseekers

Global union the ITF today issued a warning to anyone looking for work on board ships and oil rigs that fraudsters have made Nigeria the new centre for scams offering non-existent jobs for moneykers' Federati reports that three known Nigerian criminal operations - including one purporting to be based in Redhill, Surrey, England - are currently trying to defraud innocent jobseekers worldwide. Their usual trick is to ask for 10 per cent of an applicant's first month's wages for a job on a fictional ship that just happens to be stopping at Port Harcourt, Nigeria, to where the money should be paid.

David Cockroft, ITF General Secretary commented: "In the overcrowded field of money for jobs at sea scams Nigeria has rocketed to the top of the list of offenders. We repeat our warning that if you have to pay for a job in advance, it probably doesn't exist. If the offer comes from Nigeria, then it definitely doesn't. Charging seafarers for jobs is outlawed by ILO Convention 179 - to which Nigeria is a signatory."

"The number of scams offering fake jobs on cruise and cargo ships and oilrigs continues to grow, and it has been years since anyone has been prosecuted for these crimes that often hit the world's poorest people. So far the largest was the UAE based Al Najat scandal, whose Pakistani perpetrator escaped with millions of dollars because none of the governments who knowingly or otherwise cooperated with or hosted him would press charges (<http://www.itfglobal.org/press-area/index.cfm/pressdetail/337>).

The longest running is Caledonian Offshore, supposedly based in Canada, but actually run from Panama (see <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/186> and <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/198>). We're glad to say that following lobbying and our meeting with that country's Vice President some kind of an investigation is finally underway there. But the prize for the most prolific recent efforts goes to the fraudsters of Port Harcourt." [Nigeria]

According to the ITF fraudulent organizations offering jobs on non-existent ships in return for advance fees in the last six months include:

A fake operation calling itself 'Swift Consulting UK, 1st Floor, Furness House, 53 Brighton Road, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 6PZ. Telephone +44 7040118143. Fax: +44 8716614073. Recruitment Officer Alan Smith.' The ITF can confirm that there is no such company at the address. Callers to West African-accented 'Adam Smith' are asked to send their seafarers' certificates and promised jobs in return for a fee of US\$350 (supposedly 10% of the first month's wages to be earned). The money is to be paid via a Western Union or similar money transfer to Port Harcourt, made out to Mr Okechukwu Emeka, described as the accountant of Ideal Travel Agency, Inc of Nigeria. In the last week the ITF has been contacted by seafarers from Egypt, Poland and Russia inquiring about the company. All have received messages from 'Swift Consulting UK' offering them jobs on the non-existent ships SS Queen Ridge and MV Sea Goddess. The scamsters appear to have got their contact details after they left their CVs on what they believed were legitimate jobsearch websites.

One of these inquirers was also approached with a near identical deal of work on the vessel 'Lucy Frontier', paying US\$3,500 per month, in return for a 10% 'agency fee'. The e-mail claimed to be from 'Mike Obi, Manning Manager, Haddow Maritime Africa, 8th-10th Floor, Supabod Building, Azikiwe Road, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, Tel: +23484480320'.

The names Mike Obi and Lucy Frontier also appear on another operation identified by the ITF as fraudulent: Agent Africa Nigeria, which uses the website <http://www.agentafrica.xaper.com/index.html> to defraud job seekers. The site gives the address of '# 3 Onne Road, G.R.A, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, 50001 Nigeria Tell (sic): 08027609549, Fax:084237536, email aanig@xaper.com'. The ITF first issued a warning about Agent Africa Nigeria/Hado Maritime/Haddow Maritime Africa in September 2004 (see <http://www.itfglobal.org/news-online/index.cfm/newsdetail/180>). At that time they claimed to have vacancies on the container vessel Maria, which does exist but has no connection with Nigeria.

David Cockroft concluded: "In the past and in the absence of any police action we have done our best to expose these hateful scams as quickly and widely as possible, by naming them and their methods. However, in the case of these Nigerian frauds it appears that the perpetrators are choosing to use multiple names and email addresses, rather than, like Al Najat, remain at one address under the benevolent eye of the UAE authorities or, like Caledonian Offshore, seek to hide their office through a web of post boxes and forwarding services. As a result we have little option but to warn

anyone looking for a job or who has been contacted with a job offer that at any point asks for any kind of payment, even one from an apparently British company, to look for a Nigerian connection and then treat the offer with the contempt it deserves."

For more information contact ITF press officer, Sam Dawson. Direct line: +44 (0)20 7940 9260. Email: dawson_sam@itf.org.uk International Transport Workers' Federation - ITF: HEAD OFFICE ITF House, 49 - 60 Borough Road, London SE1 1DS Tel: +44 (0) 20 7403 2733, Fax: +44 (0) 20 7375 7871. Email: mail@itf.org.uk

3 MAR 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

419: Ajudua Faces Fresh 18-Count Charge

By Gboyega Akinsanmi

Barely a fortnight after a Lagos High Court refused his application for bail, an 18-count fresh charge has been filed against an advanced free fraud king-pin, Chief Fred Ajudua, challenging him for allegedly swindling a national of United States, Engineer Montia Rice over US\$2million.

The charges arise from the submission of Ajudua's counsel, Mr Olalekan Ojo, who argued that the previous charge preferred against him did not contain Rice's statement.

Indications also emerged that fresh charge preferred against the accused person had been transferred from Justice Oluyinka GbajaBiamila of the Lagos High Court to another court over which Justice Sybil Nwaka presided.

No plea had been taken in the new charged, as a result of the fact that the accused person was seriously sick and that the matter had been transferred to a new judge in the Lagos High Court. Ajudua, after Justice Nwaka dismissed his application to quash the previous 14-count charge preferred against him, had approached a Court of Appeal sitting in Lagos, to challenge the decision of the trial court which refused to grant his bail application.

In the fresh charge with No: LCD/8/05 endorsed by Lagos State Director of Public Prosecution (DPP), Rice is listed as evidence-in-chief, as soon as the fresh trial commence before Justice Nwaka.

Other prosecution witnesses include, Mr S. Dahunsi, a Superintendent of Police, Mr J. Idiata, a Deputy Superintendent of Police and Mr A. Fadairo, another Deputy Superintendent of Police who have been listed to witness at the trial. Ajudua is currently facing an 18-count charge in which he was alleged of swindling and obtaining "money under false pretences contrary to Section 419 of the Criminal Code Law, Cap C17, Laws of Lagos State, 2003."

It is also indicated in the new charge that "Ajudua is charged for conspiracy to commit felony, punishable under Section 516 of the Criminal Code Law, Cap C17, Volume 2 Laws of Lagos State, 2003."

Particulars of offences states as follows: Fred Ajudua (m) on or about June 10, 1995, at Lagos, in the Lagos Judicial Division, obtained the sum of US \$175,000.00 from Engineer Montia A. Rice, through Crystal Bank of Africa Ltd of 17, Balogun Street, Lagos, by falsely pretending that the sum was due and payable to the Federal Government of Nigeria as taxes on the purported contract No: GF/GN/FMF/84 worth of US\$12, 000,000.00.

In his statement with the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services, Maryland State Police, United States, Rice noted that "this statement, without reservation, declares the document presented to the authorities in Lagos, Nigeria, claiming that I received N1 million on January 22, 1992 to be a complete fraud.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:

<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=10866>

2 MAR 2005

From the Financial Standard (Online) UK:

Transparency International boss lauds EFCC

Transparency International has lauded the establishment of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission to fight corruption in Nigeria.

Professor Peter Eigen, chairman of Transparency International, made this remark last week, describing the creation of the EFCC by the federal government under the leadership of President Olusegun Obasanjo as 'more than one step in the right direction'.

