

Nigeria - [419 Coalition](#) 2010 News on Nigerian Scam / 419 Operations

11 DEC 2010

From the Nigerian newspaper the Vanguard, sent in to us by
Ultrascan AGI:

Lamorde returns as EFCC Dops
... As he replaces Stephen Otitoju

By Emman Ovuakporie

Former Director of operations of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission ,
EFCC, Ibrahim Lamorde, has returned to the anti-graft body to continue from where
he stopped.

Lamorde, who was redeployed from the anti-graft commission along with other aides
of former EFCC chairman, Nuhu Ribadu, was ordered to be reinstated by President
Goodluck Jonathan, it was reliably gathered yesterday.

A source said Friday that Lamorde was restored to his former role in a renewed
attempt to pump life into the commission.

The new DOPs, it was gathered, paid a visit to the headquarters of the commission
to complete his documentation and is expected to take resume duties Monday.

He replaces Stephen Otitoju who has been acting Director of Operations since
Tunde Ogunshakin was redeployed by the Nigeria Police in 2009 following
disagreements with his principal, Mrs Farida Waziri.

When contacted, EFCC's Head of Media and Publicity, Femi Babafemi,
confirmed the return of Lamorde.

419 Coalition comment: Thank goodness, he should never have been reassigned
in the first place. Mr. Lamorde was our preferred choice to replace Nuhu Ribadu as
head of the EFCC after Ribadu was forced out. Ribadu and Lamorde did have a
track record in counter-419 operations which Mrs. Waziri (the current head of EFCC)
did not have (despite her press office) in her 1990s tenure as head of the Nigeria
Police Special Fraud Unit or indeed in her recent tenure as head of the EFCC.
Under Ribadu and Lamorde, some 419ers were indeed arrested and convicted,
had their assets seized, and some repatriations were made to 419 victims. Of course,
there remained much to do in all those areas, but at least a start had been made.
Ribadu and Lamorde did seem to understand, from a 419 victim's point of view,
that even when his 419er is arrested, convicted, and has his assets seized and
liquidated, unless those monies are repatriated to the victim he sees all this
as merely the transfer of his monies from one thief to another. For that, and
other reasons, we welcome the return of Mr. Lamorde to the EFCC and hope
that he will bring some sanity and logic back into its counter-419 efforts. Perhaps
he will even be able to effect repatriation of funds in the Odiawa case, which is
sort of the poster-child of EFCC dysfunction in seizure and repatriation matters,
that would be a promising start.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2010/12/lamorde-returns-as-efcc-dops/>

3 DEC 2010

From the Nigerian newspaper the Punch. On this article, 419 Coalition has
made comments Between the Lines, we just couldn't resist:

Cybercrime: EFCC, SOCA recover N26.5bn in three years

By Everest Amaefule, Abuja

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, in collaboration with the Serious Organised
Crime Agency of the United Kingdom, has made a recovery of N26.5bn (\$110m) from perpetrators
of cybercrimes in the past three years.

419 Coalition comment: \$110 million recovered for three years... even quintuple that would
be a drop in the bucket.... and how much of the monies that Were recovered has been
repatriated to 419 victims? We'd like to see a number on that, but we suspect that the
amount of repatriated funds is none to minimal.

Within the period, the agencies also intercepted 12,000 scam mails that were intended to
swindle their recipients of various sums of money.

419 Coalition comment: Over the last three year period we alone have sent in to EFCC at
least one third of all the 12,000 total cited above. Each of the mails we sent in came complete
with a 419er Nigerian phone number. This is despite the fact that we ask people on our
site to Not send in 419er emails to us unless they contain something new and unusual.
But people send them in anyway. If the EFCC total of intercepted emails is only 12,000
then that is pitiful, just pitiful..... Ten times that number would still only be the tip of the
iceberg of the kazillions of 419er emails sent each year....

A Principal Staff Officer at EFCC, Mr. Bala Sanga, disclosed these at a press conference addressed by the hosts of the first West Africa Cybercrime Summit, which ended in Abuja on Thursday.

419 Coalition comment: Nobody invited us, or any other counter-419 NGO that we know of, like Ultrascan AGI for example, to this summit.... given the huge amount of work that all of the Many counter-419 NGO's do (all at no cost to the Nigerian government) and the huge amount of expertise on 419 they have accumulated in many years of studying the problem, you'd think that at least Some of the more prominent NGO's would have been invited - and even subsidized - to attend....

He also disclosed that the organisation had been able to secure 300 convictions in cybercrime cases, despite the fact that the nation's legal system did not permit the admission of computer-generated evidence in the law courts.

419 Coalition comment: 300 convictions over three years is a drop in the bucket. 300 convictions a Month would be more like it. Also, it would be interesting to know how many of these convictions were in absentia. Finally, once again, Nigeria has plenty of counter-419 laws on the books, the admissibility of computer-generated evidence notwithstanding, though of course the admissibility of such evidence would be useful.

"The possession of certain documents is criminalised and the EFCC has used this element of the law to obtain 300 convictions in cybercrime," Sanga said.

He added that the money recovered from the fraudsters, in collaboration with SOCA, did not represent the entire recoveries made by the EFCC.

419 Coalition comment: Now, that is a relief to hear that \$110 million is not all the money recovered (we assume from 419ers) over a three year period. Tell us then, what is the actual amount? Doesn't the EFCC even know? If it does, why not give the actual figure? And of the pittance recovered, please tell us how much of these recovered monies has been repatriated to the victims of the crime.... and make sure the list is checkable, so the figure given can be confirmed. A good place to start would be repatriating the over \$1 million dollars ordered by the court in the Odiawa case, where the 419er was convicted years ago, but asset seizures from the 419er have been pitiful to date, and the victim so far hasn't seen a dime. Want to know how good the EFCC is at recovering and repatriating 419ed monies? The Odiawa case says it all.....

Sanga said the summit became necessary following the migration of cybercriminals from Nigeria to neighbouring West African countries.

419 Coalition comment: Yes, that is true, most of the 419 emanating from other West African countries is indeed due to "the migration of cybercriminals from Nigeria" to them. But EFCC usually says this is due to their counter-419 measures. We here at 419 Coalition tend to think that cybercriminals tend to "migrate" out of Nigeria primarily because they would rather live somewhere other than Nigeria if they can afford it.... and we also note that no matter where they live, or operate from, Nigeria remains the "home office" for most 419 syndicates.

According to him, some of the competencies available in Nigeria for fighting cybercrimes are not available in the neighbouring countries and, therefore, there is the need to broaden capacity for effective eradication of the menace within the region.

419 Coalition comment: Good point, but we'd suggest that EFCC get on the ball and do a little "effective eradication" of 419 on its home turf for starters... that would be useful.

Also speaking at the briefing, Director, Digital Crimes Unit of Microsoft, Mr. Jean-Christopher Le Toquin, said there was an urgent need to channel the energy of youths in the West African region into productive uses in order to check the incidence of cybercrime.

419 Coalition comment: And what concrete measures did the gentleman propose to implement such a programme? We agree that one is needed, of course, but merely noting that, as this gent did, is rather meaningless..... is it not...

In a communique issued at the end of the programme, the summit said there was also an urgent need to adopt a legislation and electronic evidence throughout the Economic Community of West African States.

The communique read in part, "Adopting legislation on cybercrime and electronic evidence will not change in itself the future of our sub-region, but it is the first step that will develop trust in our countries and accelerate investment and economic development."

"We must look into developing a strategy with the right policies in place to address the multifaceted aspects of cybercrime, including legal framework and enforcement, education and training, awareness, technology, continuous research, monitoring and education."

It was also decided that the conference should hold on an annual basis in order to evaluate the progress made in the fight against cybercrime and map out additional strategies to win the campaign.

