

Nigeria - [419 Coalition](#) 2008 News on Nigerian Scam / 419 Operations

10 DEC 2008

419 Coalition Commentary -

As reported in the Nigerian Tribune and many other Nigerian newspapers today, Mrs. Farida Waziri, head of the EFCC said, as part of comments blaming the Judiciary and deflecting blame from the EFCC on lack of progress against corruption in Nigeria:

"[Mrs. Waziri] expressed worries over the slowness in obtaining judgments in corruption cases as against advance fee fraud cases. **'It remains a puzzle that advance fee fraud cases are speedily tried and judgments rendered**[emphasis ours], but not so with corruption cases'. [she said]"

419 Coalition simply cannot let that statement pass.... The idea that 419 advance fee fraud cases in Nigeria are speedily tried and judgements rendered is simply laughable. In fact, given the magnitude of 419 operations operating from Nigeria, there are few arrests, fewer convictions swift or otherwise, and even fewer reparations of 419ed funds.

And even when there is a conviction for 419, the EFCC can still move slower than molasses. A case in point is the Odiawa case below [see 24 NOV 2008 News] where there was Eventually (not swiftly) a conviction, and three years after the conviction not one cent's worth of 419ed monies or assets have been repatriated to the victim despite the court's order for restitution.

We don't see how EFCC can blame the Judiciary for any lack of performance in repatriating funds in this case, for example, as the EFCC is responsible for ferreting convicted 419er's funds and assets and has in the past, under Nuhu Ribadu and Ibrahim Lamorde, seen to it that restitution is made in at least some cases (like the famous Ghasemi case).

At any rate, Mrs. Waziri's contention that in Nigeria "advance fee fraud cases are speedily tried and judgments rendered" is absurd on the face of it, as pretty much any expert on 419 (other than Mrs. Waziri and perhaps some of her staff) will tell you if you ask, our view. Therefore, statements like this recent one of Waziri's do little to enhance the credibility of the EFCC in counter-419 matters,

And even if her comments were accurate, which they are not, 419 Coalition would say: Great! If the Nigerian judicial system is so efficient in dealing with 419 advance fee fraud cases, then the EFCC needs to arrest a whole Bunch more 419ers to keep the treadmill running at speed :)

Here is the URL of an article where the Waziri quote appeared, for as long as it is good:

<http://www.tribune.com.ng/10122008/news/news6.html>

24 NOV 2008

A 419 Coalition commentary on recovery and repatriation of 419ed funds by the Nigerian Government:

The Government of Nigeria is constantly pressing other governments, with considerable success, for assistance in finding and returning monies stolen by officials of previous Nigerian administrations and placed abroad. Of course, in such proceedings, the citizens of Nigeria understandably want their monies repatriated in the maximum amounts possible and as quickly as possible.

Likewise, in 419 matters the citizens of other governments want the Government of Nigeria to expedite by all means possible the repatriation of 419ed funds to their rightful owners.

The process of seizure and liquidation of 419ed assets and then repatriating them has always been painfully slow, and things have not improved since Mrs. Waziri has headed up the EFCC.

A case in point is the Harrison Odiawa case. Odiawa was convicted in January 2006 of 419ing \$2,212,894 and restitution was ordered in the case.

Of course, Odiawa used all the customary means to launder the stolen millions. The 419 Advance Fee Fraud section of the EFCC, headed up by Mr. Olaolu Adegbite was charged with unravelling Odiawa's schemes, seizing and liquidating his assets, and repatriating the 419ed millions to the victim of the crime.

Adegbite, a very experienced officer who has served under both Nuhu Ribadu and Farida Waziri, as Head of the Advance Fee Fraud Section of the EFCC, personally inspects all case files in which restitution and repatriation are relevant. He then instructs his subordinate case officers on the priorities and processes of proceeding in each case.

But despite Adegbite's best efforts, the process of recovery and restitution of 419ed funds remains painfully slow. For example, using the Odiawa case once again for reference, restitution was ordered nearly three years ago. While Adegbite has had moderate success since then in finding relevant bank accounts containing funds, and automobiles and real estate belonging to Odiawa or laundered for him, (and 419 Coalition believes that with due diligence there is MUCH more to be found) not one dollar has yet been repatriated to the victim.

In general, competent observers have noted that the amounts seized by the EFCC from convicted Nigerian 419ers have been painfully low given the billions stolen and that the rate of repatriation of such funds is painfully slow. The disappointing performance by the EFCC in these matters, it is said, does not engender a spirit of mutual cooperation.

419 Coalition would suggest once again, as it has in the past, that if the Government of Nigeria wants maximum attention given to the return of monies stolen from the people of Nigeria, then it must in turn give maximum attention to the return of monies stolen from the citizens of other countries by Nigerian 419ers.

We believe that in diplomatic parlance "linkage" is the term most often used to describe such situations...

11 NOV 2008

From KATU TV ABC Channel 2, Portland, Oregon:

Woman out \$400K to 'Nigerian scam' con artists

By Anna Song KATU News and KATU.com Web Staff

Janella Spears doesn't think she's a sucker or an easy mark.

Besides her work as a registered nurse, Spears - no relation to the well-known pop star - also teaches CPR and is a reverend who has married many couples. She also communicates with lightning-fast sign language with her hearing-impaired husband.

So how did this otherwise lucid, intelligent woman end up sending nearly half a million dollars to a bunch of con artists running what has to be one of the best-known Internet scams in the world?

Spears fell victim to the "Nigerian scam," which is familiar to almost anyone who has ever had an e-mail account.

The e-mail pitch is familiar to most people by now: a long-lost relative or desperate government official in a war-torn country needs to shuffle some funds around, say \$10 million or \$20 million, and if you could just help them out for a bit, you get to keep 10 (or 20 or 30) percent for your trouble.

All you need to do is send X-amount of dollars to pay some fees and all that cash will suddenly land in your checking account, putting you on Easy Street. By the way, please send the funds through an untraceable wire service.

By this time, not many people will fall for such an outrageous pitch, and the scam is very well-known. But it persists, and for a reason: every now and then, it works.

For Spears, it started, as it almost always does, with an e-mail. It promised \$20 million and in this case, the money was supposedly left behind by her grandfather (J.B. Spears), with whom the family had lost contact over the years.

"So that's what got me to believe it," she said.

Spears didn't know how the sender knew J.B. Spears' name and her relation to him, but her curiosity was piqued.

It turned out to be a lot of money up front, but it started with just \$100.

The scammers ran Spears through the whole program. They said President Bush and FBI Director "Robert Muller" (their spelling) were in on the deal and needed her help.

They sent official-looking documents and certificates from the Bank of Nigeria and even from the United Nations. Her payment was "guaranteed."

Then the amount she would get jumped up to \$26.6 million - if she would just send \$8,300. Spears sent the money.

More promises and teases of multi-millions followed, with each one dependent on her sending yet more money. Most of the missives were rife with misspellings.

When Spears began to doubt the scam, she got letters from the President of Nigeria, FBI Director Mueller, and President Bush. Terrorists could get the money if she did not help, Bush's letter said. Spears continued to send funds. All the letters were fake, of course.

She wiped out her husband's retirement account, mortgaged the house and took a lien out on the family car. Both were already paid for.

For more than two years, Spears sent tens and hundreds of thousands of dollars. Everyone she knew, including law enforcement officials, her family and bank officials, told her to stop, that it was all a scam. She persisted.

Spears said she kept sending money because the scammers kept telling her that the next payment would be the last one, that the big money was inbound. Spears said she became obsessed with getting paid.

An undercover investigator who worked on the case said greed helped blind Spears to the reality of the situation, which he called the worst example of the scam he's ever seen.

He also said he has seen people become obsessed with the scam before. They are so desperate to recoup their losses with the big payout, they descend into a vicious cycle of sending money in hopes the false promises will turn out to be real.

Now, Spears has gone public with her story as a warning to others not to fall victim.

She hopes her story will warn others to listen to reason and avoid going down the dark tunnel of obsession that ended up costing her so much.

Spears said it would take her at least three to four years to dig out of the debt she ran up in pursuit of the non-existent pot of Nigerian gold.