Eigen who paid a courtesy call to Mallam Nuhu Ribadu, executive chairman of EFCC, said it is clear that after the creation of the body, a lot has been done to change laws against corruption in Nigeria and his body is happy that even the most powerful people in the society are being dragged to courts to face charges of economic and financial crimes.

Commenting on the recent classification of Nigeria by Transparency International as the third most corrupt country in the world, Eigen said the survey used did not include the recent improvements in the country on the war against corruption and corrupt practices.

Mr. Ibrahim Balarabe, Media and Publicity Unit of EFCC said Eigen acknowledged that

Transparency International has not been completely fair to Nigeria in classifying it as the third most corrupt country.

Earlier, Ribadu who had a close door session with the guest took him round the commission's Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), a department in charge of combating money laundering and financing of terrorist activities in Nigeria.

1 MAR 2005

The March 2005 US Edition of the Reader's Digest contains an excellent article on 419: "The \$100 Million Scam - And why Americans keep falling for it" by Hal Karp. The piece is too long to be reproduced here, but most libraries will have a copy of this issue of RD. The piece contains a general description of 419 and discusses the magnitude of the problem, and goes on to describe the experiences of an Idaho man with a Black Currency 419 scam.

As an aside, several issues of the European edition of Reader's Digest in several different languages have also carried stories on 419 in the past.

26 FEB 2005

Here is the latest in from our Proud 419er in today (see 23 FEB 2005 news item below for his first note), which we post here with its headers and our response, he really is refreshing in his open rapacity, is he not:

Comment: DomainKeys? See <http://antispam.yahoo.com/domainkeys>

DomainKey-Signature: a=rsa-sha1; q=dns; c=noftws; s=s1024; d=yahoo.com;

b=s+WIdSzD0E/eHyfz95fEFEEdKZppo06m7DfsS536Y4mPuba68/K76efxtFINczCOABNz+XCO44p97NKJKOga3BZmNlaR6iDEFyR06aHsRI2eDFwkmxo4Gdu+77kLGGWGDtZ0IivT2tsca1K10w9olzFT6h3vrxN6aB/U9XpAxXE= ;
Date: Sat, 26 Feb 2005 07:13:00 -0800 (PST)
From: chichi ngozi
Subject: VIVA 419
To: "C. A. Pascale"
X-RBL: 80.88.139.238 is listed by bl.spamcop.net

Pascale,

I have just concluded a transaction with a greedy Australian. By 19hours GMT today, I will be US\$265,900 richer. I WILL MAIL YOU THE DETAILS LATER.

You guys can pulish what you like, as long as greedy people exist, I will always have customers.

VIVA 419
PROUDLY NIGERIAN
PROUDLY 419

And our response:

Mr. Ngozi:

Thanks, we will be looking forward to the latest installment.

Pascale
419 Coalition

23 FEB 2005

We got an interesting note from a "Proud 419er" in today, which we post here with its headers, for your perusal, enjoy:

Received: (qmail 24192 invoked from network); 24 Feb 2005 02:28:27 -0000

Received: from web41804.mail.yahoo.com (66.218.93.138)

by mx10.rmci.net with SMTP; 24 Feb 2005 02:28:27 -0000

Received: (qmail 21444 invoked by uid 60001); 24 Feb 2005 02:28:27 -0000

Comment: DomainKeys? See <http://antispam.yahoo.com/domainkeys>

DomainKey-Signature: a=rsa-sha1; q=dns; c=noftws;

s=s1024; d=yahoo.com;

b=P4xJPzS64Eb7jaGHCAQJjtrkP0HtnCodJujNxZRlelj48BhSS5TKewEQhN/Lm/ZG7PAK8Pi3JoBBITLb8dWBU90eCpJq1XP06zKr6PgeLr4oLiNlraIt4inPzo8IeHl

Message-ID: <20050224022827.21442.qmail@web41804.mail.yahoo.com>

Received: from [82.206.247.18] by web41804.mail.yahoo.com via HTTP; Wed, 23 Feb 2005 18:28:27 PST

Date: Wed, 23 Feb 2005 18:28:27 -0800 (PST)

From: chichi ngozi

Subject: 419

To: info@freemaninstitute.com

MIME-Version: 1.0

Content-Type: multipart/mixed; boundary="0-1382324575-1109212107=:19743"

I AM A PROUD NIGERIAN 419NER. AS A MATTER OF FACT I BOUGHT THIS MY

COMPUTER FROM THE PROCEEDS OF MY LAST BUSINESS (US\$23,345). I HAVE MADE OVER US\$600,000 IN THE LAST 4 YEARS AND YOU ARE TELLING ME TO LEAVE THIS LUCRATIVE JOB. YOU ARE NOT SERIOUS. YOU EUROPEANS AND AMERICANS HAVE NOT STARTED TO PAY. YOU WILL ALL PAY FOR:

CENTURIES OF SLAVE TRADE
THE COLONIALISATION OF AFRICA
THE EXPLOITATION OF AFRICA'S RESOURCES AND THE IMOVERSHMENT OF HER PEOPLE
GRANTING SANTUARY IN YOUR BANKS TO AFRICA'S STOLEN WEALTH.

NOTE:
THE U.S DEVELOPED ON THE BACKS OF SLAVES
THE U.K DEVELOPED FROM HER COLONY WHILE
SWITZERLAND IS DEVELOPING FROM STOLEN AFRICAN MONEIES IN HER BANK VAULTS.
WE WILL DEVELOPE FROM 419. WE ARE TAKING BACK WHAT YOU GUYS STOLE FROM AFRICA OVER THE LAST 5 CENTURIES. AFTER ALL WHAT ARE STOLEN AFRICAN ART WORKS STILL DOING IN THE LONDON MUSEUM?

YOU GUYS WILL PAY. MY HAPPIEST DAY WAS WHEN 2 OF MY VICTIMS COMMITTED SUCIDE AFTER LOOSING THIER ENTIRE PENSION FUND INVESTMENT. THIEVES. THEY WANTED TO RIP WHERE THEY DID NOT SOW. I PROMISE YOU, IT HAS ONLY JUST STARTED.

AT LEAST ONE THING I KNOW IS THAT I HAVE NEVER DEFRAUDED AN INNOCENT PERSON. ALL MY VICTIMS ARE GREEDY THIEVES.

VIVA 419
PROUDLY NIGERIA
PROUDLY 419

And here was our response, as you can see we are true to our word:

Sir:

Thank you for your frank note. We'll post it up in our news section today and see to it that your views have the widest possible circulation.

419 Coalition

18 FEB 2005
There have been arrests for 419 in Belgium, according to the Belgian newspaper de Tijd, sent in by Ultrascan. A rough English summary of the article would be:

in short it says: in total 5 arrested, of which 3 during a Tsunami scam while meeting a french victim, Other Belgian victims were a notary, the rector of a university and a couple officers of the court. Found were 3 suitcases with 15 million low quality fake dollars

Here is the article in its original text, looks like Dutch:

Politie waarschuwt voor oplichting via spam-mails

(belga) - De federale politie waarschuwt voor een nieuwe oplichtingspraktijk via e-mail, de zogenaamde oplichting 'à la Nigeriane'. In België hebben al enkele gerechtsdeurwaarders, een notaris en een rector van een universiteit zich in de luren laten leggen, aldus de politie.

