

Nigeria - [419 Coalition](#) 1997 News on Nigerian Scam / 419 Operations

A posting in soc.culture.nigeria gives UPI as reporting out of Kuala Lumpur on 20 DEC that Malaysian authorities are investigating and have made arrests concerning a Nigerian 419 ring which has been operating there since 1991. Police spokesman Ismail Che Rose says that the ring has defrauded a string of businessmen from South Korea, New Zealand, Palestine, Austria, and Malaysia.

The Scammers posed as Nigerian Government and Parastatal officials and used fake letters from the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Debt Reconciliation Committee in their operations. They are also believed to have defrauded several banks using fake drafts and other instruments.

A Nigerian holding a Zimbabwean passport under the name Tinet Siketha Bahle - Mwammuha is at the center of the 419 ring, according to Malaysian authorities. Two Nigerian students are among those arrested in connection with the scam.

19 DEC 1997

Douglas Cole AKA Peter McGrath (see 11 DEC News Item) has been convicted of 22 counts of 419 related charges in the US District Court in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Authorities think Cole/McGrath's ring has been responsible for up to \$20 million in fraud worldwide.

Cole/McGrath and his company, United Guaranty Audit (among other names) would receive a 10 to 20 percent commission on 419ed monies as he moved upwards of \$2.5 million from victims in Los Angeles, Japan, Louisiana, Great Britain, France, Australia, Austria, Hong Kong, and elsewhere to Nigerian controlled bank accounts in New York, Australia, and London.

Cole/McGrath has cooperated with Federal Authorities in building cases against his Nigerian co-conspirators in London and Lagos.

419 Coalition is pretty sure it did not help Cole/McGrath much when US District Judge Wilkie D. Ferguson, Jr., who will sentence him on 27 FEB, said he has seen 419 letters while playing on local golf courses.

Assistant US Attorney Jeffrey Kay, who headed up the team which prosecuted and convicted Cole/McGrath declined comment when asked whether the US would try to prosecute the foreign perpetrators. According to Interpol and US authorities, "corruption is deeply entrenched in Nigerian political and banking circles. While Nigeria has extradited drug-money laundering defendants and other criminals, it has never cooperated with countries seeking fraud defendants."

Cole/Mcgrath also faces additional 419 charges brought against him by the State of Maryland, and is scheduled to be tried there in early 1998.

The Cole/McGrath case is the second conviction in Florida for participating in multi-million dollar Nigerian Scam/419 operations. Edwin Berman was convicted there in March 1997, receiving a sentence of five years probation after cooperating with US authorities in Operation Big Ben, which led to the

arrest of three London-based Nigerian 419ers.

16 DEC 97

As reported in the soc.culture.nigeria newsgroup and 10 DEC in the German newspaper Wetteraur Zeitung, Agents of the Dusseldorf State Bureau of Investigations (LKA) have arrested a gang of 419ers which had been operating in Germany since 1988. 7 of the 18 members of the gang were arrested, two of which were German nationals. It is estimated that the gang, which operated worldwide, had caused a loss of a minimum of 200 million German marks in Germany alone.

The gang had followed a normal 419er modus operandi of representing themselves as employees of NNPC, CBN, and other Nigerian Government ministries and then 419ing their targets.

Score another one for the "gut" (good) guys!

11 DEC 1997

Thomas E. Scott, United States Attorney for Southern District of Florida, Jack Kippenberger, Special Agent in Charge of the United States Secret Service, Miami Field Office, and Mark Grey, Inspector in Charge of the US Postal Inspection Service announced today that DOUGLAS ARTHUR COLE AKA PETER MCGRATH AKA WILLIAM H. MILES was arraigned this morning on charges that he helped direct a multi-million dollar global Nigerian 419 operation.

Cole is charged with 22 Counts of 419 related charges. Assistant United States Attorney Jeffrey H. Kay, of the Fort Lauderdale Office, is handling the investigation and prosecution of Mr. Cole. It is the understanding of 419 Coalition that a significant amount of monies were recovered by Task Force in relation to this case.

Cole was arrested in Washington DC over six months ago by the Secret Service Task Force DC office. Task Force had been trying to get this fellow for years, and the opportunity finally arose when 419 Coalition brought the case of a Connecticut couple with hard evidence in a 419 case to the attention of Task Force and an alert Special Agent was able to link that case to Mr. Cole. The arrest followed within the week.

Cole had been running around the world for years representing his Company, United Guaranty Audit (and others) as being able to secure lucrative contracts with the Government of Nigeria, complete with official looking Government of Nigeria and Central Bank of Nigeria credentials and documents. Cole also could and would produce purported High Officials of the Government of Nigeria and CBN in person when required to close the deals. Of course, the whole thing was a 419 operation.

It has been alleged that Cole did indeed have "friends" at high levels of GOV of Nigeria and CBN. One Dutch target, when checking on Cole/McGrath with Central Bank of Nigeria, was told that CBN knew Cole/McGrath but that "he doesn't work with us anymore."

Since 419 Coalition was instrumental in the arrest of Mr. Cole/McGrath six months ago, we of course knew he was in custody. However, Task Force asked 419 Coalition to keep the matter under wraps, as Cole/McGrath was singing his head off in hopes of getting a reduced sentence, and Task Force was mounting several operations based on the information provided by Cole which would have been blown if it became general knowledge that Cole was in custody.

We were, of course, glad to oblige Task Force in regard to keeping quiet the matter of Cole's arrest.

Congratulations to Task Force on their success in the Cole/McGrath case and related operations. Score one Big One for the Good Guys!

3 DEC 1997

419 Coalition has received a report from Australia that the Nigerian High Commission in Canberra was very helpful in relation to a Scam inquiry, saying that General Abacha has been told by the IMF the corruption must be curbed in Nigeria if he expects continued assistance from the IMF and the Paris Club.