11/13/2008

KATU News On Your Side Investigator Anna Song comments:

We came across this story while attending a conference on financial crimes in Eugene. State attorneys for the Oregon Department of Justice were using this case as a teaching tool, with the name of the victim redacted. I was astonished, as many of you are, that someone could lose \$400,000 in a Nigerian scam. These are the type of emails we all routinely get in our inbox, if our spam filter doesn't catch them first. I inquired with the state attorneys about whether this victim would be interested in talking with me. To my surprise, she agreed.

I went to Sweet Home with a high level of skepticism. What I found was a normal, middle-class home near an elementary school, a deaf husband trying to fix his phone so that it would vibrate instead of ring, and his wife, Janella Spears, trying to get their grandkids to calm down so we could do a television interview.

Investigators with the Oregon Department of Justice initially discovered Spears when they were investigating a different money laundering case. While looking at Western Union money transfers, they noticed someone had wired \$144,000 to Nigeria over the course of three short weeks. It got their attention. They honed in on Spears, and did a full "money bust" at her home. After scouring her house, looking at all her financials, talking with local bank representatives and otherwise doing a complete investigation, the detectives concluded she was a true victim. Remember, investigators also had hundreds of emails to go through, revealing her correspondence with the Nigerian scammers and their creative stories aimed at bleeding money from her. Spears was never charged, and I have to go on the investigators' judgment for that. For good measure, they've warned Spears that if she sends any more money to Nigeria, they will charge her with a crime. She admits it may be the only real deterrent for her, as fixing this became somewhat of an obsession.

Whether or not you believe her, Spears claims she wanted the money so she could help others in need.

The Nigerian scammers look for people like Janella Spears. Most of us have the sense to hit delete. But what about that older relative who has email, but is gullible or easily confused? Obviously, the scam works. That's why it continues.

Here is a link to the story for as long as it is good:

<http://www.katu.com/news/34292654.html>

27 OCT 2008

From the Nigerian newspaper The Sun:

Cybercrime: EFCC arraigns 58 in Kaduna

By Sun News Publishing

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has recorded yet another breakthrough in its resolve to check the incidences of economic crimes in the country, with the arraignment of 58 persons in connection with advance fees fraud before the Federal High Court in Kaduna presided over by Justice Shuabu Mohammed.

The suspects were arrested in an operation tagged: Operation Cyber Storm1 carried out in the nation's three geo-political zones of South-West, South East and South- South.

The accused persons include Kalu Agwara, Emejuru Prince Patrick, Mang Agbai Ude, Mukaila Aina, Maduka Nnamdi Stanley, Oti Gabriel Arinze, Precious Kalu, Onyekwelu Peter Ndigwe, Anan James, Okunwa Christian Udeh, Kazeem Adewale, Abiola Samson, Adigwe Ngozi, Okpere Pullen, James Momoh, Ese Irohoboinose, Yisa Adisa, Odion Kevin, Ojo Solomon Taiwo, Abiodun Bashorun, Churchill J. Essien, Adewunmi Aringbola, Sanusi O. Abdulwasiu, Babajide Lukman, Okeke Oscar Nkem, Elisha Osughe.

Others are, Olasaide Dare, Koiki W. Adewale, Adebowale Muyiwa, Akinde Samson, Imoh Idiong, Ezechukwu Samuel, Sagunwero Allen Ihama, Sunday Oladunjoye, Ubani Felix Uzor, Imonima Kingsley, Emeka Asoanya, Prince Onyechere, Hak Azu Kalu, Muiyiwa Odusanya, Anthony Ugwu, Ibini Kayode, Balogun Otaigbe, Prince Iheoma Esionu, Nnachi Ephraim, Dadi Ike, Chigozirim Nwafor, Adenuga Lateef Olatunji, Ekwebelem Promise, Sorunke Odunayo Smith, Obasi Nwankwo Irem, Presely Omorogbe, James Momoh, Oame Benjamin, Olumide Aluko, and Titus osita Okeke.

They were cumulatively slammed with more than 85 count charge all predicated on internet related fraud, offences based on obtaining by false pretences between Wednesday and Friday last week.

Seven of the accused persons were arraigned on the ground of failure to obtain full particulars of customers, permission of their business premises for the commission of the offences and non- registration of their cyber cafes with the EFCC.

A sample of one of the charges read; "That you, Kalu Agwara, on or about 5th April, 2008, at Preskal cyber café of No. 145 Azikiwe Road, Aba, Abia state, within the jurisdiction of the Federal High Court, in a letter titled congratulations we have secured the import licence sent to one Mrs. Minakshi Puri as Dominic Kingsley attempted to obtain the sum of USD 2,162.50 and USD 3,092.00 under false pretence of expending the said sum in trying to secure a fictitious import license as well as bank charges incurred in trying to obtain the said license which you claimed was a government requirement to enable the said Mrs. Minakshi Puri, send some goods that you falsely led her to believe you were going to import to Nigeria thereby committed an offence contrary to section 8 (b) of the Advance Fee Fraud and other fraud related offences Act 2006 and punishable under 1(3) of the same Act."

Though 17 of the 58 accused persons were not present in court, those in attendance were represented by counsel including Suleiman Rufai, BenChurchill Aniekwena, E.B.O Ibiloye, Mike Nwakanma, Obi I.I., M.A.Ikpe, B.M.Badru among others.

The prosecution counsel, totaling 12, were led by Messrs. Johnson Ojogbane and Joshua Saidi.

Reacting to the oral applications for bail by counsel to the accused persons, some of who cited the fact that their clients voluntarily reported themselves as at when needed by the EFCC, the prosecution lead counsel, Joshua Saidi, noted that it was pertinent that a formal application be made to support the facts as being presented by the defence counsel.

He along with other prosecution counsel, argued that while they concur that granting of bail was at the discretion of the court, it should be done in consideration of the nature of the charge, severity of punishment and evidence before the court. Only three of the defence counsel came up with written motion for bail.

Earlier in one of the cases, Francis Arinze Okeke vs Federal Republic of Nigeria, the defence counsel, Aniekwena Ben-churchill just like other defence counsel, orally applied for bail for his client citing the case of Abiola vs Federal Republic of Nigeria, as basis for his oral application. He based his application on section 118(2) of the criminal procedure Act which stipulates condition for bail of an accused and sections 35(5) and 36 of the 1999 constitution which state that an accused is presumed innocent until proven guilty..

Ruling separately in all the cases, the presiding Judge, Justice Shaibu Mohammed Said; "Though an oral application for bail can be entertained in a Law Court, materials must be made available to help the court make a judicial and judicious use of its discretion. Discretion cannot be made in a vacuum. There are no materials".

While refusing all the oral bail applications by the defence counsel, Justice Muhammed however, granted bail to only one of the accused persons, Nnachi Ephraim whose counsel Joe Umoelin the trial judge said was able to substantiate with proof his written application for bail.

The offence attracts a term of not more than 20 years and not less than 7 years without an option of a fine if an accused is found guilty.

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

<http://www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/news/national/2008/oct/27/national-27-10-2008-008.htm>

25 OCT 2008

From the Nigerian newspaper The Guardian:

EFCC arrests banker, undergraduates over N2.5m internet marriage scam

By Samson Ezea

A banker who works in the Western Union desk of one of the new generation banks was arrested yesterday by Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) over his role in a marriage scam involving two undergraduates of Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, Ogun State and a Malaysian lady who was swindled of \$21,600 (about N2.5 million).

In a statement made available to The Guardian, the spokesman of the Commission, Mr Femi Babafemi disclosed that the prime suspect claimed that he met the victim, on a dating site on the Internet and they started chatting. Soon, the chatting blossomed into a love affair. The 18-year-old undergraduate who had assumed the identity of a non-existent American national resident in Nigeria, said the only condition that the lady gave for the consummation of their romance was that he must be a Christian which he readily met. And to convince his prey about his identity, he downloaded the picture of a tall American from the Internet and sent it to the victim in Malaysia.

The Malaysian, who is a divorcee with two children was fascinated by the photograph of the white man she saw, and she started dreaming of an enduring relationship. Unknown to her that she was being conned, she stepped up her chatting with the 'white lover'. The online romance was so hot that the victim contemplated coming to Nigeria so they could solemnize the relationship. She was so carried away that she promised to take her 'fiance' to a Lagos-based Pastor because, as she claimed, the pastor was known to her. The suspect also promised to take his 'fiance' to a fictitious Pastor of a non-existent church in Lagos.