'De modus operandi is steeds dezelfde, vertelde Glenn Audenaert, gerechtelijk directeur van de gerechtelijke dienst van het arrondissement (GDA) Brussel. Per dag worden drie miljoen spamberichten verstuurd via het internet. Daarin vertelt iemand uit Zuidoost-Azië dat zijn of haar ouders, die succesvolle handelaars waren, zijn omgekomen bij de tsunami van 26 december. Die ouders hadden toegezegd een kapitaal in Europa, maar de wees is momenteel niet in staat om dat geld zelf te gaan halen. 'In de mail wordt dus aan de ontvanger gevraagd het geld op te halen, in ruil voor een fiks commissieloon', aldus Audenaert.

Europeanen die op de oproep reageren, worden voor een eerste ontmoeting uitgenodigd naar een ander land. Daar ontmoeten ze zogenaamde mensen van een veiligheidsfirma, die koffers vol valse dollarbilletten hebben. 'Om het geld te krijgen moet het slachtoffer daar al tussen de 10.000 en 50.000 euro neertellen', vertelt Audenaert. Daarna wordt een nieuwe ontmoeting geregeld om 'een consul om te kopen om het geld het land uit te krijgen'.

Vorige week woensdag heeft de afdeling witwassen van de GDA Brussel drie personen kunnen oppakken die een Frans slachtoffer probeerden op te lichten. Daarbij werden drie koffers met voor zowat 15 miljoen valse Amerikaanse dollars in beslag genomen.

In totaal werden tot nu toe al een vijftal mensen opgepakt die aan deze oplichting meewerkten. 'In drie kwart van de gevallen gaat het om Nigerianen', aldus Audenaert. 'Deze methode bestaat al een tiental jaar, maar het nieuwe is dat men nu de tsunami-ramp misbruikt om slachtoffers op te lichten', stelt Glenn Audenaert. Er zijn momenteel verschillende oplichtersbendes die dezelfde methode gebruiken en grensoverschrijdend werken.

Hoeveel mensen al het slachtoffer zijn geworden van deze techniek, is niet bekend. Heel veel

gedupeerden dienen geen klacht, omdat ze bang zijn dat hun zwart geld aan het licht zou komen, of dat ze zelf beschuldigd zouden worden van witwaspraktijken.

'De gedupeerden handelden allemaal uit puur geldgewin', vertelt Audenaert. 'Tot nu toe hebben we al weet van gerechtsdeurwaarders, een notaris en een rector van een universiteit die zich hebben laten oplichten', luidt het.

Here is a link to the article for as long as it is good:

<http://www.tijd.be/nieuws/artikel.asp?id=1596537>

18 FEB 2005

From the ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

Senate Passes '419' Bill

From Kola Ologbondiyan in Abuja, 02.17.2005

The Senate yesterday finally passed the amendment to Advance Fee Fraud Act, which would check the use of cyber cafe facility to commit offences.

The bill, when assented to by President Olusegun Obasanjo, compels operators of electronic communication service, to obtain from their customers, their full names and addresses and provide them on demand to the regulatory agencies.

Internet Service Providers who fail to or supply false information would have committed an offence and could be jailed for one year or fined N100, 000, while owners of such facilities would on conviction pay N100,000 and have their equipment seized.

A section of the Bill also provides that owners of electronic telecommunication houses must maintain a register of all fixed line customers, which could be inspected by any authorised officer of the National Communications Commission (NCC), even as it further provided that anybody who uses the non-fixed line or the Global System of Mobile Communications should submit to the Commission necessary data required by the Commission.

419 Coalition Note: Very impressive, if this bill is massively enforced. Time will tell, let us hope for the best. We'd like to see a provision added which specifically gives the EFCC access to all this data on demand.

8 FEB 2005

From Vanguard, a Nigerian newspaper:

Money laundering: Bank chairmen, CEOs now co-offenders, says CBN

By Babajide Komolafe & Yinka Kolawole

LAGOS-THE Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has said that chairmen, board members and chief executives of banks "will not be spared if their institutions are found to have been used as vehicles for the transfer of proceeds of crime." The CBN threatened to penalise bank executives that allow their banks to be used for fraudulent funds transfer.

The apex bank gave this warning in a circular entitled: "The unprofessional roles of banks in funds transfer," issued February 1, 2005, and signed by the Director of Banking Supervision Department, Mr Ignatius Imala.

The CBN said: "In recent times, the media has been replete with stories of unprofessional activities by banks in facilitating the movement of criminally acquired funds. The release of the Know Your Customer (KYC) Guidelines and Manual Ref: BSD/DO/CIR/VOL.1/01/24 of November 28, 2001 and BSD/14/2002 of December 19, 2002 respectively, by the CBN, was intended to guide banks in ensuring that they were not used as conduits for moving such funds. Furthermore, the reports of the CBN examiners on several '419' and other irregular transfer cases had led to the imposition of penalties on the affected banks to serve as a deterrent.

According to the circular, "The reports of the unprofessional roles of banks in the 'bad business' is increasingly becoming embarrassing to the industry and should be totally checked. While it is expected that the on-going consolidation and the strengthening of the capital base of the banks will lead to sound, more professional and better managed institutions, all the operators in the industry are hereby advised in their own interest to diligently review their processes in total compliance with the KYC guidelines and manuals referred to above.

"They are also advised to note that the CBN Governor's special e-mail address governor@cenbank.org for capturing information on malpractices by banks is still available to the public. Only the Governor of CBN has access to this web address, and information sent to it is treated with utmost confidentiality.

"The chairmen, board members and chief executives of the banks, in line with their oversight functions, are, therefore, advised to take these matters very seriously as they will not be spared if their institutions are found to have been used as vehicles for the transfer of proceeds of crime," the circular said.

419 Coalition comment: We are under the impression that monies sent in and out of Nigeria are often "transited" through CBN, which functions like a combination of a Bank of England and the Federal Reserve in

the Nigerian banking structure. We ask - what will CBN do to punish itself when laundered monies pass through it? Also, 419 Coalition asks When will the affairs of Paul Ogwuma, ex -Governor of CBN, be looked into, recalling that Ogwuma was named as a principal in several 419 cases and was even hauled in to US Court and forced to give a deposition as a defendant in a 419 lawsuit? Also recalling that he has been named as a principal in other 419 cases that have not come to court? Most assuredly, his financial affairs should be examined by the EFCC, if only to "remove all doubt" that he has been complicit in 419 activities over the years.

21 JAN 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

Again, Court Refuses Nwude Bail Application

By Abimbola Akosile and Amina Amali

An Ikeja High Court judge, Justice Olunmi Oyewole has dismissed a second bail application filed by Ch g Advance Fee Fraud a.k.a. 419 trial involving \$242million. The judge refused the application on the grounds that it application was incompetent.

Nwude, who is standing trial in the four-month old matter alongside Mrs. Amaka Anajemba, (2nd accused) and Mr. Nzeribe Edeh Okoli, in a de novo (fresh) trial, which began on October 5, was not in court at last adjourned date (on Wednesday). He is currently under -going treatment at the National Hospital, Abuja, allegedly for a kidney-related ailment, and his absence stalled the trial.

The presiding judge, who earlier ordered the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to obtain a medical report on accused's health status, in a bid to determine continuation of trial, however refused and rejected the bail application filed by Nwude, through his counsel, Chief Alex Izinyon, SAN.

A mild argument occurred between Izinyon and lead prosecution counsel, Mr. Rotimi Jacobs, on the issue of medical report ordered by the court. Jacobs accused Izinyon of going behind him, contrary to court orders, to obtain the report from the hospital. Izinyon also countered that Jacobs was only concerned about the trial, and not his client's state of health, when he wrote a letter to the hospital asking that Nwude be transferred to Lagos to face trial.