The Nigerian High Commission also said that they "would include the address [URL] of 419 Coalition on the info they send out to all enquiries [419 related]." We do hope that they follow through on that, as our records show that Nigerian Scam attempts are currently on the rise in Australia.

This would be a welcome development, as 419 Coalition is long on record as being willing to work with anyone or any agency willing to fight Nigerian Scam operations.

However, only fair to note (perhaps the Nigerian Foreign Office has not informed the Nigerian High Commission in Australia yet) that the Nigerian Government issued an official Position Paper on 419 Coalition in April 1996, calling us, among other things - incompetent lying profiteers and implying that we are racist, imperialist, colonialist dogs only out to make a name for ourselves(?) and get rich off the misery of the Criminals who have lost money due to the Nigerian Scam and from the misery of the Nigerian people (paraphrased summary).

The Position Paper is available in its entirety on the International Investigation Services site which is menued up on our site both on Main Page and in the Links section [<http://www.superhighway.is/iis/>].

Our Response to that Position Paper is also menued up on our Main Page.

419 Coalition wishes to restate here yet again that we will work with anyone or anything which wishes to fight the Nigerian Scam, and in this particular case the High Commission of Nigeria in Australia qualifies in that regard. Kudos. We believe in giving credit where credit is due.

2 DEC 1997

The United States Secret Service Joint Task Force on West African Fraud recently gave presentations on Nigerian Organized Crime to a conference of Law Enforcement officials from 14 Nations held in Stockholm, Sweden, and to the Regional Conference on Money Laundering (Gosh, 419 Coalition gets a chuckle out of that title) held in Lagos, Nigeria.

We are informed that the presentation in Lagos ran to two hours in length, including a slide show and graphics, and that the role of Nigerian 419 in providing the capital for other illicit enterprises such as the drug trade was emphasized.

9 NOV 1997

In an 8 NOV article titled "Fraudsters Shift Base to Neighboring Countries" the Post Express cites an Unnamed Source at NCB - Interpol Lagos to the

effect that Nigerian law enforcement efforts and the bad PR generated by CBN advertorials etc. have increasingly driven the 419ers to neighboring countries like Benin, Burkina-Faso, Ghana etc. The Unnamed Source also says that Interpol Lagos hasn't seen a new 419 case involving a foreigner in weeks.

According to GOV of Nigeria pronouncements over the last several years, the 419ers are Always "being" driven from Nigeria to neighboring countries. Yet, 5 million letters, most of them 419 letters, originating from Nigeria, were returned to Nigeria by other Governments for "improper franking" a few months ago; the US alone will arrest ten times as many 419ers as Nigeria will this year; there have still been no convictions in Nigeria; and no substantial amount of the Billions stolen has begun flowing back from Nigeria due to the efforts of Nigerian authorities.

On the PR problem the 419ers are having, that is true enough, but it is one they have generated for themselves due to the ubiquitousness of their activities, Not due to pressure from CBN advertorials etc. 419ers have for years been setting up "Stringers" (sortof Field Offices) in other countries, this is nothing new, but the Home Office has always remained in Nigeria where they can operate with impunity.

We have advised the editorial staff of Post Express that this was a singularly poorly researched article, bordering on disinformation, and have made those views known to the US Task Force dealing with this matter and to the US Department of State.

419 Coalition has noticed no decrease in 419 activity emanating from Nigeria, we still get 60 plus front door hits on our site every day, seven days a week, and in fact have noticed an Increase in 419 activity in the South Asia and Australia regions of late.

7 NOV 97

The Decision came down late yesterday in the Adler Case, (see previous news items). Adler lost. We do not know the basis for the loss yet, we are awaiting our copy of the Decision. The Judge, Irma Gonzalaz, was the same Jurist who had earlier thrown out the case on the basis of Nigeria's Sovereign Immunity and was subsequently reversed on appeal by a higher court, thereby forcing this Trial. We will fill you in on the details of the Decision as soon as we get our copy. It is not currently known whether or not Adler intends to appeal the Decision, we will keep you advised.

419 Coalition is disappointed, but is perfectly aware that as long as the Nigerian Scam is running, and it shows no signs of abating, there will be other Court cases, and notes that there are lessons to be learned from any case, win or lose, that can be applied in subsequent cases.

Our "side" only has to win One case. Better sooner than later, of course, but we'll take it whenever it happens. On the other hand, the Government of Nigeria has to win ALL the cases, both current and future, Forever.

And we've got all the time in the world, we're a patient and persistent bunch :) :)

7 NOV 97

The Post Express published on 4 NOV an article titled "Money Laundering Workshop Begins in Lagos" (the title alone is priceless). In a "related

development", Dr. Paul Ogwuma, Governor of CBN (please look back through earlier news items in 1997 and 1996) is to be the Keynote Speaker at the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN) annual dinner. ROFL :) :) :) :) 419 Coalition is Rolling On Floor Laughing.

30 SEP 97

In an editorial of 25 SEP 97 titled "Building Nigeria" the Nigerian newspaper Post Express says, in part, "As soon as corruption becomes a national ethos in any society, as it is in Nigeria, such a society is heading to its destruction...There can be no future in a country in which the most common phenomenon which characterizes over 85 per cent of its population is stealing. The only analysis close to understanding corruption in Nigeria is like saying all Nigerians from ages 6 to 100 be wiped away, that is the appropriate answer to how corruption can be wiped out in Nigeria."

Stong words. We here at 419 Coalition continue to believe that the great majority of Nigerians at home and abroad are decent, law abiding citizens, and we have never had a problem with traditional forms of dash, wong rokok, bakshish, tea money, etc. We recognize that is how most of the world runs, and that it has been running very well that way for a very long time.

We do however, think that in Nigeria dash has run amok, gone beyond the pale, off the charts, has become dangerous, and has metamorphosed itself into the massive 419 operations we deal with every day.