Now conscious that he had the victim under his spell, the suspect began to release tricks from his rich arsenal. He started by telling the woman that he would like to visit her in Malaysia before she arrived in Nigeria for the marriage and that he would need money for a ticket and other travel expenses. The victim swallowed the bait and agreed to send money through Western Union.

At this juncture, the fraudster realized that he would need to recruit more people to perfect the scam. He got a ready accomplice in his childhood friend, 18, who is also an undergraduate of Olabisi Onabanjo University. The accomplice's duty was to present his identity card to collect the money being sent by the Malaysian and take it to the prime suspect for a commission.

When they realized that the ID card might give them away because of the frequency at which they visited the bank, they changed their strategy. The accomplice stole his father's driver's licence, which they used to collect more money from the bank.

But despite the ingenuity of the duo, it wouldn't have been so easy to defraud the 35-year old Malaysian but for the role played by the third suspect, the banker, who was in charge of the Western Union Money Transfer desk of a branch of the bank. He threw banking ethics into dustbin and provided cover for the fraudsters for a fee and in the process, the trio successfully defrauded the victim of \$21,600.

The cat was let out of the bag when the woman discovered that the photograph sent to her by the principal suspect was actually downloaded from the Internet. Consequently, she petitioned the EFCC and the operatives of the Commission swung into action. In no time, the suspects were rounded up at Oshodi, Lagos. They have made useful statements and would soon be arraigned in court.

Here is the URL of this article for as long as it is good:

http://www.guardiannewsngr.com/news/article03//index3_html?pdate=251008&ptitle=EFCC%20Arrests%20Banker,%20Undergraduates%20Over%20N2.5M%20In

18 SEP 2008

From the Ontario Provincial Police, Canada:

OPP dismantle counterfeit cheque operation

TORONTO, Sept. 18 /CNW/ - Officers from the Ontario Provincial Police Organized Crime Enforcement Bureau and Anti-Rackets Section have arrested two persons in connection with the production and mass mailing of counterfeit cheques throughout North America.

This investigation was primarily focused on the "lab" where the fraudulent cheques were manufactured. The scheme was accomplished by preparing counterfeit cheques and their supporting documentation in relation to job banks, investment opportunities and lottery schemes.

In most cases, the victims received an unsolicited letter and cashier's cheque and asked to evaluate a company. The victims were asked to cash the cheque and wire the majority of the funds to a fictitious company. The victims would discover the cashier cheque was counterfeit and the financial institution held the victims liable.

The investigation was led by the OPP Organized Crime Enforcement Bureau, Identity Crimes and Forgery Investigation Unit, in partnership with the Vancouver Police Department, the United States Postal Inspection Service and all major financial institutions within Canada.

Over 1,200 possible victims were identified with financial losses estimated to be between \$120,000 and \$2.1 million.

On September 16, 2008, police executed two search warrants and seized computer systems, printers, scanners, credit card data, and a large quantity of cheque stock.

Charged are:

Adesoji Shakir SHITTU, age 32 of Etobicoke, Ontario, one count of Fraud Over \$5,000, Possession Of Credit Card Data, Possession Of Property Obtained By Crime And Conspiracy To Commit Fraud. The accused is being held for bail hearing.

Simone SHITTU, age 26 of Etobicoke, Ontario, one count of Fraud Over \$5,000 and Possession Of Credit Card Data. The accused was released on a Promise to Appear scheduled on October 17, 2008.

The investigation is continuing.

For further information: D/S/Sgt James GORRY, OPP Organized Crime Enforcement Bureau, Identity Crimes and Forgery, Investigation Unit, Phone: (705) 238-9818

Here is the URL of the announcement for as long as it is good:
<http://www.newswire.ca/en/releases/archive/September2008/18/c5933.html>

16 SEP 2008

From the Nigerian newspaper, The Punch:

EFCC arraigns businessman over N86m fraud

By Kayode Ketefe

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission has arraigned a businessman, Lewis Amitaye, before Justice Morenike Obadina of an Ikeja High Court for allegedly perpetrating fraud of over N86m.

The anti-graft agency had brought the accused to court on a 66-count charge of conspiracy and obtaining thousands of United States dollars from Mr. Amadi Chukwuma by false pretences.

The accused was said to have committed the offence between December 2005 and March 2007.

The offence is contrary to sections 8 (a) and 1 (3) of the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Related Offences Act No13 of 1995 as amended by Act No 62 of 1999.

Amitaye was alleged to have induced Chukwuma to give him funds, including \$10,061 (on December 16, 2005) \$30,000, (on January 9, 2006), \$26,570 (on January 27, 2006) and \$66,667.00 (on February 12, 2006) by false pretences.

EFCC also alleged that the accused had promised Chukwuma that these funds were meant to facilitate the transfer of \$10m for the lease of 10 acres of land at Rumokparali town, Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State which Chukwuma would use for a fish pond project.

Amitaye was alleged to have promised to help Chukwuma to obtain this \$10m facility from a company called Worldwide Financial Organisation through the Central Bank of Nigeria.

Chukwuma, who intended to use the 10 acres of land for fish farming, was alleged to have given one sum of money after another to facilitate the release of the said \$10m.

Amitaye (who often paraded himself under different identities like Dr. Tutu, Mr. Sikiru Olagunju, Mr. Precious John etc) allegedly collected \$33, 113 from Chukwuma on April 6, 2008 on the false pretext that he would use the sums to obtain EFCC clearance for transfer of the \$10m to him.

When the charge was read to the accused, he pleaded 'not guilty'.

The court consequently adjourned the matter till October 6.

22 AUG 2008

From the Sydney Morning Herald, Australia.
[419 Coalition comments between the lines in brackets]

Jail the 'greedy' scam victims, says Nigerian diplomat

by Asher Moses

THE Nigerian high commissioner says people who are ripped off by so-called Nigerian scams are just as guilty as the fraudsters and should be jailed. [419 Coalition comment: Someone needs to inform the High Commissioner that it is not the policy of His Own government, nor that of any other government in the world of which we are aware, to consider targets of 419 as criminals.]

Responding to a story in yesterday's Herald, which revealed Australians lose at least \$36 million a year to the online scams, Sunday Olu Agbi said Australians had failed to heed repeated warnings not to deal with shady characters on the internet. [419 Coalition comment: And of course the Nigerian 419ers have failed to heed repeated warnings that they are involved in large scale criminal activity and should cease and desist mass marketing fraudulent solicitations.]

He said media coverage of fraudulent activity stemming from Nigeria had given the country "a bad image" and "those who want to transact business with us are always very suspicious".

"The Nigerian Government frowns very seriously on these scams and every day tries to track down those who are involved," he said. "It is not in the character of Nigerians to be engaged in this kind of scam." [419 Coalition comment: Actually the Nigerian Government has done an pretty lousy job combating 419 over the last twenty years, though there were some notable successes when the Nigerian EFCC was run by Nuhu Ribadu and Ibrahim Lamorde. Even with those successes, the arrest and conviction rate given the magnitude of 419 operations is abominable overall, and the recovery rate and repatriation of stolen funds is even worse].

Professor Olu Agbi said there were almost 140 million people in Nigeria and fewer than 0.1 per cent were involved. [419 Coalition: Although no-one knows exactly how many 419ers there are in Nigeria, we suspect that they are considerably more than 0.1 per cent of population - certainly a considerably higher number Benefit from the influx of 419ed funds into the Nigerian economy.]

Nigerian scams are typically conducted via email and there are many variations.

In one version, the scammer poses as a government worker who has embezzled millions of dollars and is offering victims a percentage if they help retrieve the money by providing a relatively small amount of money for bribes or other charges.

Professor Olu Agbi said "greedy" Australians who tried to partake in these crimes - even though they are scams - should be arrested as well. [419 Coalition: Once again, while that may be the opinion of the good Professor, nevertheless that is not the policy of His Own government, the Australian government, or that of any other government in the world of which we are aware.]

"People who send their money are as guilty as those who are asking them to send the money," he said. [419 Coalition: That is simply not true according to the Justice Depts of every nation on earth, as far as we know, therefore the Prof should be reminded that while his personal opinions are what they are they are NOT policy anywhere.]