419 Coalition comment: As long as EFCC remains the joke (in terms of counter-419) it has become under Waziri, what's the point? Talk is cheap (well, sometimes).

Here is the URL of the article for what as long as it is good:
<http://www.punchng.com/Articl.aspx?theartic=Art201012033131190>

1 DEC 2010

From the Nigerian newspaper The Punch:

'Nigeria lacks legal framework to tackle cybercrime'

Ezra Ijioma, Abuja

Nigeria lacks the regulatory and legal framework to effectively tackle the worsening menace of cybercrime.

This was disclosed by the Chairman, Senate Committee on Drugs, Narcotics and Financial Crimes and Anti-Corruption, Senator Sola Akinyede, at the 1st West African Cybercrime Summit held in Abuja on Tuesday.

According to him, the foundation of Nigeria's war on cybercrime is faulty given that the courts do not recognise computer print outs as evidences.

He said, "The foundation for fighting crime is the law and the foundation of the law is evidence. But the Nigeria Evidence Act is totally archaic and out of sync with modern happenings. The Evidence Act does not recognise computer print out as evidence and this is sad."

However, Akinyede said that the process of amending that Act had started at the Senate with the bill for that purpose passing the second reading.

He said the contentious constitutional amendment and preparations for forthcoming elections had delayed the National Assembly from turning the bill into law.

Similarly, the Chairman, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Mrs. Farida Waziri, agreed that the Evidence Act was hampering the work of the commission.

She said, "What the senator said about the Evidence Act is shocking, that since independence, this colonial Evidence Act that has been inherited is what Nigeria is still using.

"But I am glad that Senator Akindele is so committed to what we are doing in EFCC. And once the Evidence Act is gotten right, we will make headway in fighting cyber crime. We hope with the support of the National Assembly, we will get relevant laws that will make computer-generated evidence acceptable in the courts."

Waziri said the spread of cyber crime to neighbouring West African states meant that common measures and strategies should be adopted by the region in combating the menace.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.punchng.com/Articl.aspx?theartic=Art201012010585967>

419 Coalition comment: Let's see, successive Nigerian governments been moaning and groaning for two plus decades about how 419er cybercriminals are giving the country a bad name and they are just now figuring this out? Duuuuhhhhhh, ROFL :) Seriously folks, while updating laws to meet current conditions is good, Nigeria has ALWAYS had plenty of laws on the books to deal with their 419er problem. The REAL problem here has always been one of Lack of Will to deal effectively with the problem, not with lack of laws preventing the problem being dealt with....

1 DEC 2010
From CBS Channel 3 News in Philadelphia, as reported by
Reported by Paul Kurtz, KYW Newsradio 1060, sent in by a
friend of 419 Coalition:

5 Liberians Arrested In West Philly Scam Attempt

Philadelphia police have arrested five Liberian men accused of running a phony moneymaking swindle.

Investigators say undercover cops conned the men after getting a tip from a West Philadelphia business owner who had been approached by the five Liberians with an alleged offer to trade \$50,000 for \$100,000 in so-called "black currency."

Police spokesman Ray Evers says the scammers attempt to convince the victim that the US currency has been smuggled into the country by soaking it in black ink.

"They'll cut open a large stack of US currency that's painted black. They'll pull the top two dark bills out. Money is placed in some tin foil, and they use a special compound liquid to extract the dark ink from the US currency" said Evers, describing the phony "recovery" procedure.

It looks legitimate, Evers says, until the victim goes home and finds he has nothing but a stack of black paper.

Evers says the ruse was revealed in a sting operation on November 18 at a store in the 7500 block of Haverford Avenue.

The five men arrested were identified as [there are photos with the original article]:

Nagbe Saykagee, 30, of the 200 block of Sanford Road, Upper Darby

Patrick Sanyeah, 27, of the 4600 block of Chester Avenue, Philadelphia

Solomon Bility, 26, of the 300 block of East 24th Street, Chester

Rovia Dousuah, 24, of the 100 block of North Front Street, Darby, and

Isaac Johnson, 36, of the 2500 block of South Ashford Street, Philadelphia.

The suspects are being prosecuted by local authorities, but the US Secret Service has taken an interest in the case. And police are repeating the age-old warning to business owners: if it looks too good to be true, it probably is.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2010/12/01/5-liberians-arrested-in-west-philly-scam-attempt/#>

22 OCT 2010

From MSNBC News, NBCMIAMI.com

Couple charged in \$13 million Nigerian scam

Scheme siphoned money from people who sought work as maids

By Hank Tester

It is a scam so complicated police have to draw a diagram to explain it.

Fort Lauderdale police have arrested a North Lauderdale couple, who are accused of running a \$13 million scam that had ties to Nigerian mobsters.

Here's how the scam worked, according to police:

Using classified ads and Craig's list, Plenord St. Fort and his wife, Sandra, would offer jobs to victims looking for work as maids.

The St. Forts and the victim would agree to a monthly salary. Soon a check would arrive, but in an amount far in excess of the agreed salary. The unsuspecting victim was instructed to use the remainder of the money to pay rent to a landlord and otherwise manage the home.

The rent money, according to instructions, was to be sent by Western Union money order. The original check was a phony, police claim, despite the fact the check would clear.

.Meanwhile, using a code, the St. Forts would intercept the payment to the non-existent landlord. That money would be sent to their handlers in Nigeria, who would in turn send money orders to Haiti with the St. Forts' cut of the deal, investigators allege.

Det. Randall Pelham said the couple operated for about a year and were producing 12 to 50 phony checks per day.

These were checks with legitimate routing numbers allegedly stolen from major public or private institutions. The St Forts, according to police, had a home office full of printers, blank check paper, hundreds of routing numbers and names of potential victims.

"When we went to serve warrants and searched the house they had lists of identities, checks, check paper, checks in the printer," Pelham said. "They were printing them out when we came in."

The scam started in Nigeria, a hot bed of criminal activity. The African nation has become a haven for scammers who have collected stolen credit cards, personal information and banking account numbers.

Officials said the St. Forts were basically operating a local franchise for the Nigerian mob.

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

http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/39788395/ns/local_news-miami_fl/?ocid=twitter

13 OCT 2010

From the Nigerian newspaper The Vanguard:

419er bags 120-yr jail term

By Ifeayi Okolie

A 48-year-old-man, Olusoji Abiodun Ilori, was yesterday sentenced to 120 years imprisonment by an Oyo State High Court sitting in Ibadan, for offences bordering on fraud, forgery and obtaining money by false pretence.

The suspect who was arraigned by the Economics and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) on a 40-count charge, bagged three years jail term for each of the 40 counts.

He is however to spend only three years in prison as the jail terms is to run concurrently.

According to Justice M. Abimbola of the High Court of Oyo State, Ibadan, who delivered the judgement, the jail sentence was to serve as a deterrent to the convict and others who may be nursing the idea of engaging in fraudulent activities. He said he hoped the three years the convict would be in prison would serve as a reformatory period for him.

The suspect who was earlier arraigned on September 17, 2009 by the anti-graft agency has been in jail since as he was refused bail by the court because of the enormity of the offence.

He was arrested in March 2009 at the Dugbe Post Office, Ibadan while posting over 200 scam letters containing forged United Kingdom documents meant to be delivered to unsuspecting victims.

He also had 213 letters purportedly signed by one Mr. Benson Nwosu of Fidelity Registrar, which Fidelity Bank Plc has since confirmed to be fake as the bank stated that it has no subsidiary company with the name Fidelity Registrar. "The 213 letters purportedly signed by Mr. Benson Nwosu of Fidelity Registrar, were forged as we do not have any employee by such name.