Ruling on the bail application, Justice Oyewole claimed an appeal on his earlier ruling on bail request (filed by Nwude) was pending before the Court of Appeal, and granting the fresh application would amount to stepping on the higher court's jurisdiction. He added that he will do that, unless the accused files a notice of discontinuance, or the notice is struck out by the higher court.

The judge also claimed there was no deviation in the new medical report on the accused applicant (Izinyon told the court his client was stooling blood), which would have warranted a fresh application for bail being granted. He thereafter refused and dismissed the bail application, and adjourned the matter till February 9,11,14,15 & 16 for continuation of trial.

First arraigned in Abuja on February 4th, 2004, accused persons, were alleged to have defrauded a Brazilian banker, Mr. Nelson Sakaguchi of a sum of \$242million over a three-year period, from April 2, 1995 to January 20, 1998 at Opebi, Ikeja, Lagos State, contrary to Sections 1(1)(a) and (3) of the Advance Fee Fraud Act of 1995 as amended by Act 62 of 1998.

The amount was said to represent payment due to the Federal Government on the alleged contract No. FMA/132/019/82 for the construction of Abuja International Airport, Nigeria. Penalties for each of the counts range between seven and ten years. The accused persons are facing a fresh 98 count charge, with twelve additional counts.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:

<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=7546>

14 JAN 2005

From the Daily Independent (Online) a Nigerian newspaper:

Alleged 419 : Nwude is dying, counsel tells court

By Victor Efeizomor
Law Reporter.

The Advance Fee Fraud suspect, and a former director of Union Bank Plc, Emmanuel Nwude, standing trial for allegedly defrauding a Brazilian bank of \$247 million is said to be seriously ill and currently in the intensive care unit of an Abuja hospital.

The suspect is to undergo a second major surgical operation at the Abuja General Hospital next week to be performed by a team of neurologists and brain specialists to stabilise his health condition.

Emmanuel Ofulue, counsel to Nwude who made this known on Thursday at the resumed trial at an Ikeja High Court, told the presiding judge, Justice Joseph

Oyewole that the health condition of his client was critical adding that "Since he was admitted , I visited him and the condition was serious and he is considering a second operation. We are grateful to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for allowing him to go back to the hospital, where he was operated upon," he said.

But controverting the claims, Rotimi Jacobs, an EFCC lawyer and prosecution counsel stated that Nwude's condition was not as serious as the defence counsel wants the court to believe ,adding that he could not contact the doctor handling the case on his visit to the hospital to ascertain the true position of the accused person.

Oyewole, on that score ordered that a medical report should be forwarded to state the true position of Nwude's health and dismissed an oral application brought by Amaka Anajemba, one of the suspects standing trial ,asking the court to grant her limited and conditional bail in view of the recent development.

Arguing the application, Anajemba's counsel, Chris Uche (SAN) told the court that the condition under which his client was being detained is in such a terrible state as it has started having serious impact on her health , saying that Amaka is a victim of circumstance.

"I am asking that if she is granted limited bail, she will regularly attend the court proceedings to stand her trial. We will agree to any condition, even if it amounts to reporting to EFCC on a weekly basis. She has enough property of her own and she will not run away from the country", Uche pleaded with the court.

Jacobs countered the defense counsels argument, positing that the issue of bail has already been decided by the court when the judge dismissed the application which is at the court of appeal and that the lower court has no jurisdiction to decide on a case before the appellate court. He said the defense can not come to accuse the prosecution of delaying trial when it was he who has been frustrating the trial.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.independentng.com/news/nnjan140514.htm>

Vanguard and ThisDay also covered the story, here are the respective URL's for as long as they are good:
<http://www.vanguardngr.com/articles/2002/southwest/sw314012005.html>
<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=6938>

12 JAN 2005
From the Miami Herald:

Miami, Florida: Nigerian scam suckers professor; \$1.68 million in money laundered

By Nick Farrell

Miami law professor, with three doctorates, who is in the centre of a money laundering court case, claims he is a victim of the Nigerian scam.

University of Miami law professor Enrique Fernandez-Barros has told the Miami Herald that he thought he had been emailed by the the Nigerian government for help reviewing some infrastructure contracts.

A "Nigerian official" promised in late 2003 to pay him for legal services if he would help the government and a Nigerian businessman recoup \$1.68 million from a US truck-leasing company.

Fernandez-Barros would get \$200,000 in fees for this and other work. He apparently didn't seem to notice any problems with the English in the email, or anything else that suggested it was a Nigerian scam other than the fact it came from Nigera. Still that is a high powered education for you.

Later Fernandez-Barros received an altered cheque from Penske Truck Leasing which he deposited it in his credit-union account and later had the money wired to Nigeria.

Now Penske say that the money was taken illegally and they want it back. Fernandez-Barros, 73 says he never got any cash out of the Nigerians.

Penske is going after its own bank, Fleet National, which approved the professor's transaction, and the University Credit Union, an independent provider of banking services for UM employees and students.

Fernandez-Barros has not been charged or sued.

11 JAN 2005
This is from South Africa's news24.com which is an online and cable news service. It was posted up on 31 DEC 2004, but we were just made aware of it:

SA cops, Interpol probe murder

Philip de Bruin

Interpol and the police forces of South Africa, America and Greece have joined forces to investigate the brutal murder of a wealthy Greek national whose badly mutilated body was found in Durban shortly before Christmas.

George Makronalli, 29, was a victim of a notorious 419 fraud scheme.

He was apparently lured to the country under the pretence that he could earn hundreds of thousands of rands. He was then kidnapped and summarily killed when his family refused to pay the ransom.

A spokesperson for the Durban police confirmed on Thursday that Makronalli was a victim of a 419 syndicate.

Caught in a trap

The syndicate issued a statement on the internet in which they claimed that they had stolen about R150m from the South African government by submitting false claims for "contracts" and that they needed help from overseas to get the money out of the country.

Whoever was willing to help them, would receive a large part of the "profit". Makronalli was caught with this ruse. He reacted to the "invitation" and was convinced to come to South Africa in November.

He returned to Greece, but re-entered South Africa through Johannesburg International Airport at the request of syndicate members on December 18. He then disappeared.

When his brother, Sotirus Makronelli, from Los Angeles, could not establish contact with him for two days, he contacted Interpol and the American police. The police spokesperson said Sotirus allegedly also invested money in the 419 scheme.

Shortly after, Sotirus received an e-mail from the syndicate in which they informed him that they had kidnapped his brother and demanded that \$160 000 (about R1m) be deposited in an American bank account within 24 hours. They threatened to kill George if their demands were not met.

The ransom was not paid. A day later, police found George's body in Durban. Both his legs and arms were broken and he had been set alight - probably while he was still alive.

"This was a blatant execution after a failed demand. Mr Makronalli's suitcases full of clothes and travel documents were found with his body. Robbery was not the motive," the police spokesperson said.

Nobody has been arrested, but the police's unit against serious violent crime in Durban and the 419 task team from Johannesburg are investigating the murder with the assistance of Interpol and the American and Greek police services.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
http://www.news24.com/News24/South_Africa/News/0,,2-7-1442_1641875,00.html

419 Coalition Note: In the mid 1990's an American businessman, who happened to be an African American from Chicago, went to Nigeria and realized he was being 419ed, and refused to pay any advance fees. The 419ers held him for ransom, and sent home pieces of him to show they were serious. The family sent the 419ers \$1 million in ransom. But the man was found dead in front of one of the best hotels in Lagos. As in this case above, he had been set alight (basically they threw him out of a car and lit him up). It was not determined whether or not he was alive when they put him out of the car. 419 Coalition mentions this to point out the similarity in modus operandi with the case above. No-one was even caught or charged in the case.