Some Nigerian fraudsters go as far as setting up fake profiles on dating sites. They string along targets for months before organising to meet them, but first ask for money to, for instance, help pay for a plane ticket.

The head of the NSW Police fraud squad, Detective Superintendent Col Dyson, said he was willing to work with Nigerian officials on an education campaign to warn people about the scams, which were difficult to track because the perpetrators were located all over the world.

He likened victims to gambling addicts. People were in denial about the scams even after being warned because the thrill of a possible windfall at the end raised their excitement and they became emotionally involved. [419 Coalition: Sometimes that is indeed true, other times not.]

"The bottom line is anything that sounds too good to be true is too good to be true," he said.

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

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/web/jail-the-greedy-scam-victims-says-nigerian-diplomat/2008/08/21/1219262473059.html>

27 JUL 2008

A concerned Nigerian has asked us to put a link in to the famous 419 song and video "I Go Chop Your Dollar" by Osuofia, so here it is for as long as it is good:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_YjvC4ndzM&feature=related

28 JUN 2008

More on the Fiedler case (see 25 JUN 2008 News) from the Nigerian newspaper The Punch:

\$2.1bn fake cheques seized from US, Nigerian fraudsters

by Sola Adebayo

American Postal Service agents have discovered counterfeit cheques, lottery tickets and e-Bay overpayment documents worth \$2.1 billion while investigating a scam involving some Nigerians and a US citizen.

PCworld.com reports that a cyber investigator with the US Postal Service, Chris Siouris, told a recent conference in Seattle, United States that the discovery was made when the

agency sent 15 postal investigators to Lagos on a three-month undercover operation.

Washington State Attorney-General, Rob McKenna, who also spoke at the conference said they were pushing for ways to better educate Internet users to avoid e-mail scams.

The report said that an American woman, Edna Fiedler, was sentenced on Wednesday to two years in prison and five years of supervised release for her role in the Internet counterfeit cheque scheme.

The report said that Fiedler, who is from Washington, had pleaded guilty in March to attempting to defraud US citizens in connivance with suspected accomplices in Nigeria. She connived with them to send fake cheques to people who had agreed to cash them on behalf of the sender, keeping some of the proceeds and sending the rest back.

The report, which quoted the US Department of Justice, said the Nigerian accomplices found people willing to cash the fake checks via e-mail. They sent their names as well as fake documents that looked like Wal-Mart money orders, Bank of America checks, US Postal Service checks and American Express traveler's checks to Fiedler, telling her how to fill out the checks and where to send them.

The Justice Department said the recipients most likely thought they were helping out someone who needed a person in the US to cash a cheque for them. It added that they then got the money by cashing the cheques and sending most of it to either Fiedler or her Nigerian accomplices. However, once the cheques were discovered to be fake, the people who cashed them were made to repay the full amount.

In all, Fiedler sent out US\$609,000 worth of phony cheques and money orders. When US Secret Service agents investigating the case searched Fiedler's house, they found additional fake cheques worth more than \$1.1 million that she was preparing to send out.

25 JUN 2008

As posted in the Yahoo discussion group Naijanet, attributed to PC World magazine:

[American] Woman Gets Two Years for Aiding Nigerian Internet Check Scam (PC World)

A Washington woman was sentenced on Wednesday to two years in prison and five years of supervised release for her role in an Internet counterfeit check scheme.

Edna Fiedler pleaded guilty in March to attempting to defraud U.S. citizens in a scheme known as a Nigerian check scam.

Fiedler helped her accomplices in Nigeria send fake checks to people who had agreed to cash the checks on behalf of the sender, keeping some of the proceeds and sending the rest back.

The Nigerians found people willing to cash the fake checks via e-mail. They would send their names as well as fake documents that looked like Wal-Mart money orders, Bank of America checks, U.S. Postal Service checks and American Express traveler's checks to Fiedler. They told her how to fill out the checks and where to send them.

The recipients most likely thought they were helping out someone who needed a person in the U.S. to cash a check for them, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. They were able to get the money by cashing the checks, and sent most of it to either Fiedler or her Nigerian accomplices. However, once the checks were discovered to be fake, the people who cashed them were responsible for the full amount.

All told, Fiedler sent out US\$609,000 worth of phony checks and money orders. When U.S. Secret Service agents investigating the case searched Fiedler's house, they found additional fake checks worth more than \$1.1 million that she was preparing to send out.

At a recent conference in Seattle, a representative from the U.S. Postal Service and Washington State Attorney General Rob McKenna described ways they're working to shut down these kinds of scams, particularly because they often involve people who don't realize that they're taking part in illegal activities.

The U.S. Postal Service recently sent 15 postal investigators to Lagos, Nigeria, and during a three-month period there, they helped intercept counterfeit checks, lottery tickets and eBay overpayment schemes with a face value of \$2.1 billion, Chris Siouris, a cyber investigator at the U.S. Postal Inspector, said at the recent conference. Siouris, McKenna and others are pushing for ways to better educate Internet users so that people don't unwittingly help out in these kinds of e-mail scams.

12 JUN 2008

Ultrascan in the Netherlands sent in the following article:

June 12 (AFP)

Spain arrests Nigerians, others over fraud network

Spanish police have arrested 51 people, most of them Nigerians, suspected of a mail and Internet fraud scam that may have netted them around 40 million euros, the interior ministry said Thursday.

It said the gang sent out thousands of emails and letters every day to potential victims, mostly in Europe and the United States, making them believe they had been selected to take part in a Spanish lottery.

It then told them they had won sums ranging from 600,000 to three million euros (900,000 to 4.6 million dollars), the ministry said in a statement.

Those who responded received official-looking but faked documents asking them to pay administrative costs and requesting their bank details.

A total of 112 people filed complaints, reporting average losses of 18,000 euros each.

But police estimated they were only about 10 percent of number of people scammed, and the total amount netted by the gang could be around 40 million euros.

Police, which began investigating the network in May 2007, carried out raids in several towns and cities that netted thousands of letters, 24 computers, 305 mobile phones and more than 1,300 fake documents.

In April, they announced the arrests of 87 Nigerians in a similar scheme.

5 JUN 2008

BBC TV News UK did a couple of related pieces on 419 today. Our associates at Ultrascan in the Netherlands sent this information in. Here are the URLs of the News videos for as long as they are good:

The first is on Lottery 419 in the UK.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7437418.stm>

The second is a continuation of the first, featuring additional discussion with the victim shown in the first piece.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/7436556.stm>

4 JUN 2008

419 Coalition Note: For the last month or so, the Government of Nigerian President Yar'Adua has been shaking up the EFCC, which is, among other things, Nigeria's primary counter-419 law enforcement agency.

In the entire history of Nigerian law enforcement, there has never been a more effective agency in the effort to control 419 than the EFCC under Nuhu Ribadu and his number two, Ibrahim Lamorde. Under these men, there have been more arrests of 419ers, more convictions of 419ers, and more repatriation of 419ed funds to victims of the crime than ever before in Nigerian history.

In our view, the Nigerian Government made an error awhile back when it shipped Ribadu off to "staff college" but it did appear that he would be coming back to the EFCC at some point in time. Until he did, it was the view here that at least the agency would be in the competent hands of Lamorde, who was fully aware of all the complicated details in all ongoing operations, thereby assuring that continuity of effort would not suffer.

Now it appears that Lamorde is to be replaced, and that Ribadu will not be coming back this fall as anticipated.

That means that the two most experienced and effective counter-419ers in Nigerian history may be effectively sidelined for the duration. No matter how good the replacements for these men at the head of the EFCC may be, they will have a long, long, way to go to match the record of Ribadu and Lamorde in counter-419.

Therefore, we at 419 Coalition would prefer that Lamorde be retained as Acting Director of the EFCC until Ribadu is finished with "staff college" and returns as Director of the EFCC. Of course, if the new people proposed by the Nigerian Government still want to work in the EFCC in high level staff positions under Ribadu and Lamorde, that would be fine with us - the more the merrier.

But replacing the two most effective counter-419ers in Nigerian history for no particularly good reason that we can see seems pretty absurd to us. In terms of the continuity of effective counter-419 operations, this is not the time to rock the boat at EFCC.