But 85% of the population as 419ers or directly benefiting from 419? We think Not. Given the available data in this matter like the 50,000 dirty phone numbers in Nigeria collected by our Task Force over the last 18 months (the Nigerian Scam has been running for about 10 years), the magnitude of the losses worldwide, and considering the "multiplier effect" (the stolen money passing through various hands as goods and commodities are purchased in the economy, not all the stolen money is squirreled away abroad, what good is stealing it if one can't spend it, and most of the Big Men stay in Nigeria where they are "safe"), and that 419 has been cited by Diplomatic sources onsite to be perhaps the third largest industry in Nigeria, we'd figure that 5% or maybe 10% tops of Nigerians directly benefit from 419 operations. Multiplier effect excluded, since many of the sellers of goods and services who receive monies stolen by 419 have no definitive way of knowing the origination the money, we'd put the percentage of active 419ers and those who directly and knowingly benefit from 419 to the Nigerian population, very conservatively, at one to three per cent.

That still translates, conservatively, to from a million plus to three million plus people as active 419ers, their immediate families who know where the money comes from and who directly benefit from it, and those of their extended families who know where the money comes from and who directly benefit from it.

Once again, to make it perfectly clear, we here at 419 Coalition believe that anyone, anywhere, anyplace who illegally benefits from 419 operations should be punished - jailed or otherwise disciplined - preferably starting from the top down - and have their ill gotten gains repatriated to those from whom they stole it. That's it. We have no quarrel with anyone else. We're too busy here to quarrel with anyone else about anything else.

29 SEP 97

A recent posting in the soc.culture.nigeria newsgroup which is apparently

from a Tempo Magazine article titled "How Nigerian Fraudsters Duped Ghana" states that the Government of Ghana was 419ed out of some \$78 Million by a Nigerian company "Union Elektrik Nigeria Ltd." on a contract for the development of Ghana's hydroelectric power stations and the refurbishing of 44 power transformers.

If this is the case, the Government of Ghana's loss of \$78 Million would be the largest loss to date of any single 419 victim of which 419 Coalition is aware.

17 SEP 97

The Post Express newspaper from Nigeria reports on 12 SEP 97 in an article titled "Tribunal Grants Businessman's Request to Attend Police Clinic" that an ill detainee has been permitted on health grounds to leave the Ikoyi jail and be placed in a Police medical facility.

The interesting part of this article is that this Nigerian and four others have been held by the Government since 11 DEC 96 for 419ing an American-based firm out of \$51.8 Million Dollars. 51.8 Million Dollars!!

Those who question the magnitude of the Nigerian Scam, please take note - 51.8 Million dollars from ONE victim - and of course, the Scam has been running 10 years, is Global, and there are, conservatively, hundreds of thousands to millions of victims, nobody knows for sure, but all agree there are a LOT.

419 Coalition, of course, approves of the detention of this man and his four confederates, and approves of the Tribunal's decision to allow him proper medical treatment.

But the Nigerian GOV reportedly has had this guy since 11 DEC 96, over nine months.

What 419 Coalition wants to know is WHERE IS THE MONEY? Have the Bad Guys' assets been frozen and or seized? If so, where are they being held? Has an accounting been made of the Bad Guys' assets? At home AND abroad? And how reliable is it if it has been done? Etc. Etc.....

And the Biggie - WHEN WILL THE VICTIM GET HIS MONEY BACK? WHEN? Will he get it ALL back? Or just Some? And, if Some, how much? What's it doing in the meantime? WHERE'S THE MONEY? That's what WE want to know.

16 SEP 97

As reported in the Post Express, a Nigerian newspaper, in an article titled "Govt to Counter Western Propaganda on the Internet - Ofonagoro", on 16 SEP 97, the Minister of Information and Culture of the Government of Nigeria, Dr. Walter Ofonagoro, said through Mr. Patrick Etta, Director - General of the Ministry of Information of the Government of Nigeria, in a lecture called "Public Relations and Transition to Democracy in Nigeria" delivered at the Cross River State chapter of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) that "The Federal Government [of Nigeria] plans to use the internet to counter the negative reports propagated by Western media about Nigeria...information centres [on the web] are to be opened in strategic countries of the world...that some centres are now on the internet ...and that the Ministry of Information [of Nigeria] will be hooked up to the internet by the end of the year."

Ofonagoro added that the "propaganda [on the web] against Nigeria was

being spearheaded by a few unpatriotic Nigerians in league with some willing foreign collaborators" (think he might mean 419 Coalition, folks?).

To the above, and in relation to the global problems with the Nigerian Scam, 419 Coalition says AGAIN that all the money spent on Public Relations, on the net or otherwise, would be much better spent by the Government of Nigeria on Controlling 419 operations originating from Nigeria and then there would be NO NEED for Public Relations efforts which do Nothing to Address the basic facts underlying the problem.

9 SEP 97

The Adler Case (see 27 AUG 97 and other earlier news items) has gone to Trial as scheduled on this date in the United States District Court for the Southern District of California with Judge Irma E. Gonzalez, District Judge, Presiding, in Courtroom #13.

It is anticipated that the Trial will take up to 8 Days.

In another matter, it has come to 419 Coalition attention that the Central Bank of Nigeria is reportedly making public announcements that it has Won the Tei/Sorth cases in Missouri. It is NOT accurate that CBN has "won" those cases. BOTH are still alive.

The Tei case was split from the Sorth case and dismissed in an earlier ruling by the Judge, the Tei's are appealing that decision, and say, to quote Yogi Berra, "It ain't over until it's over."

The Sorth case continues to move forward despite GOV of Nigeria efforts to quash it, is currently tentatively scheduled for trial in FEB 98, and is still very much alive.

Therefore, any announcements by CBN or anyone else that they have "won" the Tei and or Sorth cases are, to put it politely, premature.

28 AUG 97

The Washington Post is reporting that three Laurel MD residents have been found guilty of impersonating officials of the Government of Nigeria and Nigerian organizations in 419ing businesses and individuals worldwide of over \$5 million.