10 JAN 2005

From ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

\$242m Scam: EFCC Can't Enforce Forfeiture Order: Counsels

By Ndubuisi Ugah

Counsels to Chief Emmanuel Nwude, one of the accused persons, in the \$242 million Advance Fee Fraud (aka 419) scam have condemned the moves by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to forcibly take over Nwude's properties and businesses.

In a statement by Nwude's Personal Assistant, Mr. John Nwachukwu, EFCC has gone ahead to appoint a firm of legal/property consultants to "manage" some of Nwude's prime properties.

The statement claimed that the move by EFCC was rather "hasty and an act of self-help," while stating that the order by the Abuja High Court was still subject of an appeal by the defence team.

Justice A. I. Chikere of Abuja Federal High Court had on May 26, 2004 granted EFCC's prayer for order of interim forfeiture of affected properties of accused persons standing trial in the 419 case.

Speaking on the issue, a lawyer in the defence team said "parties to a dispute are obliged to maintain the status quo, when an appeal is pending against an order of court to the knowledge of all parties," adding that "if the party that was favoured by the said order should go ahead to realise it irrespective of pending appeal, the rest (subject matter) would have been destroyed even if the appeal succeeds at the end of the day."

The statement noted that "because EFCC got this order unfairly through ex-parte, they are almost certain that it would not survive the test of an appeal. They appear, therefore, determined not to allow their victim (Nwude) enjoy the fruit of the pending appeal when it comes."

As a way to achieve its objectives, the statement explained that the defence team is examining two main legal options of either bringing civil actions against EFCC particularly for disrupting the operations of his companies, which are different legal entities or the initiation of criminal proceedings via contempt citation, which it feared may have to wait until the appeal against the order of interim forfeiture is due for hearing at the Abuja Court of Appeal.

Aside from this, the defence team expressed fears that cash and materials, which he (Nwude) would require for his defence had been lost in EFCC invasion of his office on December 1, 2004.

"There is a clear evidence of lawlessness and desperate self-help on the part of EFCC. It is clear all they wanted were these choice properties of the man and they are eager to acquire them by hook or crook, but why don't they allow the judicial process, which they themselves initiated to run its full course," the statement added.

10 JAN 2005

The Nigerian Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) on Monday arraigned five persons at the Ikeja High Court in Lagos for allegedly defrauding a United States national of N378 million (\$ 2.7 million) in a Classic 419 scheme.

Harrison Odiawa (alias Abu Belgore) who was alleged to have conspired with Dr. Tunde Oni, Desmond Okoro, Mr. Sayor, Mr. Anderson and others still at large, pleaded not guilty to the charges before Justice Joseph Oyewale.

A bail hearing has been set for 28 JAN.

419 Coalition Note: We have been following this case, and want to compliment Deputy Director Ibrahim Lamorde and the rest of the EFCC team on how they have handled it so far. Odiawa and his fellow arraigned 419ers are a definite flight risk, so we would urge that they be held without bond and that their assets be immediately seized. We also look forward to their apprehension those 419ers remaining at large in this case.

6 JAN 2005

From The Punch, a Nigerian newspaper:

EFCC probes eight banks

Louis Iba and Oluyinka Akintunde, Abuja

Eight banks are being investigated by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission for allegedly aiding and abetting economic and financial crimes in the country.

A comprehensive report on the operations of the EFCC, prepared by a committee set up on July 29, 2004, also listed a liquidated merchant bank and an Abuja-based community bank as two of the eight errant banks.

The liquidated merchant bank is, however, contesting the revocation of its licence by the Central Bank of Nigeria and liquidation by the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation at a Federal High Court.

The law establishing the EFCC mandates it to investigate economic and financial crimes such as money laundering, advance fee fraud (419) and oil bunkering.

The report which was exclusively obtained by our correspondents on Tuesday in Abuja, however, did not disclose the type of crimes committed by the banks being investigated.

On the cases of advance fee fraud, the report stated that 175 cases were reported to the commission.

About 205 arrested suspects and 31 cases were charged to court.

The Commission also warned three other banks for non-compliance with the rules and regulations governing money laundering and suspicious

transactions.

The Chairman of EFCC, Mr. Nuhu Ribadu, had on June 28, 2004, revealed that about 30 banks were being investigated for their roles in economic and financial crimes.

Ribadu warned that the commission would henceforth close the banks used for such crimes.

He said, "We would go after any financial institution that allows itself to be used in facilitating advance fee fraud. We would not hesitate to close down the banks.

"Already, we have about 30 banks that we are investigating for their roles in financial and economic crimes. If it means closing down the banks, I swear we would do that to sanitise the system," he had affirmed.

Ribadu also flayed the management of an old generation bank for allowing a shareholder to own more than 10 per cent of shares of the bank.

He blamed the increasing rate of economic and financial crimes on the inability of the country's judiciary to convict a any accused person.

"The law enforcement agencies including the judiciary encouraged the crimes because they also benefited from the misfortune of the victims.

"This is evident because hitherto law enforcement agencies and the judiciary often turn a blind eye to the criminal activities of these perpetrators," he added.

419 Coalition Note: Many more than 175 cases of 419 have been reported to the EFCC. 419 Coalition alone has sent in many hundreds, if not thousands, of 419 solicitations which included Nigerian phone numbers to the EFCC, and each one of those is a 419 complaint (or "case"). Under Nigerian law even writing a 419 letter is illegal, and each letter is a "419 case" when brought to the attention of the authorities.

4 JAN 2005

From a US magazine, Internet Retailer, as posted on naijanet.com this date:

The Reshipping Scam: How public-private cooperation led to cyber-busts in Nigeria

More than 50 people crowded into a Lagos, Nigeria, street one day last spring, shouting in outrage and manhandling four local cops and an American FBI agent who were arresting a neighborhood kid they suspected of running online scams. "I thought we were going to have a riot," recalls FBI supervisory special agent Dale Miskell. "The people started going nuts." Neighborhood women felt especially protective of the 18-year-old boy being taken into custody, he says.

The officers broke free of what they say was a potential mob, escorted their handcuffed suspect into an armored Chevy Suburban nicknamed the "War Wagon" and made their retreat. "At certain times, you don't want to hang around," Miskell says.

17 arrests

The arrest was one of the 17 collars, all of them far from quiet or routine, that Miskell helped make during a 30-day trip to Nigeria that spanned April and May last year. It was his third journey to West Africa in the last two years to fight online crime. "In every arrest, these guys ran and fought," Miskell says.

Nigeria and Ghana have earned notoriety for web crime, according to officials of the Merchant Risk Council, a not-for-profit group that's helping authorities track scams there and throughout the world. Miskell was in Nigeria as part of a mission by the Internet Crime Complaint Center in Fairmont, W.Va., an organization formed in 2000 by the FBI and the National White Collar Crime Center, to fight international online fraud. He was acting on information provided by the Merchant Risk Council.

Miskell reports that arrests for cyber-crimes in Nigeria are rare. Both the Merchant Risk Council and the Internet Crime Complaint Center believe that cooperation among online merchants and law enforcement agencies made the arrests possible and could serve as a model for the future. Retailers can provide data that can indicate who's committing the crimes, but have no law enforcement capabilities. And police agencies are not sources of information but have the means to investigate data and make arrests. "We look to this as a proven case where we can collaborate productively between private industry and law enforcement," says Tracy Brown, director of Internet security for American Eagle Outfitters and Merchant Risk Council cochair and head of the council's law enforcement committee. "We would welcome members all the way down to local law enforcement to partner with us on getting the bad guys."