The blank letter headed paper was also forged,. the logo and lettering imitated our regular letter heads while they listed our Board of Directors underneath it, but we disown the document as it was forged and did not originate from us", Fidelity Bank Plc had stated.

Ilori in his advance fee fraud venture also had 212 letters purportedly signed by one Neil Freeman, Centre Manager, Inland Revenue Centre for Non-Residents, Fitzroy House, Nottingham , United Kingdom .

However EFCC through its collaboration with Serious Organised Crime Agency, SOCA , UK , discovered that though the address is correct, the content was false. "Whilst the address is correct, the Inland Revenue was replaced by HMRC several years ago and therefore the forms are false as they are dated March 2009.

The return envelope is addressed to a mail box with no connection to HMRC", a letter from SOCA had stated. All the disowned documents were forged by Ilori with a view to extract information and dupe unsuspecting members of the public.

All of them were however used as evidence and exhibits against the accused person before Justice Abimbola who condemned the attitude of some Nigerians who are desperate to make money at all cost and by any means possible, thereby bastardising the image of Nigeria . He said the misadventure of Ilori and other scammers was capable of scaring away foreign investors and businessmen from the country.

Count one of the charges reads: Forgery contrary to section 467 of the Criminal Code, Cap 38 Laws of Oyo State of Nigeria , 2000. Olusoji Abiodun Ilori on or about the 25 day of March 2009 at Dugbe Post Office, Ibadan within the Ibadan judicial division with intent to defraud, forged a letter dated 18th March 2009 purportedly written by Neil Freeman, Centre manager, Inland Revenue Centre for Non-Residents, Fitzroy House, P. O. Box 46 Nottingham NG21BD to Mr. Samuel H. Mokwunyer and Mrs Bridget A. Cinwuzor of Suite 3A, Princess Court, 27 Ahmed Onibudo, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria. Count two of the charges reads: Forgery contrary to section 467 of the Criminal Code, Cap 38 Laws of Oyo State of Nigeria , 2000.

Olusoji Abiodun Ilori on or about the 25 day of March 2009 at Dugbe Post Office, Ibadan within the Ibadan judicial division with intent to defraud, forged a letter dated 18th March 2009 purportedly written by Neil Freeman, Centre manager, Inland Revenue Centre for Non-Residents, Fitzroy House, P. O. Box 46 Nottingham NG21BD to Professor A. G. Falade, P. O. Box 29840 Secretariat Post Office, Ibadan, Nigeria.

The convict has since Monday October 11 when the judgement was delivered, been taken back to Agodi prisons Ibadan

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.vanguardngr.com/2010/10/419er-bags-120-yr-jail-term/>

419 Coalition comment: Good work on this one EFCC and Nigerian Courts, well done.

5 OCT 2010
From The Times (LIve) South Africa, sent in to us by Ultrascan AGI:

419 Scammer to be Sentenced Next Week

By Sapa

A Nigerian national will be sentenced for fraud and money laundering next week after extracting over US\$250 thousand from a Saudi Arabian man in a "419" scam, the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) says.

Peter Maxson Anyanyueze was convicted in the Johannesburg Regional Court on Friday, said NPA spokesman Mthunzi Mhaga.

He was also found guilty of contravening the Immigration Act for being married to a South African woman he was not in a relationship with, for citizenship.

According to evidence presented during the trial, he snared Dr Abdulaziz Alheiraqi Nwasser, a Saudi Arabian citizen, with the customary email associated with such scams, stating that he had US\$10.5 million which he had realised from sales of gold dust and other precious metals.

He said the money was lodged in a security company in South Africa and that he needed someone to move it and invest it abroad for him and his family, preferably in Europe.

"Instead of transferring the amount to the complainant, he demanded that small payments be made into nominated bank accounts worldwide to cover capital flight tax and currency fluctuating margins, amongst others.

Nwasser paid US\$295,364 to various bank accounts furnished to him by the accused, but the accused never deposited the US\$10.5 million intended for an overseas investment.

Named after Section 419 of a Nigerian law that deals with advanced fee fraud, the scam deceives a victim into making advance payments to bank accounts before a transaction is concluded, through unsolicited communication. They are usually offered a generous payment for being the go-between.

The woman he was supposedly married to was living with her South African boyfriend, which whom she had a child.

Mhaga attributed the arrest and conviction of Anyanyueze to the "excellent work done by the South African Police Service and prosecutors in this two-year long trial

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.timeslive.co.za/business/article690574.ece/419-scammer-to-be-sentenced-next-week>

19 AUG 2010
Here is an article from Ghanaweb, originally from WABC radio in New York, sent in by Ultrascan AGI:

Driven to suicide by a "419" scam

Yonkers, NY (WABC) -- A New York father is dead and his family believes it's all because he was sucked into an international romance and money scheme (419), causing him to lose everything and even steal from relatives.

"I saw him sitting in a chair with a bullet in his head," Peter Circelli said.

Circelli believes his father, Al, felt he had no way out, committing suicide in the living room of his Yonkers home after realizing a romance to riches fantasy he'd bought into was a scam.

It was only after Peter started going thru his father's belongings that the son discovered his dad's shocking secret, starting with a pile of western union money transfers to the country of Ghana, a notorious location for romance scams.

"They say Ghana, \$300. Ghana, \$200," he explained. "We've added them all up and they come to the sum of \$50,000." On Circelli's laptop, his son discovered email photos and messages supposedly from a woman calling herself Aisha, who promised to come here and start a new life, giving the divorced retired businessman a future and a fortune.

"She had money in a bank and was going to transfer the money to him," Circelli said. But first, she claimed she needed money transferred to her in Ghana via someone named Nulu Suleman for expenses. At some point, Al Circelli ran out of his own money, and started taking it from his son.

He took out credit cards in his son's name and got advances. Peter's credit is "above and beyond destroyed."

Peter is a respected small business owner who runs a successful body shop and towing company in Englewood, New Jersey. He owns the home his father lived in, and just discovered his father had stopped making mortgage payments.

"This house is in foreclosure. I'm most likely going to lose this house," he said. "It's destroyed me. It's destroyed my family."

The day Al Circelli killed himself, he thought Aisha would be arriving on a Delta flight. She, of course, never showed up.

"What he did because of something like this, I can't even imagine it," Circelli said.

And in one final bizarre twist on Tuesday, Peter found a message on his dad's laptop from Nulu Suleman saying Aisha, or Shanda, had killed herself -- "blown her head off in Chicago."

"It can't be tracked. These people are like ghosts and the damage these people have caused, they shouldn't be able to cause in other people's lives," Circelli said. "To see him go down like this, to think there are other families who might have to go through something like this, I have to open my mouth. I can't hide no more."

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=188605>

Here is the URL of another report on the story from Softpedia,
for as long as it is good:
<http://news.softpedia.com/news/Man-Kills-Himself-after-Falling-Victim-to-a-419-Scam-152853.shtml>

18 AUG 2010
Here is a concise article from Australian news website
ninemsn.com on "Targeted 419":

Targeted email scams on the rise

By Nick Pearson

When Sydney-based filmmaker David Doyle received an offer of \$120,000 via email to make two documentaries, it seemed too good to be true - because it was.

Mr Doyle had been specifically targeted in an email fraud attempt far more sophisticated than the average internet user is aware of, with the scammer researching his background using personal information posted online.

Internet scams are becoming more sophisticated as internet users become more savvy, targeting individuals with specifically tailored schemes rather than widely distributed form emails.

But while hundreds are still tricked by typical money transfer spam emails telling internet users they can receive millions of dollars from unexpected inheritances, scammers are now taking a more surgical approach to fraud.

The scammer targeting Mr Doyle showed some awareness of his work and the filmmaking process as a whole, though he considered it to be "a bit fishy" that he would be contacted in this way.