C. A. Pascale
Coordinator
419 Coalition

29 MAY 2008

From the UK Daily Mail:

Worldwide £20 million lottery scam busted by Spanish police

By Daily Mail Reporter

Busted: Police made 52 arrests at the resort of Velez-Malaga in Spain as part of 'Operation Loto'

Police in Spain have smashed a fraud ring believed to have conned hundreds of Britons in a worldwide £20 million lottery scam.

Squads of detectives backed up by riot police took to the streets of Malaga in a massive round-up codenamed 'Operation Loto' in which more than 60 homes and business premises were raided.

Officers made 52 arrests in the city and detained three other people at the resort of Velez-Malaga, just east of the capital of the bustling southern holiday coast. All were Nigerians.

Yesterday they were packed into cells at several police stations in Malaga and nearby resorts on the Costa del Sol. They will be taken before an investigating judge in Madrid over the weekend.

Those held are accused of swindling a total of 27 million euros- 21.6m pounds sterling - from 1,500 people around the world, including hundreds in Britain.

The gullible victims all received letters telling them they had won vast prizes in Spain's famed state lottery which pays out many millions every year.

But they fell for a request to send cash to cover local taxes and other 'administrative charges'.

The fact they had never bought a Spanish lottery ticket in the first place did not stop them from falling for the trick.

Victims parted with sums ranging from £640 up to £720,000. The average loss worked out at more than £14,000, police said.

There was no immediate estimate of how many of those conned were from the UK, but Britons were believed to have made up a sizeable proportion of the victims of the scam.

Recently Inspector Antonio Pintano, head of the Spanish National Police fraud squad's lottery unit said that Britons came second to US citizens amongst those who part with their money to the Nigerian gangs.

'Many of those who are swindled are elderly,' he said.

In July, 2005, Inspector Pintano and his men went down in Spanish police history for making the most arrests ever in a single case. Then they detained 320 Nigerians -also on the Costa del Sol.

Yesterday's arrests serve to prove that the gangs can regroup and begin preying on vulnerable targets again.

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

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1022808/Worldwide-20-million-lottery-scam-busted-Spanish-police.html#>

2 MAY 2008

As reported by a concerned Nigerian:

The largest Nigerian bank and the ONLY one currently allowed by the US Feds to have an office in the US was assessed civil money penalty by the United States of America Department of Treasury Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, (FinCEN) without the bank admitting or denying the determinations by FinCEN. The civil penalty assessed amounted to 3.4% of the bank's assets. The Bank, United Bank of Africa UBA) has a Branch office in New York and it was only this Branch that was involved in the FinCen action. The total amount assessed was 1.785 Billion Naira.

On the face of it, i.e. without the benefit of UBA's explanation for the apparent flagrant failures in the bank's system for dealing with Money Laundering

issues, it would appear that the bank might have knowingly or unknowingly aided 419 fraudsters and the ever present corrupt Nigerian political leaders in defrauding the Nigerian people.

If all the issues below seem to have escaped the Economic & Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) in Nigeria it must be doing a great job indeed. What a job! Surely UBA is not alone in this and only got the attention because it is the only Nigerian Bank operating in the US. So, how big is this type of problem for a country that wants to deal head on with corruption? Have EFCC of recent ever sanctioned a Nigerian Financial Institution for aiding corruption and money laundering despite the attention these have attracted in the media in Nigeria, with all these high profile corruption/money laundering cases?

Ghana-must-go bags are not involved in these cases because they are illicit funds sent through Nigerian and Foreign Banks mostly via wire transfers. Despite these, EFCC appears not to be dealing with those that ensures these folks loot Nigerian treasury. Is Nigeria really serious about combating corruption but no sanction or penalty imposed for those that knowingly or unknowingly aid such and provide the conduit?

It was determined that the failure by the UBA's US Branch to establish and implement an effective anti-money laundering program resulted in extensive violations in its failure to report suspicious transactions of approximately \$197,000,000. A Federal Branch of a foreign bank in the US is required to implement an anti-money laundering program that conforms to the rules of the office of the Comptroller of the Currency.

It was determined by FinCEN that there were serious failures in the Bank's internal controls. Some of which were highlighted and they include the following:

1. The Branch failed repeatedly over the course of multiple examinations to implement internal controls that are reasonably designed to assess the risks of potential money laundering or other suspicious activity and ensure the detection and timely reporting of suspicious transactions.
2. The Branch failed to implement effective procedures for conducting due diligence on the Branch's customers.
3. Failure by the Branch to have effective procedures to obtain critical information to establish risk profiles including obtaining information on customer's business activities, source of funds, financial capacity etc.
4. As of June 2006, the Branch did not have procedures for identifying Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs) and any procedures for managing the risks associated with such individuals. This is despite the fact that the Branch processed transactions for high level PEPs, including senior political figures in Nigeria.
5. The Branch failed to implement effective procedures to manage the risks associated with
 - (a) foreign correspondent bank accounts,
 - (b) embassy and foreign consulate accounts
 - (c) foreign based cash intensive businesses
 - (d) Money service Businesses
 - (e) Import and Export Companies
 - (f) Jewelry and Precious Metals dealers
 - (g) Foreign Exchange houses
 - (h) Off shore corporations
6. The policies and procedures for investigating suspicious activities were far too general and according to FinCEN did not provide adequate instructions to Branch personnel.
7. The Branch lacked effective procedures to detect and respond to suspicious activities involving wire transfers and dollar pouch transactions from other foreign banks.
8. There were no written procedures specifying the

responsibilities of compliance and operations personnel.

9. Operations personnel had the authority to approve suspicious transactions without compliance involvement and approval.

10. The Branch compliance personnel had the authority to REMOVE PERSONS FROM THE WATCH LIST without approval from appropriate level of management at the Branch.

11. Independent testing of the Branch was not effective to ensure compliance with the US Bank Secrecy Act. (BSA).

12. The Branch failed to report transactions that it either knows, suspects or has reason to suspect are suspicious. Usually a suspicious transaction is the one that could involve funds derived from illegal activities, or is "conducted to disguise" the illegal source or that has no apparent business purpose and the Branch has no reasonable explanation for the said transaction. Usually these types of transactions has to be reported no later than 20 days after obtaining facts but under no circumstance would the filing be done later than 60 days after the initial detection.

Despite this:

- (a) The UBA Branch failed to timely file 140 required suspicious activities reports between 2005 and February 1, 2008.
- (b) 29 reports were filed at least six (6) months late
- (c) 5 reports were filed over 3 years late including approximately \$120 million of suspected proceeds of corruption in Nigeria.
- (d) It also failed to timely file reports on proceeds of advance fee frauds also known as 419, structuring or wire transfers to avoid reporting

The delays by the Branch of UBA to timely file the suspicious activities report significantly impaired the usefulness of the information because it failed to timely report it for action by US law enforcement agencies.

Here is the URL of information on this matter direct from the US FinCEN site: <http://www.fincen.gov/20080428.pdf>

2 MAY 2008

From the Nigerian newspaper Daily Sun:

World Bank chief reveals how he was defrauded and the EFCC intervention

When Mr. Ishmael Lightbourne, executive director of the World Bank, ran into a traditional ruler who goes by the name 'Mustapha,' abroad and learnt that the latter was a 'diplomat,' he could have counted his luck.

This was even more so as the 'diplomat' told him he had some business connections in South Africa, Ghana and Mali and wanted a partnership to explore them.

Lightbourne, who wanted to make investment in Africa, had jumped at the offer, perhaps hoping that the friendship of a 'diplomat' would be worth the while. Unfortunately, he miscalculated, as 'Mustapha' milked him dry. Not even his training as accountant and a chartered accountant, for that matter, raised his antenna to know that he had entered into the trap of a fraudster or what is called '419' in local parlance.

Before his eyes were opened to the fraudster's game, he had lost \$1.4 million.

However, luck did not desert Lightbourne totally. He shouted to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), which came to his rescue. So far, the EFCC has recovered some money from the fraudster, which was given back to the World Bank chief. The anti-graft commission has also promised to recover all the money involved and return same to him.

Lightbourne spoke to Daily Sun on his experience and the EFCC intervention. He is full of praise for the anti-graft commission for its professionalism. He also sets an agenda for the Federal Government in the fight against corruption.

How and when did you get involved with 'Mustapha,' who eventually duped you?