According to US Attorney Lynne A. Battaglia, Christian Egwu, Hope Egwu, and Chidozie Onyeknowu admitted to the crimes. The criminals have been sentenced to 20-30 years in prison each and fines up to \$2.5 million as a group.

The investigation was conducted by the Secret Service's Washington DC Field Office of the Nigerian Task Force. Good Job, folks!

27 AUG 97

419 Coalition has been told that the Adler Case is scheduled to go to trial 9 SEP. In this case, as 419 Coalition understands it, Adler contends, basically, that the Government of Nigeria owes him the money, nearly six million dollars, he advanced in relation to a contract the Nigerian GOV says was 419, and payment of the contract itself (of a Very Large Amount, at least \$20 million we have heard though we have no firm data on that), and that the money should be paid him forthwith.

Adler says (once again, as we understand it) that this contract was

approved verifiably and repeatedly by several high officials of the GOV of Nigeria in their official capacity, that they repeatedly assured him it was legal and legitimate in their official capacity, and that therefore he is due payment on the contract, including the advance fees paid in relation to the contract.

Defendants named in the suit include: the Federal Republic of Nigeria, a Sovereign State; Central Bank of Nigeria; Chief Abba Gabba Hen George; C. Odibo; Balla Peters; Stanley Eke; Solomon Daniels; Paul Ogwuma a.k.a. Paul Oguma; Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation; Clement Victor Odozi, Chief John Loisa; A. Ahmed; Major Usman David; Pascal Uzo; Ukpo Akpan Chike Okonkwo; Alhaji Jubril Abdullahi; Andrew Ayomano; Edmund Odafe, and Mallam Abubakar Zanni.

Central Bank of Nigeria in recent statements has said that there have been ten lawsuits in relation to 419 filed against it globally (cases pending in Italy and Germany, for example), that they have won five, and that there are five to go including the Adler case.

Mahel Raseed (Mahe Rasheed, M. R. Rasheed), CBN's Director of Foreign Operations, was also quoted by IPS in Nigeria.Com in a piece titled "Many Fall Prey To The Perfect Scam" dated 8 AUG 97, as saying "We are disturbed because the crime exposes the problems of law enforcement, macro-economic instability, adverse publicity, (Nigeria's) bad image, and the erosion of international confidence in Nigeria."

Rasheed is also reported by Reuter as saying on 10 AUG, titled "Nigeria Warns of Growing International Fraud" that "There has been no case of an innocent (foreign) victim who participated in the Scam" which ignores the many "legal" versions of the Scam such as the Will Scam, and the Stiffing of Goods and Services suppliers who have no effective recourse, variants of the Scam, in which there is no basis at all for portraying the victim as anything but a victim.

In relation to the Adler Case, Paul Ogwuma, the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, was deposed in Washington, DC for several hours last fall by Adler's attorneys, from which interview he reportedly emerged from the back, not the front, door of the law offices in which Adler's attorneys deposed him. He was also, according to observers on site, visibly shaken and requiring the assistance of individuals on each side steadying him on emerging and while walking to his waiting chauffeured vehicle.

Adler has been waiting awhile for this case to come to trial, as the GOV of Nigeria has fought it every step of the way. It will be good for all parties to the suit to have their day in Court, win or lose. In the view of 419 Coalition that is how the system is supposed to work.

And, in the event Adler should not prevail, the reader should note that according to CBN's recent statements there are four more suits pending, more may of course be filed at any time, and it Only Takes One Victory for a plaintiff to "win" these legal wars for all and establish in a Court of Law that high officials of the Government of Nigeria are 419ers. One.

25 AUG 97

Got a case in today where the Bad Guys (one Alhaji Hassan Musa) just tried to 419 a Public Library System in Ohio, unsuccessfully. Coupled with the recent try against a Public School System, in Illinois, food for thought, isn't it?

18 AUG 97

The Government of Nigeria really is a Hoot sometimes :) :)

There have been several recent announcements of upcoming media advertising campaigns to alert the world on 419 (see our menu item Government of Nigerian Media Campaigns for our view on those, which has not changed).

They have also reportedly announced that they are gonna run a PR campaign on the web, ie., that they plan to set up websites to counter the damage being done to the image of the country (Nigeria) by what the Minister of Information reportedly described as the Malicious and Fraudulent Loading of Disparaging and False Propaganda [on the web] (Do you reckon he might mean 419 Coalition, folks? :) :)); they spend millions per annum on PR and lobbying firms to improve their image worldwide; they also hire freelancers and consultants to do the same, etc. etc. etc.

What a Hoot.

We here at 419 Coalition say the monies would be much better utilized in Directly Fighting 419 Internally than in being used for External Image Improvement.

You see, no amount of PR \$\$\$ can actually change the underlying facts in this matter, so if the Nigerian Government truly wants to improve its image, we at 419 Coalition suggest that the Nigerian Government put its effort into Tangibly and Observably Changing Those Facts :) :)

419 Coalition would suggest, for example, that all this PR money be given to Mrs. Waziri's Special Fraud Unit (for example) and that unit be given Specific Instructions to arrest anyone, anywhere, in Nigerian GOV or out of it, and immediately seize their assets, who is a 419er, starting with the Big Boys and working her way down to the Small Fry, to report ALL Tangible, Observable, and Verifiable large scale efforts made in that regard to the GOVS of the World, and to initiate massive and verifiable repatriations of 419ed funds.

News reports are Free, after all, no need for PR \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$ so long as the job is actually and verifiably getting done.

Now THAT would improve Nigeria's image more than any possible PR campaign ever could, in the view of 419 Coalition.