"One side of me was thinking 'This is great', but the other side was like 'This is so random'," he said.

"If someone's offering you \$120,000 you want it to be credible."

Mr Doyle continued to correspond with them before it became clear they were attempting a

cheque overpayment scam. He then stopped contact with them.

In the overpayment scam attempt, scammers send the victim a cheque, before saying they have accidentally sent more money than they meant to.

The victim is then asked to return the overpaid amount before they realise the cheque has bounced.

C.A Pascale, who runs the US scam awareness group 419 Coalition, said targeted email scams were becoming more prevalent, even though untargeted emails weren't declining.

"It seems to be getting worse, simply due to the ever more massive volume of solicitations being sent out," he said.

"The success rate per thousand or hundred thousand seems to be declining, but the 419ers have compensated for this by increasing the number of outgoing solicitations."

The ACCC has also reported sharp rises in reported online shopping, romance and online banking scams in recent years.

Australians lost almost \$70 million to reported scams last year, the ACCC said.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://news.ninemsn.com.au/technology/7947060/targeted-email-scams-on-the-rise>

13 AUG 2010

There is a very entertaining article on The News, a Nigerian news website, titled Yahoo Plus: The New Face of 419, which is too long to be posted here. It concerns the use of sorcery and charms by the 419ers. It appeared on 21 JUL, we were a bit late in picking it up, sorry. Here is the URL of the article:

<http://thenewsafrika.com/2010/07/21/yahoo-plus-the-new-face-of-419/>

There is, however, a problem in the article where it refers (for some reason) to the Odiawa case.

The article says, quoting Adegbite of the Nigerian EFCC:

"Adegbite cited the case of a gang of international fraudsters, including Harrison Odiawa, a Nigerian, based in the USA. They were said to have taken their victim to S

But this is not the correct. Odiawa was arrested, tried, and convicted in Nigeria, (not the US) and the case really didn't have anything to do with any "money mill".

Also, Odiawa was also ordered to pay over a million in restitution to the victim in the case, and the victim has not received a dime as yet. Adegbite is one of those responsible for finding the monies and assets of the victim, liquidating them, and seeing to it that restitution is paid the victim. In fact, the lack of significant restitution being paid long ago in this case is a very sore subject in the counter-419 community,

Just setting the record straight here..... 419 Coalition

28 JUL 2010

CNN has been showing all morning a piece describing scammers who are using real photos of alive and dead US servicemen on internet dating and romance sites, along with fake profiles to accompany the real photos, to defraud women. Buried in the piece, it mentions that many of the scammers are from 'West Africa'. Let's see, these are cases of Advance Fee Fraud, and many originate from West Africa, that by definition makes them 419 Advance Fee Fraud - although CNN does not use the proper term for this, which is Romance 419. Romance 419 is nothing new, of course, been around for many years. It is an uptick of Romance 419ers use of photos of dead and alive US servicemen that has apparently gotten the attention of the media, though the use of such photos is not new either. Nevertheless, we at 419 Coalition are grateful to CNN for getting the story out there in a Big Way - Thanks CNN.

Here is the URL of the video of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.cnn.com/video/#/video/us/2010/07/28/am.boudreau.army.impersonators.cnn?iref=allsearch>

27 JUL 2010

From the Nigerian newspaper, The Punch:

US to help Nigeria fight cybercrime

Dayo Oketola

The United States of America has offered to help Nigeria to tackle cybercrime in the country owing to its embarrassing high rate and negative impact on the country's image.

The Acting Executive Vice-Chairman, Nigerian Communications Commission, Dr. Bashir Gwandu, who spoke with our correspondent over the weekend, noted that the commission met with representatives of the US government two weeks ago and a deal to train selected

Nigerian officials on how to curb the menace was struck.

He said, "Cybercrimes are still widely being committed on the Internet and Nigeria's name is being spoilt every day. To address this problem, I have discussed and got full cooperation from the US government to train our people in dealing with cybercrimes. I had a meeting with representatives of the American government and we concluded on the matter. They will support us."

Gwandu also said the NCC would encourage Internet Service Providers in the country to buy Internet Protocol blocks from indigenous providers to help curb the ugly menace. According to him, many of the cybercrimes were not even committed in Nigeria but because the country cannot monitor activities by the ISPs, it is often held liable for many cybercrimes

He said, "Not until we have ISPs getting their IP blocks from indigenous providers like Afrilink, it becomes very difficult to trace them. If an ISP gets its IP block from America or Isreal, how do you know where they are and what they do? We will talk to operators to ensure that they get their IP blocks, going forward, from Afrilink, so we can trace illicit activities on the Internet."

Meanwhile, a report by the Internet Crime Complaint Centre, in February, named Nigeria as number three in the world and the top African nation in the US agency's cybercrime rankings.

The ranking means that Nigeria has the highest number of cybercrime incidents in Africa and is right behind the US and the United Kingdom, which have larger populations.

The publicity surrounding Nigerian cybercrime, according to the report, is raising fears that the country may face a slowdown in international investment in the telecom as well as the financial sectors.

As more Africans use the Internet for their banking needs, the number of fraudsters eyeing people's bank accounts and online financial transactions have also multiplied.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes estimated that Nigeria had lost millions of dollars through cybercrime.

The Federal Government had issued warnings about the vulnerability of the country's ICT infrastructure to cyberattacks. Following the warnings, the government had indicated that it wanted to work with other African countries to increase warning and decision time on cybercrimes.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes representative, Dagmar Thomas, who spoke at the recent conference of African leaders meeting in Nigeria, was quoted as saying there was need to get both the Nigerian government and nongovernmental organisations to back the fight against cybercrime and eradicate it.

Thomas said there was need for political awareness, multilateral cooperation, and commitment to build capacity for scalable and sustainable solutions.

The Chairman, Nigerian Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Mrs. Farida Waziri, had said that anticrime measures put in place by the Federal Government had already blocked scams that would have fleeced users of an estimated \$500m.

She said, "By working with vendors like Microsoft, several e-mail scams have been stopped. Microsoft has also helped launch a song, composed by prominent Nigerian musicians, aimed at fighting the menace of cybercrime."

419 Coalition note: We've been reading pretty much this same article since the late 1990's it seems (page back through past news years on the site if so inclined). Sometimes something does seem to get briefly accomplished by these "cooperations" but mostly not - as most would agree, it as been business as usual for the 419ers fort decades now, the Nigerian government's claims of controlling 419 notwithstanding. And in terms of the Nigerian Government seeking out NGO's to cooperate with them in counter-419 operations, let us say right here that neither the 419 Coalition's phone, nor the phone of any other counter-419 NGO that we know of has been exactly ringing off the hook with calls in from the Government of Nigeria - Ever :) Who knows, maybe this time things will be different, and this latest US - Nigerian cooperation and outreach to counter-419 NGO's will actually produce some tangible results. Hope springs eternal :)

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

<http://odili.net/news/source/2010/jul/27/816.html>

9 JUL 2010

From the online Nigerian news site, The Will brought to our attention by our friends at Ultrascan AGI:

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC has arraigned a Nigerian, Mr. George Nwokonko, 48, before a Lagos State High Court sitting in Ikeja for allegedly defrauding Mr. Parkin Ali, a German national of the sum of \$904,550. The accused was arraigned on a 6 -count charge of obtaining money by false pretence and forgery.

Nwokonko pleaded not guilty to the 6- count charge when it was read to him. However, Nwokonko's counsel attempt to move for bail was vehemently opposed by counsel to EFCC, George Adebola who said he was statutorily entitled to time to respond. The trial

judge, Justice L. A. Okunnu ruled that EFCC counsel was entitled to time to respond to the bail application and, consequently adjourned the matter to July 13 for ruling while fixing 22/23 September 2010 for trial. The judge also ordered that the accused person be remanded in Kirikiri prison.