Reshipping

By now, online merchants have become wary of shipping merchandise to addresses in West Africa because so many customers in the region use stolen credit card information to make their purchases. But criminals are always on the alert for ways to circumvent fraud-prevention measures. Many in Nigeria have come up with ingenious schemes to dupe Americans into unwittingly cooperating with their rip-offs. Those schemes are known as "reshipping" and often

start at a singles chat web site.

In a chat room, or on a singles phone line, a scammer establishes a relationship with a potential victim, often wooing her by sending her flowers or little gifts. Eventually, he gives her a story about hardships in Nigeria, including the inability for some reason or another to obtain American goods. He persuades her to agree to receive merchandise that he buys online, then reship it to Nigeria.

Once she agrees, the criminal uses stolen credit card information to buy goods online and have them shipped to his American girlfriend. The victim rewraps the merchandise and ships it to an address in West Africa. And so it goes until the victim gets tired of the long-distance romance, the criminal switches to a new victim or the victim herself gets in on the scheme and keeps the merchandise.

Criminals also have refined methods of preying on small businesses, Miskell says. A con artist in Africa might develop a relationship with a retailer who sells a relatively low-cost item, chocolates, for example. After becoming a trusted customer, the criminal then will ask the merchant to buy a high-value item, say computers, to reship to him in Africa.

If the small retailer protests that computers aren't what he sells, the confidence man cites their working relationship, asks him to do it as a favor and offers to pay a small commission. The victim agrees, charges the computers to his own card, ships them to Africa and receives a cashier's check from the scammer. Only later does the small business owner find out the check's no good.

19,000 monthly complaints

Such problems plague a large number of Americans, says Miskell. During a single recent 90-day period, some 1,500 people in this country, either knowingly or unknowingly committing a crime, repacked expensive goods for reshipment to West Africa, he says.

Under Nigerian law, authorities are allowed to open packages as they arrive in the country. Miskell reports that every one of the 46 parcels he opened during a single day of his stay there had been reshipped to launder the merchandise. He says he could only guess about the legitimacy of the stacks of packages he didn't have time to inspect.

Miskell had some idea which packages might be bogus, however, because of information he was receiving daily from his colleagues back at the Internet Crime Complaint Center. The center, or IC3 as it's called, is staffed by about 40 employees of the FBI and 20 people who work for the National White Collar Crime Center. A U.S. Postal Service employee also works there to coordinate information exchange with his agency, and the center hopes to persuade the Secret Service to station a person there as well.

Because the non-profit National White Collar Crime Center is involved, the IC3 doesn't have to treat the information it gathers as FBI intelligence, which could limit its ability to inform retailers of emerging trends. The center's analysts sift complaints from consumers, merchants, associations and law enforcement agencies, compiling facts to build cases. Some 19,000 complaints about spam, phishing and reshipping are fielded in a typical month.

Victims as far apart as Macon and Tacoma may have been robbed or swindled by the same online criminal, but the authorities can figure that out only by processing the complaints nationally. By combining the schemes that are related, the center can come up with cases with high enough dollar amounts to warrant pursuing.

Tracking help

When enough information is amassed, the center works with state and local officials to take to the field for interviews, searches and arrests. One national action the center took, Operation WebSnare, has brought dozens of criminals to justice.

The center gets help in tracking crimes from the Merchant Risk Council, which was formed in 2000 to help make online commerce safer. The Merchant Risk Council's 7,000 subscribers include online merchants and vendors who sell to those retailers, says Julie Ferguson, vice president and cofounder of ClearCommerce who serves as the Merchant Risk Council cochair.

Bringing more law enforcement agencies into the network that exchanges and analyzes information on cyber crime is one of the Merchant Risk Council's goals, Brown says. Miskell's work in Nigeria could prompt other law enforcement agencies to join the Merchant Risk Council, Brown hopes.

Ferguson and Brown hold up the partnership of the Merchant Risk Council and IC3 as a model for future relationships. The Merchant Risk Council prompted the IC3 to take action in West Africa because so many problems arise there. "That's the place we complained loudest about," Brown says.

Miskell, who cites information from the Merchant Risk Council as vital to his work as program manager for IC3's effort in Nigeria, made his first trip to West Africa in February 2003. He and three other FBI agents spent a week training officers in a class he calls Cyber 101, the same course taught to law enforcement officers in the United States.

The investment in the trip shows the IC3's commitment to attacking online crime at the source, says Miskell, who estimates the cost of sending an agent there at \$20,000 for airfare, food and lodging, salary not included.

Shortly before Miskell's group arrived, the Nigerian government had organized the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, an elite group of police officers and lawyers. That commission came into being because the Nigeria government could no longer ignore

allegations of police corruption, Miskell says.

After that round of training, Miskell returned alone in December 2003 to help the police form liaisons with the local branches of international shipping companies, such as Federal Express, DHL and United Parcel Service.

That cooperation paid off last spring when Miskell made his third visit to Nigeria—this time to help make arrests. His group, which included several local officers, began its day by opening packages that had arrived in the country for delivery. Often, they'd open a container from one shipper, Fed Ex, for example, and inside find a box delivered by UPS to an address in the United States.

Next, the group took that package, piled into the War Wagon and drove to the address. Two plainclothes detectives hopped out of the vehicle and kept the building under surveillance while a third officer, under cover in a shipping company uniform, made the delivery.

Fake cashier's checks

Once the recipient received the package and paid the tax, Miskell and two uniformed officers armed with AK-47s converged on the suspect to make the arrest. All told, the team arrested 17 and seized \$1 million in fraudulently obtained merchandise and \$2.5 million in bogus cashier's checks. Prosecutions are under way, and Miskell anticipates returning to Nigeria to testify.

That kind of work, though only a beginning in the face of growing online crime, has prompted the Merchant Risk Council's Ferguson to praise Miskell. "He puts his life on the line to fight e-commerce fraud," she says. In fact, the Merchant Risk Council's 15-member board of directors, which includes online merchants and vendors, picked Miskell as the first recipient of The Merchant Risk Council Law Enforcement Award. The FBI has recognized Miskell's accomplishments, promoting him to head of a cyber crimes team based in Birmingham, Ala.

Miskell credits the Merchant Risk Council and IC3 with bringing together the information to make the arrests possible. Combining reports from multiple sources has allowed the groups to "learn and grow together," Miskell says.

3 JAN 2005

From the Daily Independent, a Nigerian newspaper:

Three Nigerians held for possessing fake dollars

Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency, Crime Circle Rawalpindi, has arrested three Nigerians in Rawalpindi on charges of carrying fake US dollar packets.

The suspects who were named as Solomon, William Ali and Ike Liveri Okeke, were held along with a Zimbabwean national, Ebrahim Mustafa from Islamabad. The suspects were alleged to be carrying the black paper packets sized equal to US dollars with the plastic cover showing that the same were issued by the Bank of America.

The security agency said it was alleged that the black paper packets could be converted into dollars with the use of special chemical to be provided by the American Embassy.

The suspects were also said to have failed to get themselves registered with foreign registration branch as required under the law of the land, while one of the accused was illegally staying in Pakistan.

Nine persons from Nigeria, South Africa, Congo and Zimbabwe were arrested during the month of December on charges of cyber crime offences, cheating, possessing black dollar size papers as forged currency and for illegally staying in Pakistan.