And as to alerting the external world to 419 operations emanating from Nigeria, we would suggest that the Government of Nigeria leave that end to 419 Coalition, quite frankly we do a Much Better job at it than the PR \$\$\$\$ will buy for them, and they don't even have to spend a dime on 419 Coalition to get us to do it, we're Free, and are quite Happy to Continue doing the External Education job that we are already doing :) :)

Like said, the Government of Nigeria is a Hoot sometimes :) :)

10 AUG 97

Reuter reports that Central Bank Of Nigeria and Police have warned that despite their best efforts Nigerians remained prominent in international fraud. Mahe Rasheed CBN's Foreign Operations Director said that a \$1 Million advertising campaign was being prepared to urge businesses to

be careful who they deal with.

419 Coalition notes that such advertising campaigns have been tried before and that they have had no appreciable effect on 419 operations, see "Nigerian GOV Media Campaigns" menu item on 419 Coalition main page. We see, as yet, no reason to alter our analysis of Government of Nigeria media campaigns given there.

Mr. Rasheed also said that "There has been no case of an innocent (foreign) victim who has participated in the Scam."

419 Coalition begs to differ on this point, as the Nigerian GOV has once again chosen not to address the many "legal" versions of the Scam in which there is no question of victim as criminal or co-conspirator, and in which the victim is merely a victim. These include the Will version of the Scam (which is used most often on charitable and religious groups), the COD goods and services versions of the Scam, the Contract Assignment versions of the Scam, etc. etc. Therefore, Mr. Rasheed is quite in error on this point, as the United States Secret Service Task Force will confirm.

Mr. Rasheed also indicated that CBN returns over \$1 Million a Year in monies erroneously sent to it by foreign victims. 419 Coalition was able to confirm that in at least one instance in 1996, CBN returned to Task Force \$186,000.00 of such funds. 419 Coalition wishes to commend CBN for this and other similar actions in which funds are repatriated.

However, given the magnitude of Nigerian 419 operations, 419 Coalition hopes that the trickle of repatriated funds (\$1+ million in many analyses is the estimated loss per DAY to Americans alone - not to mention all of the rest of the world's losses) - becomes a flood more commensurate with the magnitude of the losses suffered worldwide in this matter.

31 JUL 97

419 Coalition has received a report that the Nigerian Bad Guys have tried, unsuccessfully, to Scam a Public School District in Illinois. It was the Will Version of the Scam in which a "bequest" has supposedly been left to the target - this is the version of the Scam used most on Religious, Charitable, and Public Service organizations.

However, this is the first time of which 419 Coalition is aware that it has been used on a Governmental or Quasi-Governmental organization like a Public School District.

Ironically enough, the Scam attempt took place in Illinois, which is represented in the US Senate by Senator Carol Moseley-Braun who awhile back travelled to Nigeria on holiday as a private citizen and while there visited with many High Officials of the Government of Nigeria including, as we understand it, the Head of State General Sani Abacha.

Ah, guess there's no Chivalry among the Bad Guys - go figure :) :)

24 JUL 97

It has been reported recently in the Guardian (a Nigerian newspaper) on the front page and by other media that 5 million - that's right - FIVE MILLION letters have just been returned undelivered to Nigeria by a dozen nations, including US, UK, France, Germany, etc. for fraudulent or nonexistent franking (postmarking at place of origin).

The Nigerian authorities say they have examined these letters and have found that most of them are 419 letters (big surprise).

The Nigerian authorities also say that the return of the letters is due to the anti - 419 efforts of the Nigerian Postal Service etc. etc.

419 Coalition wonders, in that case, how in Hades the letters got OUT of Nigeria in the first place :) :) These letters were intercepted AFTER they got to their country of destination, not BEFORE...

Now, if the Nigerian Authorities had stopped 5 million - or even 4 million - or even 1 million - or even 100,000 of these letters Before they LEFT Nigeria and had Traced the mailers and Arrested and Convicted them, now THAT would be News :) :)

And, for the Half Fullers - even if NONE of these letters originated in Nigeria (time for a Chuckle Break) that's still a Heck of a Lot of Letters, and the Governments who bundled them up and sent them back haven't exactly been collecting them since the Dawn of Time or anything :) :)

1 JUL 97

419 Coalition has received information that the Brit arrested for 419 in Nigeria and shown on Nigerian television was not, in fact, part of the "clothing scam" as reported in soc.culture.nigeria but had been caught up in a standard 419 operation.

The interesting thing about this (besides the fact that he got arrested) was that our information is that this individual approached Both the British and US GOVs concerning the "proposal" he had received and was told by Both GOVs that there was a very high probability that this was a 419 operation, and was advised by Both GOVs not to go to Nigeria about this matter in any case.

But he went anyway. Which leads us to this Very Important Point:

THE GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA HAS LAWS AND DECREES ON THE BOOKS AGAINST 419 AND MONEY LAUNDERING. WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT THE ENFORCEMENT OF THESE LAWS IS ABOMINABLE, WHAT THAT MEANS IS THAT ANY FOREIGNER WHO GOES TO NIGERIA IN RELATION TO A 419 OPERATION IS SUBJECT TO ARREST BY THE NIGERIAN AUTHORITIES AT ANY TIME AT THEIR WHIM.

ONCE ARRESTED, THERE IS VERY LITTLE THAT THE FOREIGNER'S GOV CAN DO FOR HIM. THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT VIEWS MANY 419 VICTIMS AS CO-CONSPIRATORS IN AN EFFORT TO DEFRAUD THE NIGERIAN GOV, AND WHEN A FOREIGNER IS ARRESTED IN NIGERIA IT IS NIGERIAN LAW THAT APPLIES IN THE CASE.

AND, QUITE FRANKLY, WE HEAR THAT NIGERIAN JAILS SUCK, SO DON'T GET YOURSELF THROWN INTO ONE. DISCRETION IS BY FAR THE BETTER PART OF VALOR IN THAT REGARD.

23 JUN 97

419 Coalition was recently able to assist representatives of Lloyd's of London in a Medical Insurance Fraud case which was rather interesting.

Five Nigerian Expatriates living in the US decided to go back to

Nigeria on holiday. While there in Port Harcourt, they reported being in an auto accident in which all were severely injured. They stated they were rushed to Hospital by ambulance, and extensive medical treatment was required by all. \$400,000 was the amount of the claim filed by the injured.