Nemesis caught up with Nwokonko when on September 10, 2008, EFCC received a petition from Mrs Frieda Springer-Beck on behalf of Mr. Pakbin Ali. The petitioner alleged that George Nwokonko and others defrauded Pakbin Ali of about \$1 million in a scam in 1995. She added that though the matter had been investigated in the past by the Special Fraud Unit of the Nigeria Police, nothing concrete was achieved. EFCC operatives then went into action.

Investigation shows that sometime in 1995, George Nwokonko and two others at large had a business discussion with Ali Pakbin at No. 4 Oweh Street Yaba, Lagos to supply chemicals to the complainant for the sum of \$150,000 which they never did but collected the money from the complainant in 4 installments of \$60,000, \$45,000, \$25,000 and \$20,000.

In a similar development, EFCC also arraigned one Fodayemi Oloye at the Ikeja High Court presided over by Justice L. A. Okunnu for obtaining money by false pretence. Oloye was arraigned on a 10-count charge of obtaining \$133,000 from Nousshin Hart under false pretence. Oloye, alias Cole Whannel claimed that the money represents fees for storage, shipping charges and taxes for exportation of coconut for Bio fuel to the United States of America.

In a petition by Ronald Nolan, a legal attaché of United States Consulate on behalf of one Dr. Nousshin Izadifor Hart of Houston, Texas, Oloye was said to have fraudulently obtained the sum of \$133,000 under the pretence that the money would be used to export coconut to America for Bio Fuel which he never did.

Oloye and Izadifor Hart, a Radiation Oncologist met online through a dating service called e-harmony that matches single men and women based on compatibility. Oloye was introduced to Hart as a 49- year old, Mechanical Engineer and widower based in Houston, who lost his wife some years ago. In the course of their interaction, the suspect informed the complainant that he has a company and was in Nigeria seeking to purchase raw coconut to be used in the US as bio-fuel. He claimed he needed money and had no access to his account in the US, and was basically stuck in Nigeria. Persuaded by the love she had for Oloye, Hart wired \$133,000 to him at different times.

But Oloye pleaded not guilty to the 10 count charges July 7. Justice Akunnu, has fixed ruling on the bail application for 19 July while ordering that the accused be remanded in prison custody.

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

<http://thewillnigeria.com/business/5144-EFCC-Docks-Nigerians-For-Swindling-German-American.html>

419 Coalition comment: Congratulations and thanks to Frieda Springer-Beck for orchestrating the attention of the EFCC to this matter, and to the EFCC for taking action. We trust that the EFCC will also move rapidly to locate and freeze the assets of the alleged 419er for the duration of the legal proceeds against him, with the view of promptly reimbursing the victims for their losses should the alleged 419er be convicted. In another such case, the Odiawa case, in which the 419er was convicted Years ago, the victim has yet to receive a dime of recovered and repatriated funds.... that sort of thing simply must cease should the EFCC wish to regain credibility with the counter-419 community... convicted 419ers must not be allowed to hide their assets - they must have their assets quickly and efficiently stripped and liquidated, and the recovered funds and assets repatriated to their victims promptly.

7 JUL 2010

From the Connecticut Post, Bridgeport, sent in by a friend of 419 Coalition:

Nigerian scammer's sentencing delayed

Michael P. Mayko, Staff Writer

BRIDGEPORT -- A federal judge Wednesday postponed the sentencing of a Nigerian e-mail scammer after determining she needed more information regarding cccccccathe 65 mostly elderly victims from whom the prosecution claims he helped grab more than \$2.5 million.

U.S. District Judge Janet C. Hall delayed Okpako Mike Diamreyan's sentencing until Sept. 1. In the meantime, she ordered Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward Chang to provide more detailed information on the loss amount victims sustained after their first known contact with the defendant. Additionally, she asked for evidence detailing what the government determined the words "old work" and "new or fresh work" meant in e-mails Diamreyan sent to fellow scammers.

Chang, over the objection of Jonathan Einhorn, Diamreyan's court-appointed lawyer, contends that "old work" refers to individuals who previously sent money to scammers and could be victimized again. The prosecutor added that many of the people victimized are senior citizens.

Diamreyan, a native Nigerian, constitutes a rare breed. He is the only person caught and convicted in Connecticut in the past two decades for involvement in advance fee scams, known as the 419 scam. It's named after a section of the Nigerian criminal code.

A federal jury convicted him earlier this year on three wire fraud charges all involving Michael Panedelos, a 78-year-old Shelton man.

Panedelos transferred at least \$72,987 between October 2004 and June 2007 to schemes involving Diamreyan and others, according to court documents.

Chang told the judge Diamreyan boasted he and his team were clearing "\$5 million a year."

"It sounds to me like every scam that originated in Nigeria or Ghana is being laid at this defendant's feet," Einhorn argued.

E-mails seized by Richard Lauria and Christopher Mehring of the Defense Criminal Investigative Services disclose that Diamreyan has portrayed himself as government secretary, a doctor, an airport director, a diplomat and even a prince in the schemes.

They offer to share millions in oil contracts, inheritances or boxes of stolen money. All the victim has to do is provide upfront fees to help process the movement. Except after the initial payment is made, the fee request never end. There's money needed for transportation, lawyers, documents, custom costs and more.

DCIS became involved because one of the scams involved money allegedly stolen by U.S. soldiers in Iraq.

That scam victimized Richard D. Smith, an 82-year-old Colorado resident to the tune of \$72,987, according to the DCIS investigation.

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

<http://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Nigerian-scammer-s-sentencing-delayed-568320.php>

Scroll down to 5 JUL 2010 and 3 MAY 2010 for more info on this case.

5 JUL 2010

From 1010 WINS radio, New York, sent in by a friend of 419 Coalition:

Nigerian Citizen Faces Sentencing for Wire Fraud in Bridgeport

BRIDGEPORT, Conn. (AP/1010 WINS) -- A Nigerian citizen faces sentencing for a scheme in which authorities say he promised millions to his victims in return for advance fees to help transfer the money to the United States.

Okpako Mike Diamreyan is scheduled to be sentenced Wednesday in federal court in Bridgeport after he was convicted of three counts of wire fraud in February.

Prosecutors say the 31-year-old Diamreyan should be sentenced to more than 12 to 15 years in prison. They say he and his accomplices ripped off 67 victims around the world, most of them older people. Prosecutors say many victims suffered losses of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

But Diamreyan's attorney said there was no proof Diamreyan caused the losses, except for four people involving about \$30,000.

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

<http://www.1010wins.com/Nigerian-Faces-Sentencing-for-Wire-Fraud-in-Bridge/7617771>

[For more history on this case scroll down to 3 MAY 2010 News]

24 JUN 2010

From the Nigerian newspaper Daily Sun:

Super crook: Convict serving jail term inside Kirikiri dupes banker N12m

By MATTHEW DIKE

A prisoner, who was prosecuted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, (EFCC) and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment in 2008 over advance fee fraud related offences (aka '419'), has defrauded a banker of N12million from his cell at the Kirikiri Maximum Prison, Lagos.

The prisoner, Ikechuwku Ogbu (alias Prince Eze), investigations reveal, created a 419 syndicate from inside the inner recesses of the prison, with which he had been duping unsuspecting members of the public. His forte is what is known in advance fee fraud as love scam. He advertised himself as an eligible bachelor who desperately needs a wife.