1 JAN 2005

Here is a reprint of an item posted in our 12 DEC 2000 news. Central Bank of Nigeria, amidst much fanfare, announced 17 SEP 2002 at a huge public function in New York that they had recovered the Ghasemi's 419ed monies. However, the Ghasemis have yet to receive their recovered monies from the Central Bank of Nigeria as of this date, though the US State Department has written that the funds can be repatriated by CBN at any time:

Anatomy of a case - this is a mix of Will Scam 419 and Black Currency 419. The victims in this case are seeking contacts with other victims. We received it 28 NOV 2000 and sent it onwards immediately to appropriate government agencies but have been holding it from public release until now to give time for investigators to work. A slightly edited version (for security and investigative purposes) of their case report is below in their own words:

From: Kennedy Walk- In Clinic
3308 West Kennedy Blvd.
Tampa FL, 33609
Phone Number- (813) 874-2400
Rubycafe1@aol.com

To Whom It May Concern:

Hello, my name is Shahla Ghasemi and my husband is Dr. Ali-Reza Ghasemi, we are American citizens who live in Tampa, Florida. Our telephone number for your convenience is (813) 874-2400 and (813) 832-4515, our address is above. This is what had happened to us and how we got involved in the Nigerian Advance Fee Fraud. About 3 months ago, we got a phone call from Nigeria by a man named Dr. Ali Abubakker -I don't believe that is his real name--his phone number is 234-1-774-1703. He introduced himself to us as the director of NNPC. He said that he had a confidential message for my husband, but if we were to expose this message he could lose his job and his life. He told us that he would receive a very big commission from this. The story that he told us was that one foreign contractor from our country who died transferred \$27,400,000.00 to Dr. Ali Reza Ghasemi. We were very shocked. After that, he faxed all the documents and attached all the needed documents. We looked over everything and they all seemed real, all bore the government's official seals and stamps. Then he faxed us a copy of our bank information, which we filled out and faxed back to him. On August 14,2000 we received a letter from the bank which stated that we needed to hire a power of attorney. His name is F.A. Williams and his telephone is 234-1-774-0939. We contacted Mr. Williams and he asked us to send him \$7,250.00 for the court registration fee through Western Union. We sent the money with a fee, which came out to be \$7,565.00. Attached is a copy of the receipt that we sent through Western Union to Mr. Williams. After they had received the payment, Mr. Williams said that everything was ready. Mr. Williams was at the bank and called us and asked us for a copy of SEPA. We had no idea what that was, so we called Dr. Abubaker who said that he didn't have the form and thought that maybe the original contractor hadn't paid for it. They then asked us for \$27,400.00 but with a fee we paid nearly \$30,000.00 through Western Union. After two days, Mr. Williams had called and congratulated us. He said that our money had been transferred and he faxed me a copy of the transaction, which stated that our money had left the bank and was on its way into our account. In that same week, Dr. Abubaker had faxed me his confirmation ticket saying that he was on his way into America, and that we should send him money to buy his ticket. The following day Mr. Williams called and said that our money had been stopped because of a shorting tax that needed to be paid which hadn't been paid. He faxed me an invoice for \$63,250.00 bill for the tax. We transferred this money through our bank to Prism Company at Nigeria. Two days later he called and said that everything was fine. He said that we should be hearing from our bank representative very soon. Two days later we received a call from Carlos White from Atlanta, Georgia in America. He introduced himself as a NCB Bank Representative with the phone number of 404-944-1842. He said that our money was ready and that we needed to fly to Atlanta to transfer the account into our account. We asked why and he said because the money was big and he needed to transfer the money in front us. He told us to bring a copy of our driver license, a copy of the contract, and \$11,500 in cash. The same evening my husband, daughter, and myself flew to Atlanta. We got a hotel room. Then next day we called Mr. White to make an appointment with him at our bank, First Union. He said that he had to send a bank representative to our hotel room. When we got back, he sent two men by the names of Mustafa Sharief and Agu Jbreh. They received all the documents and \$11,500 in cash and then they told us to wait for two hours at which time our money would be transferred into our account. We waited for a few hours and kept calling them and they had said that no transaction had occurred. So we decided to head back to Tampa, while we were in line checking our bags and reserving our tickets, we were contacted by Mr. White by our cell phone. We told him that we were leaving and ready to go back to Tampa, He got very mad and said that we couldn't go back because the transaction hadn't been closed yet and that he still needed to talk to us. We went back to our hotel and we had to reserve another room. We called Mr. White and he said that he would be sending two people. After two hours, two people arrived by the names of Mustafa Sharife and the other didn't give his name, but I do remember his face. They came and told us that the government of Nigeria had approved our payment to be physical cash. We asked them what that meant and they said that it was real physical cash. Then they asked us to go to their car to see the cash and get the cash or to wait and transfer the money into our bank account. They said that the money couldn't get into our account until it had been cleaned. We asked them what they meant and they went to the car and came back with 5 pieces of black paper. Then they went into the bathroom sink and with some chemicals cleaned the black paper and it turned out to be \$100.00 bills. We told them that it was fine. They could clean the money and deposit it into our account. Then Mr. Sharif called Carols White and he said that we had to pay for the chemicals, we asked how much they need and he said it was \$185,000. We told him if he could take the 185,000 from the money but he said that he could not touch the original money. Then we decided to go back to Tampa. From that night we decided to contact the Nigerian government and our attorney Mr. Williams. I called Dr. Abubaker and I called Mr. Williams, they acted normal and they didn't know what Mr. White had told me and then Mr. Williams told me that he had to go and speak with the president of Nigeria in Abuja and get his advice. Two days later, he called me and said that we had no choice but to pay the money for the chemicals, but he said that we should send him a copy of the receipt so that after the government received their money from America and Japan in January or February they would reimburse my money that we paid them for the chemicals. Mr. White was calling me and asking me for money for the chemicals. Finally we wired \$150,000 to them. Two days later, Mr. White called me from Atlanta and asked for a Rolex watch for the president of Nigeria so that he could basically smother the president and get a better job in Nigeria in addition he wanted \$350,000. The \$350,000 was for the purpose of opening an account for me for a CBN transit account. I

told him that he didn't tell us anything about this before, he told us after he had cleaned the money. That same day I spoke to our consultant and told him what happened to us and he said that we had been involved in a scam. He showed us the many different stories and example on the Internet of this scam and the many different victims that it had happened to. We found many different numbers to call for help including the Nigerian police. Sir/Mam, we really need your help. We lost almost \$400,000 on this matter. We are just a middle class family, my husband is a physician and I am a nurse. We borrowed money from many different places to pay to these people. Now we lost our credit and everything else. We beg for you to help us to arrest these people and get our money back. Please feel free to contact us at our phone number for any further information.

[Paragraph edited out]
[Paragraph edited out]

I called my bank and I asked them for a refund, my bank requested a refund through the Bank of New York. I got the number for the Bank of New York and asked them where did they send my money.

The representative said that they had sent the money to Lagos in Nigeria and Beirut in Lebanon, I asked for the phone number of the banks but they said that they didn't have it. They said that they had a representative at Nigeria who works for the Bank of New York. He is at Lagos and his name is Mr. Shay (phone number 234-1-2693327). The bank said that they sent the money to him and he sent it to the Bank of Omega (phone number is 234-1-2620851). I called to the Omega Bank Director, Mrs. Odunsi. I explained the situation and I faxed a letter of complaint. She said they got the money from the Bank of New York.

She then said the money was sent to the Atlantic Precision LTD (phone number is 234-1-2640120). The manager is Mr. Ikye, Eugwu. I spoke with Mr. Eugwu and I requested for a refund, I am yet waiting for his action towards this manner.