They submitted their initial claim to Lloyd's of London, their insurer whose suspicions were aroused by, among other things, the \$40,000 requested for the transportation by ambulance of the five across town to the hospital. Lloyd's assigned an investigator to the case, who asked the Injured for additional information, and who contacted the 419 Coalition.

We told the investigator to expect Reams of documentation for all the injuries, the treatments etc. (including such things as cat-scans) and sure enough, massive piles of information arrived, including X-rays of the accident victims' injuries, detailed treatment schedules etc. etc. and a copy of the Police report on the accident was very helpfully provided.

Unfortunately, investigation revealed that these severely injured expatriates had actually stopped - in the ambulance - on the way TO the Hospital to file a police report on the accident (which does exist). The time of the report, filed at the police station, is the same time they were admitted into the Hospital, according to records.

Further investigation revealed that the Hospital did not even Have much of the sophisticated equipment said to have been used in the treatment of the injured, though there in the claim, on verifiable Hospital letterhead, were the bills etc. for the use of same. etc.

Needless to say the claim was denied.

Additional investigation revealed that of the five accident victims, after returning to the States, one was in jail for armed robbery and two others were in jail for stealing credit cards. Nice Bunch, huh?

Please note that Insurance Fraud is not actually considered 419 per se, we report this matter only because 419 Coalition assisted in this matter even though it IS out of our normal focus.

Insurance fraud is, of course, endemic worldwide and not in any way limited to Nigeria, in fact it appears to be worse in Western Countries like the US and UK than elsewhere.

16 JUN 97

A British national has been detained in Nigeria over alleged advance fee fraud. He and his alleged Nigerian accomplice were presented before Nigerian Journalists and were later shown on national TV.

Nigerian Law Enforcement authorities said the arrest was the result of intensified efforts to stamp out advanced fee fraud.

The arrest comes at a time of increasing tension between Nigeria and the UK over such matters as the refusal of the British to allow Nigerian passenger aircraft to land in the UK and others.

The arrest is interesting in that to date Nigerian Law Enforcement efforts

have been unable to significantly impact the volume of 419 correspondence coming out of Nigeria and that the number of arrests of Nigerian Locals in their own bailiwick for 419 related matters bears no significant relation to the massive amount of 419 activity in Nigeria evidenced by the US Secret Service database of some 50,000 proven 419 phone numbers in Nigeria over the last 18 months alone.

Additionally, recoveries and repatriations of 419ed funds due to any efforts made by the GOV of Nigeria remains virtually nil. It basically remains a one way flow of cash, folks - Cash Out of Everywhere Else in the World and Cash In to the hands of Nigerian Bad Guys, though occasionally the Law Enforcement agencies of the Rest of the World Do manage to catch some Dirty funds in their jurisdictions and return them to those who have been ripped off. But this is Not due to Nigerian Government efforts - if one wants to Judge the Efforts of the GOV of Nigeria in fighting 419, we here Strongly Suggest that the following criterion be used - FOLLOW THE MONEY - which continues to go In to Nigerian Bad Guys - in Massive amounts - and Rarely comes Out due to any efforts made by the GOV of Nigeria.

419 Coalition applauds any efforts made by the Nigerian Government which result in the recovery and repatriation of fraudulently obtained funds and continues to urge that All those who derive Illegal Financial Benefits from 419 operations be prosecuted in Nigeria and elsewhere.

22 MAY 97

In The Post Express newspaper, published and distributed in Ogun, Lagos, and other locations throughout Nigeria, in The Saturday Magazine feature section of 17 MAY 97, Mr. Kenneth Ugbechie, Head, Science & Infotech Desk writes that in all of Nigeria there are "about 604,000 telephone lines... [of which] only about 400,000 are connected with far less than that in good condition."

The Post Express, and the above Feature article complete, titled "World Telecoms Day Without Telephones," is also Online and available worldwide on demand at URL <http://www.postexpresswired.com>

The US Secret Service Task Force, which has only existed in its current form for the last 18 months or so, reports that it has compiled a database of phone numbers in Nigeria proven to have been used for 419 operations which is now approaching 50,000 numbers.

Given the above, the math would indicate that a minimum of 50,000 of the 400,000 phone lines connected in Nigeria are proven 419 lines, for a 1 of 8 ratio of 419 Lines to All Lines in Nigeria.

Even with the illegal connections etc. cited by Nitel, which serves to drive up the number of lines available over reported figures, thereby reducing the ratio somewhat, the number of proven 419 lines increases on a daily basis thereby increasing the ratio, plus, as above, 419ers have Good Connections, so it is the opinion of 419 Coalition that the above 1 Dirty for Every 8 Lines ratio is 'close enough for Government work' at this time, all things considered.

Or, for the "Half Full" folks out there, the Good News is that of every 8 phone lines in Nigeria, only 1 is used by the Bad Guys :) :)

12 MAY 97

Item: 419 Coalition has an unconfirmed report that West African,

specifically Nigerian, fraud has reached such epidemic levels globally that controlling it is on the agenda for the G7 Conference to be held in June at Denver Colorado.

Item: Sources have informed 419 Coalition that in UK, West African, specifically Nigerian, fraud accounts for fully 50% of all fraudulent activity in the UK, to the tune of 3.5 Billion plus Pounds per annum.

31 MAR 97

419 Coalition has recently been informed of a Contract Assignment case much like Adler's - in which we understand that the victim vetted the Assignment proposal with World Bank and IMF in Washington, DC, and several US Banks before taking the plunge.

World Bank and IMF reportedly told the victim that everything was in order, that he might have to pay a couple of bribes of the Wong Rokok (small) variety, but that was to be expected.

The victim has lost, in purchasing the assignment of contract and the inevitable related fees due to complications, over a three year period, over \$20 Million USD. That's 20 MILLION DOLLARS.