A friend introduced me to Mustapha from Africa, who wanted my assistance, financial and otherwise, on a transaction he was engaged in. I met Mustapha personally, in the summer of 2002 and he represented himself as a career diplomat for Nigeria with involvement in South Africa, Ghana and Mali. He invited me to become involved in a mineral and mining venture in Ghana. I was introduced to the Chairman of the Ghana Mining Corporation, with a view to becoming involved in investments in the mining and

extractive industry.

How much was involved?

Over the period of about two years, 2002 to 2004, I transferred approximately US\$1.4 million to Mustapha.

How much has the EFCC recovered?

I learnt through my legal representatives in Nigeria that the EFCC has recovered approximately US\$800,000 in assets from Mustapha and others of his associates. However, I have not yet received a direct confirmation from the EFCC in this respect. However, through Mr. Lamorde, who was then director for the EFCC, I received a total of US\$80,000 between 2004 and 2005. I have not received anything thereafter, but I am hopeful that once the case against Mustapha is concluded, there would be the possibility of a substantial distribution in the near future.

What is your level of confidence in the EFCC, especially now that Lamorde has taken over?

To my knowledge, Mr. Lamorde's involvement in this matter commenced around December 2004, at which time he notified me that the EFCC was investigating the fraudulent activities of Mustapha and urged me to cooperate with his investigation. I provided documentary evidence of the payments made to Mustapha for investment purposes and he promised that the money would be recovered and returned. I have had communications with Mr. Lamorde several times during the past four years, in his capacity as director of the EFCC and he has always assured me that once the court case is concluded, the funds already recovered would be returned.

I accept his assurance entirely and because he is thoroughly familiar with my case and now in his capacity as acting Chairman of the EFCC, I am even more convinced that once the case is successfully completed, the funds would be returned.

What is your view about the recent Nigeria's position on Rule of law and fight against corruption?

The country of Nigeria has suffered greatly in the eyes of the international community because there is a perception that fraudulent practices are rampant, not only within the country itself, but in the aggressive and relentless practice of some of its citizens to fraudulently manipulate people from any country. This certainly is not a good reputation for a country to have and certainly, should not be the kind of reputation that the Nigerian citizens would want its beloved country to have. Accordingly, it is incumbent upon the Nigerian government to not only establish but also implement the rule of law to fight the ugly scars of corruption and to restore the good name of its country.

Based on your experiences with the "419" dupes in Nigeria, what lessons have you learnt?

I still receive many scam communications via e-mail, fax and ordinary mail. I have learnt from bitter experience and from the several documentaries that have been shown on the '419' scams to stay as far away as possible from this unlawful and dangerous business.

What assurances has the EFCC given you to recover fully your money?

I have received assurances from the EFCC from time to time that it would make every effort to recover my money. The process has been long and sometimes I have felt that the goal would not be accomplished. I was particularly concerned with the fact that my repeated request of the EFCC to disclose exactly the amount of money they have recovered so far has gone unanswered. But I have not lost hope and now with Mr. Lamorde's elevation to the position of acting Chairman of the EFCC I have even greater expectation of a substantial recovery of my funds.

What is your advice to Nigerian government in her war against corruption?

The Nigerian government is the custodian or the trustee of the good name of the people and country. It, therefore, has a representative and responsibility to vigorously promote and uphold the good name of Nigeria and to implement measures to eradicate corruption for the sake of its own citizenry and to rid the rest of the world of this menacing problem.

The country should continue to fight corruption both at home and abroad and to work assiduously to build strong institutions and citizens of good character and to raise the national consciousness to fight against corruption in all forms and places. The government should establish good governance in all government institutions and to urge its citizens and private sector corporations to do the same.

It should also practise the golden rule: 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'

What connection do you have with Global Society for Anti-corruption?

I am deeply indebted to the heroic and bold efforts of the NGO, Global Society For Anti-Corruption; its President, Frank Ezeona and others in the organization for their hard, unselfish and untiring work to rid Nigeria of corruption. I am grateful for their efforts to restore money and property to those, like myself, who have been defrauded. The government and people of Nigeria also owe the organization a debt of gratitude because of their work to rid Nigeria of corruption and establish good governance and

the rule of law. Unfortunately, this organization needs more recruits and needs greater funding from the public and the government, if it is to carry on its noble mission to banish corruption and to restore stolen property to their rightful owners.

The group's president has been particularly strong and diligent in representing me sometimes without the proper funding. He has kept me informed about every new development in the case and has given honourable and professional representation so far. For this, I am truly grateful.

Here is the URL of this article for as long as it is good:

<http://www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/features/crimewatch/2008/may/01/crimewatch-01-05-2008-001.htm>

24 APR 2008

From the Guardian, a Nigerian newspaper:

Court jails man 149 years for fraud

By Omobola Tolu-Kusimo and Yetunde Oyegbami

FOR being found guilty of defrauding a Saudi Arabian national of N36.6 million (\$305,337), an Ikeja High Court has sentenced a middle aged man, Christ Michael Mbagwu, to 149 years imprisonment.

This is just as another high court jailed a level 13 officer of the Lagos State government, Ogundimu Mumir, for three years for fraudulently selling a plot of land at N1.5 million.

Mbagwu (also known as Duru Christian Chidozie) obtained under false pretence the \$305,337 from one Hassan Zean Satoohi of Alwayi Alonleai, Saudi Arabia.

But while Mbagwu pleaded guilty to the allegations, his accomplice Emmanuel Obinna Oguine (alias Malik Mohammed) pleaded not guilty.

In his judgment, Justice Olubunmi Oyewole said that the jail term on the 31-count charge brought against Mgbagwu by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) would run concurrently from February 2, 2005 when he was taken into custody.

Mbagwu was charged with obtaining money under false pretence, conspiracy to obtain money by false pretence, forgery and altering of forged documents, contrary to section 419, 516, 467 and 468 of the Criminal Code Cap. C17 Vol 2, Laws of Lagos State of Nigeria, 2003.

According to the charge sheet signed by S.K Atteh Esq, the accused sometimes in September 2002 with the intent to defraud, conspired to obtain money by false pretence from Satoohi.

The accused persons on October 2, 2002 with the intent to defraud, obtained the \$5,640.00 from Hassan Zean Satouhi pretending that they had \$30,000 to be transferred out of Nigeria to the foreign account of Hassan Zean Satoohi.

To facilitate and to obtain the money, the accused persons forged the contractor's certificate of registration (category 'A' special) purporting the certificate was issued by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) to Hassan Zean Satoohi of Alwafi Alouleai Saudi Arabia.

"I have considered the allocutus of the learned defence counsel, I have also considered the fact that he is a first offender. From admitted facts of this case however, I am inclined to believe that the posture of the 2nd accused is more prudence than pertinence.

"In the circumstances, I hereby sentence the 2nd accused to five years imprisonment without option of fine on each count one to 29 respectively. Two years imprisonment without option of fine on each of counts 30 to 31 respectively. And the accused shall pay the sum of \$32,165.00 to the victim as restitution and all prison sentences shall run concurrently and shall be reckoned from February 10, 2005 when the accused was taken to custody," Justice Oyewole ruled.

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

http://www.guardiannewsngr.com/news/article19//indexn3_html?pdate=240408&ptitle=Court%20jails%20man%20149%20years%20for%20fraud&cpdate=240408

17 APR 2008

From BBC News UK:

Spain holds lottery scam suspects

Spanish police have arrested 87 Nigerians suspected of defrauding at least 1,500 people in a postal and internet lottery scam.

The arrests were made in and around Madrid in an operation co-ordinated with the FBI.

Police said millions of euros were taken from the victims, most of them in the United States and European Union.

Those targeted were wrongly told they had won a lottery and asked to send a payment before prize money could sent.

Thousands of letters and e-mails, most in ungrammatical English, were sent out to prospective victims every day, police said.

The faked documents asked them to make an initial payment of 900 euros (\$1,400, £720) in taxes or administrative costs.

The scam is estimated to have netted around 20 million euros, but the actual sum could be many times that, say police.

Anglican bishop

Police said the number of those defrauded could run into many thousands, as most of them probably failed to report the crime out of embarrassment.

Police estimate that only one in 1,000 recipients of the letters needed to fall for the fraud for it to make a profit. An Anglican bishop was among those duped, according to Spanish officials.