Those who responded to adverts, ended up adding to the long list of his victims. However, the riddle which EFCC operatives are trying to resolve is how a prisoner managed to place an advertorial in the love links page of the Vanguard Newspapers of March 7, 2009. In the advertorial, Ogbu wrote: "I am Prince Eze, 46, from Anambra State, live in Lagos. Genotype AA, Blood Group 0 needs a working class business lady between 39-45 to settle down with on 07057928637 or 07085350598. Several women that were desperately looking for husband called these numbers.

One of them is a lady, who works with the National Assembly in Abuja. After making contacts with her proposed spouse, she flew to Lagos, to ensure that others didn't beat her to her

prospective husband.

She received the shock of her life when she landed at the domestic wing of the Murtala Muhammed Airport, Ikeja and no one was there to pick her.

This prompted her to call Ogbu, who now told her that he wained in Kirikiri Prison by the EFCC over money laundering matters, whereas he is serving a jail term. He told the woman to come over to the prison to meet him. She did. On getting to the prison yard, she was accorded VIP treatment by the warders and this gave her the impression that Ogbu was an influential personality who was detained over a minor issue.

When Ogbu finally met her, he told the lady that theirs was love at first sight. He painted the picture of a blissful marital experience for the couple once he gets out of prison. The woman couldn't believe her luck for getting a husband, a rich one at that, so cheap. While the woman was thanking God, Ogbu moved to the next stage of his plan to pull off a massive scam. He told her that he was a drug baron and that someone was sending \$25 million to him from the United States, but that he was afraid of lodging the money in his own account for fear that it could be seized by EFCC.

The woman fell for the bait, and suddenly made it her business to look for an account for the fraudster. Instead of returning to her station in Abuja, she flew to Port-Harcourt to meet her brother-in-law, a manager with one of the new generation banks and told him about the business. The banker immediately flew to Lagos and met Ogbu. And the story changed. He said the person bringing the money from the US said he would not release it until he came out of prison.

The challenge now was for the banker to arrange his release which, supposedly entails bribing key officials of the prison service and the EFCC as well as the judge. He gave the bankers number to fake EFCC officials who were members of the syndicate.

They started calling the banker, demanding for all sorts of money (in millions). And he paid. At the end of the day, he lost over N12million to the fraudsters, yet Ogbu was not released neither was any payment in dollars received.

At this juncture, he realized that he had been fleeced and reported to the EFCC. The commission's investigations revealed that Ogbu lives like a king in Kirikiri Prison. Although he was not supposed to have access to telephone, five cell phones were recovered from the unrepentant prisoner when EFCC stormed the prison last Thursday, June 17. It was also discovered that he had been receiving huge sums of money in the presence of warders.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://sunnewsonline.com/webpages/news/national/2010/june/24/national-24-06-2010-003.htm>

16 JUN 2010
From Haaretz.com Israel:

Court: Israelis suspected in 'Nigerian scam' can be extradited to U.S.

Seven Israelis are suspected of scamming tens of millions of dollars from U.S. pensioners in a so-called Nigerian scam over the course of four years.

By Liel Kyzer and Haaretz Service

The seven Israelis suspected of scamming tens of millions of dollars from U.S. pensioners in a so-called "Nigerian scam" can be extradited to the United States to face trial there, the Jerusalem District Court ruled on Wednesday.

The seven, arrested by Tel Aviv police in July 2009, have been charged by American prosecutors for a serious of legal violations, including conspiracy to commit fraud. Some of the defendants also face money laundering charges.

The defendants are suspected of building a sophisticated crime network to defraud elderly American pensioners. Over four years, the network netted tens of millions of dollars in ill-gotten gains.

The defendants, all in their 20s and 30s, allegedly phoned American pensioners, told them they had won the lottery and asked them for a fee of several thousand dollars for the transfer of the prize money, which in fact never existed.

The investigation that uncovered the network was conducted in conjunction between Israeli and U.S. law enforcement agencies.

Here is the URL of the piece for as long as it is good:
<http://www.haaretz.com/news/national/court-israelis-suspected-in-nigerian-scam-can-be-extradited-to-u-s-1.296597>

419 Coalition Note: 419 Advance Fee Fraud (419) is defined as Advance Fee Fraud with a West African (primarily Nigerian) connection. While the above case is certainly Advance Fee Fraud, it is unclear from the article whether there was a West African involvement or not. If so, it is indeed Lottery 419, if not, it is indeed Lottery Advance Fee Fraud, but not 419.

We post this story here, since there are comments being made on Nigeria-centric sites blaming Israelis for the 419 problem, like these two from the NaijaIntellects google group: "Israelis use Nigerian identity to 419 Americans!" and "I always knew they were the ones behind some

of the 419 frauds."

This gives us a good opportunity to clarify, once again, what is 419 AFF and what is not, and unless this case does indeed have a Nigerian or West African connection, it is Not, by definition, 419 Fraud. In short, folks need to realize that while All 419 is Advance Fee Fraud, All Advance Fee Fraud is NOT 419.

26 MAY 2010

From the Nigerian newspaper The Punch:

EFCC raises special team to probe 'ill-gotten' properties

by Emma Anya

A special team has been constituted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission to investigate properties and assets whose owners cannot explain how they acquired them.

The commission's Chan, M. Farida Waziri, who made this known in Abuja on Tuesday, also flayed multinational companies for encouraging and deepening corruption in Nigeria in their bids to win huge contracts.

However, Waziri neither disclosed when the team was constituted nor its membership; but she explained that it (team) was a part of the intensified efforts of the agency to stem "corruption and money laundering in the country."

She spoke when Senator Smart Adeyemi visited her at the EFCC head office in Abuja.

A statement by the anti-graft commission's Head of Media and Publicity, Mr. Femi Babafemi, after Adeyemi's visit, quoted Waziri as having stressed the need for the passage of the EFCC Asset Forfeiture and the Freedom of Information bills by the National Assembly to rev up the war against graft in the country.

The commission's boss said, "While we expect the passage of our asset forfeiture bill by the National Assembly, we have decided to make use of Section 7 of the EFCC Establishment Act to go for the assets of the corrupt.

"As a result, I have just constituted a team that will, henceforth, go out to identify properties which means of acquisition cannot be explained by their owners. We promise they will forfeit them to government."

Section 7 (1b) of the EFCC Act states that the commission has the power to "cause investigation to be conducted into properties of any person if it appears to the commission that the person's life style and extent of the properties are not justified by his source of income."

Waziri said that the level of corruption in Nigeria and the urgent need to develop the country deserved drastic actions.

She said, "This is why it is expedient for the National Assembly to reconsider and pass our assets forfeiture bill, the freedom of information bill and other pending bills that will aid the fight against corruption in our country.

"Fighting corruption needs drastic actions and here at the EFCC, we have been trying to do something."

She "bemoaned the situation where multi-national firms encouraged corruption in Nigeria through bribes in their bid to win huge contracts."

According to her, "Nigeria has suffered a lot in the hands of some of these conglomerates who use the excuse that Nigeria is a corrupt country to perpetuate same by offering bribes before contracts are awarded."

She reminded such firms that "both the givers and receivers of bribes are guilty and must answer charges."

She referred to the multi-million dollar bribery scandals involving American and German multinationals, Halliburton and Siemens.

Some former top Nigerian government officials fingered in the United States and Germany for receiving bribes from the companies to facilitate the awards contracts to them in Nigeria are being interrogated by the EFCC.

Waziri hinted that the scope of investigations into the Siemens scam was being expanded as some past managing directors of Power Holding Company of Nigeria and Nigerian Telecommunications, would soon be invited for questioning.

Responding, Adeyemi said his visit was to commend the commission for its commitment to the war against corruption and to also exchange views with Waziri on issues bordering on good governance.

He said that the Senate was disturbed by the level of corruption in the country.

The senator said, "As our nation is going to be 50 years as an independent nation on October 1, 2010, it is time to take stock. You (Waziri) should count yourself privileged that you are part of history to make a turning point for Nigeria.