The victim in this case is a European multinational with offices in the midwestern United States and elsewhere. The matter came to 419 Coalition attention when a Consultant from Texas was asked to look into this matter on behalf of the European Multinational and contacted us for our analysis of the matter.

In this case, as in Adler, the office of Paul Ogwuma, Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, is directly implicated.

This is the worst single case 419 Coalition has ever seen.

29 MAR 97

419 Coalition has received its copy of the decision in the Adler Case, (see news item of 25 FEB 97) and confirms that the Government of Nigeria has lost their appeal in US District Court, and that there would seem to be only three possible outcomes remaining - 1. Nigeria appeals to the US Supreme Court, which appeal 419 Coalition believes it will lose based on the Decision of the US District Court; 2. The case, in which Paul Ogwuma, GOV of CBN and other high officials of the Government of Nigeria (and the Government of Nigeria itself) are defendants, goes to trial on the Merits; and 3. The Government of Nigeria settles the case out of Court.

14 MAR 97

Citing human rights reasons, lack of progress towards democracy, business corruption, frustration with the inability of the Commonwealth Action Group to get anything done about the preceding, and other reasons, the Government of Canada today suspended diplomatic relations with Nigeria, recalled its High Commissioner, and closed its offices in Lagos.

2 MAR 97

The Joint Task Force on West African Fraud, operated by the US Secret Service, which specializes in the Nigerian Scam, has reported to the 419 Coalition that their database contains more than 40,000 telephone numbers in Nigeria confirmed to have been used for Scam purposes.

The Task Force has only been fully operational for the last year and a

half. The Scam has been running, of course, for at least ten years.

Only numbers which have been Reported to the Task Force on hardcopy and confirmed by the Task Force are included in the database. Numbers which have not been reported cannot, of course, be included. Estimates are that more cases - with their related phone data - go unreported than are reported.

The Task Force database is also US - centric in that primarily only cases with a US connection are reported to the Task Force. Therefore, the phone numbers used by the Scammers in cases without a US connection are, in most cases, not reflected in the above data.

25 FEB 97

In the case commonly referred to as Adler vs Nigeria (see 1996 News) the US Court of Appeals in Pasadena CA held on 19 FEB that the Government of Nigeria can indeed be held responsible for the millions Adler was 419ed out of and thus that Adler's suit can go to trial.

The Adler suit named as Defendants, individually and severally as we recall: The Federal Republic of Nigeria, a Sovereign State; Central Bank of Nigeria; Chief Abba Ganna Hen George; C. Odibo; Balla Peters; Stanley Eke; Solomon Daniels; Paul Ogwuma a.k.a. Paul Oguma; Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation; Clement Victor Odozi; Chief John Olisa; A. Ahmed; Major Usman David; Pascal Uzo; Ukpo Akpan Chike Okonkwo; Alhaji Jubril Abdullahi; Andrew Ayomanu; Edmund Odafe; and Mallam Abubakar Zanni.

As we understand it, A Copy of the Decision can be obtained from US Court of Appeals, Request Copy of Decision, Case 965119, 125 S. Grand Ave, Pasadena, CA, 91105 by making a written request for same and enclosing \$2.00.

Details are sketchy at the moment - 419 Coalition will report more precisely on this matter when we have received our own copy of the Decision and any corrections necessary will be made at that time.

As we recall, the original suit alleges, among other details, that Adler met with Paul Ogwuma, Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, and John Olisa, Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria at what was "clearly the Central Bank of Nigeria."

Additionally the suit states that "...the entire premise of Nigeria's conspiracy-based merits defense falters on the indisputable facts that Mr. Adler met with and was assured by the Assistant to the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Finance, the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, and numerous others, all of whom were officials of the current government of Nigeria, that this transaction was legitimate and sanctioned by the government of Nigeria."

Looks like Adler and the Government of Nigeria (though it has tried desperately to keep the case from being tried on the merits) will both be having their day in Court to argue the merits of the case. Regardless of which side prevails on the Merits, 419 Coalition is pleased that the case WILL be argued on the Merits - 419 Coalition believes in the Rule of Law.

19 FEB 97

In his presentation at the Association of Nigerians Abroad Conference in Cleveland last year, the Coordinator said "In Indonesia it is called Wong

Rokok, in Thailand "Tea Money", in India Bakshish, and in Africa it is Dash. Now, I have no trouble with that system by any name - when it operates within normal limits, it may even actually be preferable, in some ways, to our (Western) systems for getting things done. But in Nigeria, what we have is a situation where Dash has been carried to its ultimate, which is destroying the nation and hurting its people, both at home and abroad.

In short, what we really have in Nigeria is a case of Dash Gone Mad."

The following is from the 3 FEB 1997 US News and World Report article titled "The Same Old Excuses - A Black American's Tough Prescription for Africa's Ills" by Keith B. Richburg. It is an excerpt from his book "Out of America" copyright 1997 by Keith Richburg, published by Basic Books, a division of Harper-Collins Publishers Inc., which we think sheds a little light on the above situation in a humorous, non-threatening way:

"So endemic is African corruption, and so much more destructive than its Asian counterpart, that the comparison has even spawned a common joke, which goes like this:

An Asian and an African became friends while attending Graduate School in the West. Years later, each rises to become Finance Minister of his country. One day, the African ventures to Asia to visit his friend and is startled by the Asian's palatial home, the three Mercedes-Benzes in the circular drive, the swimming pool, the servants.

'My God!' the African exclaims, 'We were just poor students before. How on earth can you afford all this now?' The Asian takes his friend to the window and points to a new elevated highway in the distance. 'You see that road?' he says, and then proudly taps himself on the chest. 'Ten percent.'

A few years later, the Asian returns the visit of his old friend. He finds the African living on a massive estate. There's a fleet of dozens of Mercedes-Benzes, an indoor pool, an army of uniformed servants. 'My God!' says the Asian, 'How do you afford this?' This time the African leads his friend to the window and points. 'You see that highway?' he asks. The Asian looks and sees nothing, just an open field with a few cows. 'I don't see any highway,' he says. The African taps himself on the chest. 'One hundred percent!'