The operation to track down the gang began in May 2007 when a huge number of identical letters destined for addresses in the US was discovered at Madrid's Barajas airport.

Police confiscated hundreds of computers, mobile phones and 60,000 letters in a raid on more than 30 homes and businesses.

Law enforcement officers also seized a suitcase full of fake \$100 notes which they say was used to convince some victims who came to Spain in person to collect their "prize money".

Here is the URL of this article for as long as it is good:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7353003.stm>

16 APR 2008

From AP via Fox TV Channel 2 St. Louis:

Postal Inspectors Return Funds From Nigerian Internet Scam

U.S. Postal Service inspectors in St. Louis return \$4,500 to a St. Charles County woman who sent money to Nigeria after she was duped in an Internet scam.

The inspectors say the case marked the first time their agency ever successfully recovered funds sent overseas in this type of Internet scam.

Christine Shepherd, 41, met a man at an online dating site and they e-mailed for about eight months.

He falsely told her he was living in the United States, traveled to Nigeria, and then needed money from her after being beaten up and hospitalized.

The cash she sent was intercepted by Nigerian authorities, who told the postal officials the suspect is now serving six years for the crime.

419 Coalition note: Kudos to the Acting Director Ibrahim Lamorde and the EFCC for recovering and repatriating the 419ed funds and for jailing the perpetrator.

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

<http://www.myfoxstl.com/myfox/pages/News/Detail?contentId=6322886&version=2&locale=EN-US&layoutCode=TSTY&pageId=3.2.1>

2 APR 2008

UK 419 Victims Wanted for Television Documentary

Channel 4 in the UK are currently producing a documentary programme about e-mail fraud and are interesting in hearing from anyone in the UK who has been a victim of an 419 e-mail scam - no matter how big or small the loss turned out to be.

If you would like to help raise awareness of the issue and prevent other people being scammed, or just talk about your experience over the phone, please forward a contact telephone number to the following e-mail address - documentary419@hotmail.co.uk Discretion is of course guaranteed by the producers.

19 MAR 2008

From the Nigerian newspaper ThisDay:

NIPOST Seizes N28bn Fake Currencies

From Patrick Ugeh in Abuja

The Postmaster General, Mallam Ibrahim Mori Baba, has revealed that the Nigerian Postal Service (NIPOST) last year intercepted over 100 forged certificates and fake currencies in different foreign denominations. He said the fake currencies amounted to N28,810,230,644.80.

Addressing newsmen in Abuja, yesterday, the NIPOST chief also said the agency intercepted 7,831 scam letters meant to defraud international businessmen and investors.

In January 2008 alone, he said \$1,840,000.00; 296,631.00 pounds sterling; 703,710.00 Euros; 917 blank cheques; 16 international passports and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) ATM cards were intercepted, while \$2,853,979.00; 1,186,650.00 British Pounds Sterling; 890,980.00 Euros; 21 international passports and 1,086 blank cheques were seized in February... [the rest of the article deals with matters other than 419]

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

<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=106326>

19 MAR 2008

From the Nigerian newspaper Daily Independent:

EFCC Arraigns Man For \$59 Fraud, Forgery

By Anthony Okoro and Dolapo Oseni, Lagos

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) yesterday arraigned a middle-aged man before a Lagos High Court, Ikeja, for an alleged Advance Fee Fraud offence, popularly called '419'.

The accused, Akeem Adejumo (alias Stephen Williams), was charged with a four-count charge of fraudulently obtaining money and forgery.

According to the charge sheet signed by the EFCC Head of Legal Department, S. K. Atteh, the accused had, on April 25, 2007 obtained a parcel with tracking number 857342903764, containing a Motorola mobile cellular phone valued at \$59 by false pretence, from Shyrah Johnson of United States of America, contrary to section 1 (3) of Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act No. 14 of 2006.

He was also alleged to have forged an e-mail titled, "EFCC Undercover," and purported it to have been written from EFCC address, to Myles McLellan, contrary to section 467 of the criminal Code Cap 17, Vol. 2, Laws of Lagos State of Nigeria, 2003.

More so, he was alleged to have been in possession of a document containing false pretence with intent to defraud, contrary to sections 6, 8 (b) and 1 (3) of the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act No. 14 of 2006.

The accused person pleaded not guilty to all the charges against him. The presiding judge, Justice Olubunmi Joseph Oyewole, adjourned the case to April 14 and 16, 2008 for proper trial.

The URL of the article is <http://www.independentngonline.com/?c=117&a=12775> for as long as it is good.

17 MAR 2008

From BBC News television in the UK:

Trauma victims at risk from scams

Victims of some of the most high-value scams have previously suffered from trauma, according to a new report.

Dutch IT fraud agency Ultrascan reviewed 362 cases when victims lost more than £150,000 and found that 308 had suffered family trauma.

The agency estimated some 300,000 advanced fee fraudsters were in operation across the world in 2007.

Latest research from the Office of Fair Trading suggested victims were most likely to be aged between 35 and 44.

Huge losses

The Ultrascan report claimed that £2.1bn was lost internationally to advanced fee fraud, the most successful of scams for con-artists.

Victims are typically asked by e-mail to help in transferring millions of pounds overseas, for which they would receive a cut.

The fraudster will then ask for bogus processing fees upfront or extract victims' personal details and clear their bank accounts.

A spokesman for Ultrascan said that people, often white-collar workers, suffering as a result of bereavement or trauma appeared to be losing out in these scams.

"We are looking at the profile of victims to help warn others," he said.

Vulnerability myth

Research published last year by the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) suggested it was wrong to assume that only the vulnerable were victims of scams.

"Our research dispels the myth that only the vulnerable, elderly or naive are taken in by scams," said the OFT report into mass-marketed scams, the first study of its kind.

Older people were more likely to lose more money on average, the research found, but victims were most commonly aged 35 to 44.

Those in less affluent groups were particularly at risk of foreign lottery, career opportunity and clairvoyant scams.

Those earning more were affected by advance fee, property investor and high-risk investment scams.

Nearly two-thirds of victims of all scams were in employment, the OFT study found....

[The remainder of the piece doesn't have anything to do with 419]

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

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/7300543.stm>

8 MAR 2008

From the Nigerian newspaper, The Punch:

Nine Nigerians jailed for forging Ghanaian president's letterhead

By Emeka Madunagu with agency report

An advance fee fraud (419) syndicate, made up of Nigerians who used the forged letterheads of the President, Ministry of Finance and the signature of the Governor of the Bank of Ghana to dupe foreigners on the Internet, has been handed a five-year jail term by an Accra Circuit Court.

According to www.ghanaweb.com, the first accused person, Victor Okechukwu Okoye Ibueze, now at large, was sentenced in absentia while the remaining eight, namely Ibrahim Mato, Benson Nnadi, Budy Sampson, Raymond Popson, Ashanor Wright Waheed, Adeotan Oluwafemi Adeniyi, Abolade Oluwaseyi Toyosi and Ekpemadu Chukwu Andy, were all jailed.

They were each sentenced to five years in prison for conspiracy to commit crime and 18 months for possessing forged official documents. But Ibrahim Mato, using a Ghanaian passport with the name Edward Mensah, was found guilty of forgery of passport and sentenced to 18 months.

All the charges are to run concurrently, according to Jennifer Duodu, the trial judge.

The first accused person was the one in whose house at Achimota, a suburb of Accra, the cyber café was situated, from which the other accused persons who are mostly computer experts and self-styled businessmen operate.

In addition, the syndicate had a workshop at Alogboshie near Achimota where their faulty computers were repaired to prevent their activities from being detected.

The facts of the case as read by the court, according to the prosecution, were that the syndicate had for sometime now been using the cyber café to prepare forged documents to convince their victims that huge sums of money had been deposited in some banks in Ghana in their names, and that to access these monies, taxes must be paid in Euros and US dollars.

According to the court, the accused persons managed to convince a French national they met on the net, who is the complainant in this case, that \$8.5 million had been bequeathed him at S-G SSB Bank at Kokomlemle in Accra, so he had to pay some money for the release of the funds.