"We should not let this opportunity to make history positively to slip away from us."

Adeyemi promised to contribute towards the passage of the Asset Forfeiture and the Freedom of Information bills,

The senator also lamented that "in spite of the abundant natural resources in the country, there is so much unexplained poverty caused by corruption."

He said, "All over the land, you see our girls that are into prostitution and our youths wallowing in joblessness despite our abundant resources. This is because there are many people in government who are not supposed to be there. They loot public treasury with impunity and allow the generality of the people suffer.

Here is the URL of a press notice on the EFCC website that also covers this news:

http://efccnigeria.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=931&Itemid=34

419 Coalition comment: In terms of 419 matters, this all sounds very positive, and we would hope that this means aggressive seizure of 419er assets and repatriation of funds to victims of 419. The EFCC constantly states that it has seized huge amounts of 419er assets and monies to date already, but the repatriation of funds rate is dismally slow, even in cases where the 419er has been convicted and is in jail. Like the Odiawa case. From the victims of 419 view, it does them no good whatever if the EFCC seizes 419er assets and funds and then does not repatriate them promptly (if ever). An occasional victim has been heard to mutter in such cases, that unrepatiated seized 419er funds merely amount to the effective equivalent of one thief being exchanged for another.... that certainly is not a public image the EFCC wants to project, we are sure.....

25 MAY 2010

There is an interesting essay on the Nigeriaworld website written by Mr. Alfred Obiora Uzokwe, a Nigerian expat Civil Engineer who has lived in the US since 1987. Mr. Uzokwe is a frequent columnist on the Nigeriaworld website, which features Nigerian news, discussion, and analysis on matters concerning Nigeria. His article is titled "Beware - 419ers Still on the Prowl!"

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

<http://nigeriaworld.com/columnist/uzokwe/052510.html>

20 MAY 2010

From The State (newspaper , Columbia, South Carolina, sent in by a friend of 419 Coalition:

Rental scam hits Columbia

FBI says "Nigerians utilizing Craigslist" to cheat people

By KRISTY EPPLEY RUPON - krupon@thestate.com Buzz up!

Summer Bennett was looking for a rental home in Columbia this week. Instead, she found what is believed to be a Nigerian scam that officials say is running rampant through South Carolina and has caught the attention of the FBI.

Bennett spotted two ads on Craigslist for nice homes in good school districts that were renting for about \$700 a month, utilities included. Both people listing the ads sent her nearly identical e-mails, saying they had to go out of the country and they would send her a key and leasing documents - after she wired them a \$500 deposit to Nigeria.

Bennett didn't fall for the scam, but others have, real estate officials and consumer advocates said. And the problem that started in Hilton Head Island last year is now affecting all areas of the state and is growing as scammers take advantage of a down economy, they said.

"They're getting more sophisticated. It's harder and harder just on the face of it to realize they're con artists," said Byron King, general counsel for the S.C. Realtors trade group, which has provided information about the scam to the FBI.

The FBI issued a warning about the scam last year, advising homeowners to be cautious "of a new scheme being perpetrated by Nigerians utilizing Craigslist." But the federal agency won't open an investigation until the amount of money stolen reaches a certain threshold, investigators have said.

Wendy Dufford, an FBI analyst, said the number of complaints about the housing scam nationwide declined slightly after the FBI's warning but has been rising this year. She did not have S.C. statistics Wednesday.

The scammers copy advertisements for actual homes that are for sale or rent and lure renters with discounted offers. The hucksters then flee with deposit money and often personal information from a rental application.

In the past year, they have increased the rents to make them more believable, King said. Gone are the days of ads to rent a six-bedroom beachfront house on Hilton Head Island for \$500 a month, he said.

The problem got so bad along the coast last summer that renters were surprising homeowners by showing up with boxes and suitcases ready to move in, thinking they had legitimately rented the home, said Brandolyn Pinkston, executive director of the S.C. Department of Consumer Affairs.

The economic meltdown has helped spread the scam, she said.

"(Potential renters) are thinking that the home prices have dropped, which creates these too good to be true rents," she said.

In Bennett's case, she became suspicious after getting the second e-mail and Googled the address. She called Columbia real estate agent Lisa Davey, who had her property listed for rent on Zillow.com for \$1,300.

Davey said she received about half a dozen calls Tuesday and Wednesday from people who suspected the Craigslist ad was a scam. She contacted the site to have it removed and also filed a report with the Richland County Sheriff's Department.

"They stole it from my ad," she said. "They just cut and paste it with my pictures of my house. What concerns me is who is sending money. There's nothing I can do other than try to get the word out. Homeowners need to be aware of it."

One of the e-mail responses to Bennett from the Craigslist posters was written in imperfect English by someone claiming to be a pastor who had to go to Nigeria for work and didn't have time to find someone to handle renting the house for him.

"There is no landlord in Nigeria who has a cute three-bedroom house for rent in Columbia", Pinkston said.

Davey said it is not unheard of for people who are not from the area to rent a home without seeing it first because they want to save money on travel expenses. But she always speaks directly with them on the phone and does not encourage the practice.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.thestate.com/2010/05/20/1294760/rental-scam-hits-columbia.html>

3 MAY 2010

From the Connecticut Post (Bridgeport, CT) brought to our attention by
Ultrascan AGI:

Nigerian scams still net victims

Michael P. Mayko, STAFF WRITER

Over the years, Mike Okpako has been a secretary, a doctor, an airport director, a diplomat and even a prince.

Now he has a new title, convicted scammer, courtesy of a federal jury.

Okpako, whose birth name is Okpako Mike Diamrean, is one of those people, according to investigators, responsible for sending those annoying, grammatically incorrect, misspelled e-mails that clutter your computer. The e-mails plead for your help in moving millions from an African bank, company, custom office or warehouse into your bank account.

All you have to do is pay a few thousand up front in "document fees."

Unfortunately, for 52 people, the only money that moved was \$1,306,533 from their wallets to his operation, according to a federal court document compiled by investigators.

Diamrean's take of the \$1.3 million was \$68,681, the document states.

More importantly, Diamrean is the rare breed. He is the only person caught and convicted, at least in Connecticut, during the past two decades for involvement in advance fee scams, more commonly known as a 419 Scam. It's named after a section of the Nigerian Penal Code that criminalizes these acts.

Diamrean now faces a Friday sentencing before U.S. District Judge Janet C. Hall for his conviction on three counts of wire fraud all involving an elderly Shelton resident. Each of the charges carries a maximum 10 years in prison followed by deportation and restitution.

The ship is not coming in

Henry Schissler, who teaches sociology and criminology at Housatonic Community College in Bridgeport and Quinnipiac University in Hamden, labeled this conviction as "awesome" and "a feather" in Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward Chang's cap. But he believes Hall should send a strong message with a severe sentence.

"One message certainly is not enough, but it is a start," he said. "It's not going to be a magic wand. But it will cause someone to pause and think maybe I'm not really that safe."

By no means is Diamrean working alone.

In Internet cafes in Africa, scammers routinely fire off e-mails from their laptops. The scammers know the believers, or suckers, are out there. It's just a matter of locating them. And there are many. Since the 1970s, it's estimated victims lost more than \$41 billion worldwide to these scams.

Despite the global economic collapse, last year was the scammers' best year. Victims handed more than \$9.3 billion, up \$3 billion from 2008, according to Ultrascan Advance Global Relations, a Dutch-based criminal research association. The biggest losers? Americans, who lost \$2.1 billion in 2009.

"That's astonishing," said Rachel Ranis, an adjunct professor of sociology at Quinnipiac University, when told of the numbers. "It's just crazy that people would allow themselves to fall for this. But they prey on ignorance, the elderly and good, old-fashioned American greed; people want to believe their ship is coming in."