That joke was first told me by an American diplomat in Nigeria who had also spent time in Indonesia."

Or, as the Coordinator of 419 Coalition put it - a case of Dash Gone Mad.

10 FEB 97

419 Coalition just received the word from Official US GOV sources that a Nigerian Bank returned 419 monies to a US victim. It seems the Task Force and the US Bank through which the transfer went were able to "catch" the monies before they were disbursed by the Nigerian Bank, which then sent the monies back. This is a rather momentous occasion, as, to the best of 419 Coalition knowledge, this marks the first time that Any US victim has been able to recover funds once they got to Nigeria.

419 Coalition Thanks the Nigerian Bank which returned the scammed money, and we will post its Name as soon as we can. 419 Coalition believes in giving Credit where Credit is Due.

22 JAN 97

Maryland and US authorities recently arrested half a dozen or so Nigerian nationals who were running a large scale Credit Card Fraud (primarily) operation in that State. What makes this case unusual and worthy of special notice is that there are a couple of Murders associated with this case. Nigerian Bad Guys have not, historically, committed crimes of violence in the US, normally finding the Threat of violence to be sufficient for their purposes when required. Let us hope that the murders in this case were an isolated incident carried out by a Rogue Group of Bad Guys, as if murder in the US is becoming a modus operandi on the part of the Bad Guys, the Government of Nigeria will quickly find that any lingering reluctance of the US Government to act against Nigeria on a Govt to Govt basis will become nonexistent and the upgrading of Sanctions will be expedited. This isn't Lagos, gentlemen.

3 JAN 97

State of Connecticut authorities recently arrested a group of half a dozen or so Nigerian Nationals for grand larceny, credit card fraud, etc. The group was apparently making its way from Massachusetts to New York City with a bunch of fake credit cards, charging and cash-advancing as they went, in amounts of up to \$15,000.00 to \$60,000.00. In some of the transactions, they even knew the "mother's maiden name" key of the actual cardholder.

While the extensive Nigerian Credit Card Fraud and Drug Supplier Cartels (see 1996 News), are Not the direct specialty of The 419 Coalition, we would like to note that it IS revenue from 419 operations which provides much of the "start up" capital required for Nigerian organized criminal operations.

And we would like to take this opportunity to Commend the Law Enforcement Authorities of the State of Connecticut for their vigilance.

2 JAN 97

It has come to our attention that Adamu Mohammed, Special Adviser to Sani Abacha on Drugs and Financial Crimes has "suggested that he made some payments" to our Iceland - based friends at International Investigation Services.

We were able to reach Mr. Njall Hardarson, President of IIS, on his cellular phone as he toiled around the fashionable districts of Reykjavik in his late model Rolls Royce Phantom, sipping champagne, who denied that IIS had received any funds from either Adamu or the Nigerian Government - however, Mr. Hardarson did say that he was looking forward to flying his Lear Jet over to visit with us in the 419 Coalition offices later this month.. :) :)

It IS accurate that IIS offered to work with the Government of Nigeria to help shut down 419 Fraud if the Nigerian Government was seriously interested in doing that - a commendable goal. IIS, at its own expense for travel, etc., met with Adamu and his retinue in Dublin, Ireland in mid-1996. As reported on the IIS site, the 419 Coalition site, and elsewhere on the net, the meeting was a total bust with no positive results whatever - Adamu, while acknowledging that the Government of Nigeria had an "image problem" concerning 419 matters, didn't want the help of IIS in addressing the 419 problem. Neither IIS nor Mr. Hardarson has Ever received a "payment" from Adamu or the Government of Nigeria.

419 Coalition advises the "Adviser" to stick to lying to his Own Countrymen concerning Government of Nigeria "efforts" to fight the Scam, as the rest of

the World, at this point, merely finds his "twisting in the wind" statements Amusing.

Ademu, in addressing half a dozen members or so of the High Level US Gov't Delegation recently returned from Nigeria (see 1996 News) went On and On about how "IIS had taken payments from them and then done nothing for them". Members of the US Delegation, on their return, queried 419 Coalition about the allegation. Interestingly enough, the next day 419 Coalition got a fax in from Ademu Mohammed's assistant, A Y Shehu (see 1996 News) stating that IIS had never received any payments from the Nigerian Government and that they Never Said it did.

What happened here is that Adamu Mohammed got carried away with his own rhetoric on the assumption that nobody would check his allegations - a severe case of "Hoof 'n Mouth" disease, as the US Delegation of course Did Check. Then when the Government of Nigeria realized that they had gotten caught lying barefaced to the US Delegation Shehu got directed to attempt to rewrite History - a not uncommon phenomenon for the Gov't of Nigeria, and they usually get away with it.

Not this time, gentlemen.

Gotta admit though, that it was sure Good to be able to start the New Year with a Big Horselaugh courtesy of our "friend" Adamu...a little Comedic Relief, even in the most serious of matters, is Always Welcome - good for what ails ya! :) :)

[Go To 419 Coalition Main Page](#)

[Go To 2018 News](#)

[Go To 2010 News](#)

[Go To 1999 News](#)

[Go To 2017 News](#)

[Go To 2009 News](#)

[Go To 1998 News](#)

[Go To 2016 News](#)

[Go To 2008 News](#)

[Go To 1997 News](#)

[Go To 2015 News](#)

[Go To 2007 News](#)

[Go To 1996 News](#)

[Go To 2014 News](#)

[Go To 2006 News](#)

[Go To 2013 News](#)

[Go To 2005 News](#)

[Go To 2012 News](#)

[Go To 2004 News](#)

[Go To 2011 News](#)

[Go To 2003 News](#)

[Go To 2002 News](#)

[Go To 2001 News](#)

[Go To 2000 News](#)