The court noted that through some fraudulent correspondences, using the letterhead of the President, and other forged documents, the accused persons managed to invite the complainant to Ghana and on May 25, 2005 collected \$35,000 from him as part payment. The court noted that at that the same meeting, Ibrahim Mato, the second accused person, posed as the manager of the International Commercial Bank, while the others acted as solicitors and a receipt was handed to the complainant for the money paid. The Frenchman was subsequently asked to return to his country and later remit the remaining money.

Furthermore, the court stated that the complainant was made to understand that he had to finish payment before his fortune could be transferred to him.

The judge noted that while in France, the complainant discussed the issue with a Ghanaian friend and showed him the documents. This friend then advised the

complainant to report to the police in Ghana because the documents were forged.

Explaining further, the judge said when the complainant was invited to Ghana again by the syndicate on September 16 2005, he alerted the police who trailed the accused persons to the Kotoka International Airport.

They were arrested as they took the complainant from the airport towards Saint Peters Street, Achimota.

A search conducted in the house where the syndicate operated yielded computers, eight Ghanaian passports belonging to the accused persons, ECOWAS travelling certificates, a driver's licence, some undisclosed amounts of money in cedis and naira, and assorted forged documents.

Other items retrieved later included letterheads of the President, signature of the Bank of Ghana Governor, Dr. Paul Acquah, and letterheads of the Ministry of Finance, Ghana Police Service, the High Court of Ghana, Auditor-General, among others.

419 Coalition comment: Good on the Ghanaian authorities! We hope that they will keep up the good work, it is appreciated.

23 FEB 2008

From ABC News Australia:

Arrested man a 'major player' in email scam: police

Police say it is very rare to make an arrest of this type as offenders are notoriously hard to catch.

Police believe a Nigerian man they have arrested in Perth is a major player in an international scam costing Australians millions of dollars a year.

Officers from the Western Australian computer crime squad allege the man may have personally been involved in African advance fee fraud offences involving up to a million dollars.

Detective Sergeant Duncan Taylor says the 29-year-old man pretended to be a diplomat or other foreign government official, and recruited victims online with various stories of windfalls and inheritance.

He says the arrest is significant.

"It's an extremely rare occurrence to identify and prosecute one of these offenders in Australia, as their normal mode of operation is to hide behind multi-jurisdictions," he said.

Sergeant Taylor says one of the victims in this case travelled to Malaysia as part of the scam.

"On one occasion a victim was actually convinced to travel overseas at which time he was met with associates and actually taken to a bank where a large sum of money was withdrawn," he said.

"So he found himself in a very dangerous situation."

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

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/stories/2008/02/23/2170756.htm?section=australia>

30 JAN 2008

From the US Department of Justice:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30, 2008
(202) 514-2007
TDD (202) 514-1888

Three Defendants Plead Guilty in "Advance-Fee" Fraud Scheme

Fraud Victims Lose More Than \$1.2 Million

WASHINGTON Three defendants pleaded guilty to federal charges of running an "advance-fee" scheme that targeted U.S. victims with promises of millions of dollars, including money from an estate and a lottery, Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Benton J. Campbell of the Eastern District of New York announced today. The guilty plea proceedings were held before United States Magistrate Judge Ramon E. Reyes, Jr. at the federal courthouse in Brooklyn, New York.

The investigation was initiated by Dutch law enforcement authorities. After identifying victims in the United States, the Dutch authorities notified the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, which opened its own investigation, resulting in the charges against the defendants. Three of the defendants were arrested in Amsterdam on February 21, 2006, and were subsequently extradited to the United States. They are:

Nnamdi Chizuba Anisiobi (a/k/a Yellowman, Abdul Rahman, Michael Anderson, Edmund Walter, Nancy White, Jiggaman, and Namu), 31, citizen of Nigeria;

Anthony Friday Ehis (a/k/a John J. Smith, Toni N. Amokwu and Mr. T), 34, citizen of Senegal; and

Kesandu Egwuonwu (a/k/a KeKe, Joey Martin Maxwell, David Mark, Helmut Schkinger), 35, citizen of Nigeria.

Anisiobi pled guilty to one count of conspiracy, eight counts of wire fraud and one count of mail fraud. Ehis pled guilty to one count of conspiracy and five counts of wire fraud. Egwuonwu pled guilty to one count of conspiracy, three counts of wire fraud and one count of mail fraud. The fraud victims allegedly lost more than \$1.2 million.

A fourth defendant, also a Nigerian citizen, Lenn Nwokefor (a/k/a Eric Williams, Lee, Chucks, and Nago), fled to Nigeria and was subsequently arrested by the Nigerian Economic & Financial Crimes Commission on July 27, 2006, pursuant to a United States arrest warrant. He is being held by the Nigerian authorities pending extradition to the United States.

According to the indictment and an earlier filed complaint, the defendants sent "spam" e-mails to thousands of potential victims, in which they falsely claimed to control millions of dollars located abroad. Attempting to conceal their identities, the defendants used a variety of aliases, phone numbers, and email addresses. In one scenario, the defendants sent emails purporting to be from an individual suffering from terminal throat cancer who needed assistance distributing approximately \$55 million to charity. In exchange for a victim's help, the defendants offered to give a 20% commission to the victim or a charity of his or her choice. Subsequently, as part of the ruse, the defendants would send a variety of fraudulent documents, including a "Letter of Authority" or a "Certificate of Deposit," making it appear that the promised funds were available, and pictures of an individual claiming to suffer from throat cancer. Defendant Anisiobi allegedly telephoned victims, disguising his voice to give the impression that he was suffering from throat cancer.

After obtaining their victims' trust, the defendants asked them to wire-transfer payment for a variety of advance fees, ostensibly for legal representation, taxes, and additional documentation. In return, the victims received nothing. In a variation of the scheme, if the victims said they could not afford to pay the advance fees, the defendants would send them counterfeit checks, supposedly from a cancer patient, to cover those fees. Many victims deposited the checks and then drew on them to wire-transfer the advance fees. Subsequently, when the checks did not clear, the victims suffered substantial losses.

"Online scam artists should be on notice that we will continue to work closely with our international partners to ensure that there are no safe geographic boundaries for committing these crimes," said Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division. "These defendants preyed upon the kindness and charity of their victims by sending thousands of scam emails aimed at their recipients' heartstrings," stated United States Attorney Benton J. Campbell. "If you receive an email offering you money in exchange for an advance fee, you would be well advised to delete it."

The maximum penalty for mail and wire fraud is 20 years in prison. The conspiracy charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

The case was investigated by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, and prosecuted by Fraud Section Trial Attorneys Mary (Kit) Dimke, Amanda Riedel, and Nicola Mrazek, Paralegal Pamela Johnson, and Assistant United States Attorney Tanya Hill.

Here is the URL of the announcement for as long as it is good:
http://www.usdoj.gov/opa/pr/2008/January/08_crm_075.html

7 JAN 2008

As reported in all the Nigerian media, there has been a major flap over the EFCC (the primary Nigerian counter-419 agency) in the Nigerian government going on for the last several weeks and continuing.

In essence, elements in the government want the Director of the EFCC, Nuhu Ribadu, to step down and attend a nine-month Nigeria Police academy staff officer training course. Other elements in the Nigerian government want Ribadu replaced entirely, still others want him to stay on the job.

We at 419 Coalition would like for Ribadu to stay on the job. If that cannot be managed, we'd prefer that he be seconded to the staff college and return as Director of the EFCC at the completion of the course. In that case, we'd prefer that the Deputy Director of the EFCC, Mr. Ibrahim Lamorde, serve as Acting Director during Ribadu's absence.

The EFCC is the first counter-419 effort in the history of the Nigerian government to get any meaningful results whatever. Both Ribadu and Lamorde are internationally respected proven counter-419 operatives and have been instrumental in getting those results. Continuity is conducive to successful counter-419 operations; turmoil in Nigeria's primary counter-419 agency is not.

We here at 419 Coalition say that it would be foolish to change horses in mid-stream at the EFCC. And we want the current flap to be quickly

resolved so the EFCC staff can get back to work, as there is much to be done and all this hooha is not helping the counter-419 effort.

419 Coalition note: This matter was ultimately concluded by Nuhu Ribadu being seconded to the police staff college for the bulk of 2008, with Ibrahim Lamorde assuming the post of Acting Director of the EFCC while Ribadu is gone.

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