On November 2, 2000, I contacted with Mr. Ikye, Eugwen (director of Atlantic Precision LTD concerning when he was going to refund my money. He said that he couldn't refund the money because he paid the money to Mr. Bashiru, Ibrahim (phone numbers are 234-1-775-3112, 234-1-493-3445, and 234-1-804-3445). I said "Mr. Eugwn I sent my money from America to the Atlantic Precision LTD and it is your responsibility to collect my money from whoever received it." He then said "I am not a collector and don't call me anymore," after that he hung up. After that incident I called Mr. Bashrim and I explained what Mr. Eugwn had told me from the Atlantic Precision LTD, he said that he had received the money and would not be refunding it. I asked who he is and did you give anything in replace of my money, he said that it is their business; this is the way we live. I told him that I am going to call the police at Nigeria and I am going to send a letter to the Nigerian President. He said that he didn't care and used an excessive amount of profanity towards the President and the police. Then he proceeded on by saying that this is another way of income besides the oil that is coming into the country. He said that the President and the government knows about this. He also proceeded on by using curses and also by threatening. Now I believe that not only are Dr. Ali Abubaker, Mr. F.A. Williams, Mr. Carlos White (real name Ojbe, Onokaite and phone number in America is 404-944-1842) but also Mr. Bashiru and Atlantic Precision LTD are also included in this scam. I have also found the number for the director of CBN from the Internet. His name is Mr. Joseph Sanusi (phone number 234-1-266-0100) to tell him about how the people are using the CBN's name improperly. I decided to call him and one person who answered his phone proceeded on to tell me to call him at his private number (011-234-1-775-4327). I called him and told him my contract number and he said that everything was fine with my contract. He also asked me to fax the document to his attention at 44-870-134-9987. I asked him where this is and he said it is at London. It was then where I found out that this is another scammer. I hope that Mr. Joseph Sanusi can read this and find out who is really working for him and answering his calls. In conclusion, I would just like to point out that these scammers have created a horrible name for Nigeria. The people wont trust anyone from that country and yes there are some wonderful and innocent people out there whom our money should go to, but not to these 419ers [remark edited slightly].

1 JAN 2005

This piece is from 31 DEC 2004, but we wanted to carry it over into 2005 News as well.

EFCC Commissioner Nuhu Ribadu selected as Man of the Year by ThisDay, a Nigerian newspaper:

Nuhu Ribadu: The Anti-Corruption Czar

By Simon Kolawole, 12.31.2004

Nuhu Ribadu is vindictive. Nuhu Ribadu is being used by President Olusegun Obasanjo to witch-hunt the president's political opponents. Nuhu Ribadu does selective justice. Nuhu Ribadu talks too much. Nuhu Ribadu grandstands. Nuhu Ribadu is power-drunk. Nuhu Ribadu

has bitten more than he can chew. Nuhu Ribadu this. Nuhu Ribadu that.

That is just one side of the story, the unpleasant side of the story, depending on whether you have been pinched by the claws of the Octopus called Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), headed by Nuhu Ribadu, an Assistant Police Commissioner who is the Executive Chairman of the Commission.

The pleasant part of the story is that Ribadu has inspired the commission to a height that could make Major-Generals Muhammadu Buhari and Tunde Idiagbon (late) envious, given their own spirited battle against corruption and indiscipline when they sat on the seat of power in 1984-85. Theirs was called War Against Indiscipline (WAI). Despite all their excesses, Buhari and Idiagbon are still recognised for making efforts to sweep corruption and other forms of indiscipline out of the nation's terrain.

The EFCC is saddled with the responsibility of fighting battles that even angels will tactically dodge. In a country where corruption is the major employer of labour, it takes a large injection of courage to stand out and be counted as an anti-corruption crusader. Ribadu is heavily injected with courage, perhaps an overdose of it, and he is suicidally wearing a battle gear against 419, bank frauds, fraud in the petroleum sector, pipeline vandalisation and money laundering among several other children and grandchildren of corruption.

He knows that too well. A devout Muslim, he readily admits that if it is the will of Allah that he should be consumed by this anti-corruption war, so be it. From Allah he came, and to Allah he shall return. "Believe me, I'm not afraid of death. I've got so many death threats. I am not bothered. I just checked my e-mail now and I received a threat mail from a Nigerian fraudster based in Germany. We just blocked a 419 deal he wanted to seal. He's furious. He said he is monitoring my movement, that he would deal with me. Of course, I just smiled. I get a lot of such letters everyday. I'm not worried at all," he once told this writer in an informal chat.

What makes the Ribadu story pleasing to the ear is that he is not a typical police officer. In fact, he had a rough battle with the police hierarchy when he was appointed chairman of EFCC. Their anger stemmed from the fact that President Olusegun Obasanjo appointed a 'junior' officer to head the commission. The position, they argued, was for a person with rank of Commissioner of Police. But Obasanjo stuck to his gun. He had heard a lot about the integrity of this particular police officer in a country where police officers and integrity don't mix as a matter of principle. Obasanjo had done his own surveillance gathering and was bent on scoring a vital goal with Ribadu's appointment.

Many were of the opinion that the police hierarchy did not like Ribadu's appointment, not because he was not qualified, but because of the billions of naira involved in the anti-corruption business. It was too juicy a job to hand over to a very young man, who was just hovering around 40 years of age then.

Fighting 419 was a very lucrative business in the past. Many Inspectors-General of Police had fed fat on the scams. There was an IGP who used to give police protection to 419 kingpins. The story goes that one day, an Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG) was having a meeting with this IGP in question when a notorious 419 kingpin came in. The IGP told the AIG to 'please excuse us'. The AIG was so furious that as soon as he was appointed IGP, his first duty was to get the fraudster arrested and detained throughout his tenure. Such was the decay in the police hierarchy.

The official support and protection given to the fraudsters did sufficient damage to the image of Nigeria. The international community treated Nigerians with contempt, and when it came to business matters, they would not want to touch Nigerians with a long cable. The reproach was dehumanizing.

To make matters worse, the 419 kingpins were walking the streets as kings. They were openly celebrating their ill-gotten wealth. They were getting chieftaincy titles and granting press interviews. As soon as Ribadu came into office, he rounded them up. Many of them have been languishing in jail on court orders, and they have been fighting for their fundamental human rights since then.

Ribadu has fought wars with foreigners who evade taxes and duties despite the billions they made from the Nigerian economy. He has engaged fuel smugglers in a war on the borderline. He has taken on his own people like Alhaji Mohammed Bulama, the Managing Director of Bank of the North, who must have thought that the Arewa spirit would bless him with some protection. Those who accuse Ribadu of being used for political ends point directly to the case involving Governor Joshua Dariye of Plateau State. Many believe that it was because the president wanted to deal with the embattled governor that the EFCC has taken over the case. However, one point that cannot be discounted is that the Metropolitan Police of London wrote him and detailed all the allegations of financial misdeeds against the governor. Should the EFCC fold its arms and go to sleep after receiving such a report? Even though, EFCC does not have the power to try a constitutionally-protected governor but by trying the governor's co-conspirators who do not have immunity, Ribadu may be scoring an even bigger point. It will serve as a landmark in the anti-corruption fight.

Indeed, Ribadu is a shining example. No matter his perceived imperfections, he stands out for daring to take up a dogged fight against corruption. Not many Nigerians can be counted as standing tall in integrity, but his slender frame houses both integrity and courage. And since these are very scarce qualities in Nigeria, Ribadu has clearly made a name for himself. And that is why he has been selected as THISDAY Man of The Year which just ended.

419 Coalition Note: 419 Coalition would like to congratulate Commissioner Ribadu on his selection as ThisDay Man of the Year. He is genuinely doing his best to bring down the 419ers, and that takes immense skill, courage, and perseverance. Mr. Ribadu is a true patriot and is Making a Difference for all Nigerians, at home and abroad. We often think of Mr.

Ribadu as Nigeria's Eliot Ness. We thank the EFCC team and Mr. Ribadu for their efforts, and we applaud ThisDay for its selection of Commissioner Ribadu as Man of the Year.

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