Ultrascan warns 2010 could be even bigger as scammers turn their attention to the emerging market nations like China, India, South Korea and Vietnam where prosperity is growing. While Nigeria may be the birthplace, Ultrascan uncovered teams working in 69 other countries.

The 'sucker list'

The scammer teams, according to Supervisory Special Agent Charles Pavelites of the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center, include an organizer who manages the operation, people who write the spam as well as any malware or virus attached to it. Others send out e-mails and play the roles. Runners pick up the money and a person collects the funds and arranges for its transportation.

He said once a person is victimized their name lands on "a sucker list," which can be traded among groups.

Lately, Pavelites said, the scammers are asking money to be sent to places like England, Canada and even within the U.S. because victims will "feel more comfortable then sending money there than to Nigeria."

The schemes involve "anything that gets attention." He recalls scams related to Hurricane Katrina, the earthquake in Haiti and anticipates one involving the Louisiana oil spill. There are tax rebate scams, work-at-home scams, re-shipping scams and escrow scams -- all requiring advance fees.

"As long as people are making money and feeling no fear of prosecution, why would they stop?" said Ranis, the sociology professor. "All you need is a letter, an e-mail list and a send button. Send out 100,000 requests get one or two bites and you're in business."

HOW ONE SCAM WORKED

Not much is known about Diamreyan's background. His visa papers claim he was born in Warri, Nigeria, on March 19, 1978. He attended Prestige Gateway Academy in Accra, Ghana, where he lived until coming to the U.S. in 2008 to marry Martine Janvier in Massachusetts. He has parents and siblings in Africa.

His actions caught the attention of the U.S. Defense Criminal Investigative Service. On July 31, 2009, agents had his belongings inspected at Boston's Logan Airport upon his return from Africa. Michael Carbone, an agent with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, found cell phones, SIM cards and a thumb drive which provided evidence for the prosecution.

It also gave Richard Lauria and Chris Mehring of DCIS evidence to secure a search warrant for Diamreyan's apartment in Mattapan, Mass.

The e-mails they obtained indicate Diamreyan enlisted help from relatives and friends to work the scams.

SHELTON FAMILY LOSES \$71,587

Three senior citizens felt the sting of the scams, according to Chang.

Michael Pandelos, a retired international exporter from Shelton lost \$71,587; Richard D. Smith, a retired heavy equipment operator from Colorado lost about \$59,695 and Mitchell Bender, a retired music teacher from Virginia, lost \$51,835.

But all Chang needed to convict Diamreyan on the three wire fraud charges were a phone call from Ghana to Pandelos and two payments totaling \$150 wired from Pandelos to Diamreyan, all of which occurred in Connecticut in August 2009.

Pandelos, who has suffered two strokes, the last of which left him with a short-term memory problem, did not testify at Diamreyan's trial.

But Antje Pandelos, his wife, did.

Chang asked her why they stopped sending money.

"Because ... we were broke ... we just didn't have anymore money," she testified. "I said enough, enough. I have not seen any results from anything."

Still Antje. Pandelos said the scammers kept writing and calling.

"So we disconnected the e-mail. We disconnected the phone lines, everything, so they could not contact us anymore ... I have no more computer."

Antje Pandelos angrily recalls the days of e-mails filling their computer; phone calls ringing early in the morning, interrupting lunch and dinner before stopping around midnight and the

numerous rubber checks arriving in the mail and bouncing at the bank costing the family even more in fees.

Yet, Michael Pandelos always thought the next one would pay off. He once even traveled to Spain as part of the scam. "We fought constantly about this," Antje Pandelos said.

Now, she suspects this stress led to her heart attack and contributed to her husband's health issues. It also drained their savings accounts and affected their lifestyle.

Scammer strikes again

Bender, who operates a music publishing company and suffers from a hearing loss, had numerous conversations with people he believes are Diplomat Dala and Dr. Michael Koffi, the supposed director of Provident Insurance and Security Co.

"I had many, many conversations with Diplomat Dala," he said. "I dealt a lot of the time through Dr. Koffi."

Investigators suspect Diamreyan played those roles.

Bender got caught up in a scam e-mail claiming to be from Amos and Mary Gomogo, two displaced Sudanese children. They wanted his help to access boxes containing \$18.5 million and a quantity of diamonds left them by their late father Vincent. The boxes are in America and they need someone to act as "beneficiary."

Diamreyan as Koffi writes Bender in June, 2007 and tells him:

"...those kids are Sudanese ... and they have no other person here. They are here alone...They are the people who chose you and appointed you to be their beneficiary. They also have to stand in your behalf here to testify before the court that you are their beneficiary to obtain the power of attorney document on your behalf, giving you the legal right to receive the boxes for them, so be wise and casual who you are dealing with."

Koffi asks Bender to send \$250 to Mike Okpako, an alias Diamreyan uses, "to obtain the power of attorney document."

"That's the emotional tug," said Schissler, the sociologist and criminologist. "It tends to work nicely, particularly with senior citizens."

By Oct. 5, 2007, a financially distraught Bender e-mails Mary Gomogo (Diamreyan) "You probably know by now that another document that will cost \$3,000 is needed. I do not have the money and will not have the money ... I am totally broke."

Of the approximately \$51,836 Bender sent, Diamreyan's take was nearly \$11,000, according to a federal court document.

Smith, a retired heavy equipment operator in Colorado, was fleeced of \$59,695. That bought him a multicolored United Nations clearance certificate determining the \$18.5 million is "drug-free, terrorist-free and laundry-free" money; a notice from the Bank of New York that \$18.5 million is moving from the Bank of Ghana to them and then to Smith's Centennial Bank of the West account. Then a month later, there was another certificate from the Bank of New York advising him he needs to send an immediate payment of \$800 for "the final signing of the funds release order documents to release out the Activation Code for the confirmation of the account to confirm the presence of the funds by your bank."

"I believed I was going to receive money or I would not have sent any," Smith testified.

The scammer's future

On Friday, Chang is expected to urge Hall to send the message Schissler believes is necessary and the Pandeloses want by imposing a lengthy sentence.

The prosecutor may ask for restitution, but the chances of any payback are rare. DCIS can't subpoena records from Diamreyan's bank account because it has no affiliation in the United States.

Jonathan Einhorn, Diamreyan's court-appointed defense lawyer, will urge the judge to be lenient pointing out that the conviction only involves the \$150 fleeced from Pandelos and not the \$1.3 million taken from 52 others.

"We believe the government is stockpiling victims without proving injury related to Mr. Diamreyan's conduct," he said. "There's no question people fall victim to e-mail scams, rich people, poor people, but the government must prove Mr. Diamreyan is responsible for their losses."

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

<http://www.ctpost.com/local/article/Nigerian-scams-still-net-victims-472312.php>

25 APR 2010

From the Nigerian newspaper, The Daily Sun:

Lagos: Fraudsters fleece woman N1.3m

By PRECIOUS IGBOKWE

The quest to get rich quick has landed Mrs. Sylvia Tony in the hands of fraudsters as she

was defrauded of N1.3 million. The perpetrator of the fraud, 28-year-old Mrs. Chinyere Okpara who was arraigned before an Ikeja Magistrate Court for conspiracy, fraud and stealing, was said to have obtained the sum from Sylvia around Ayobo-Ipaja area of Lagos state.

According to the prosecution report, the accused person was said to have collected the money from the victim under the pretext of using it to purchase some chemicals and olive oil, which would be used to wash out charms on the US dollars (amount withheld) to be given to Sylvia by Mrs. Okpara Chinyere and others who are now at large.

The accused person was arraigned on a three-count charge. In the charge sheet, Chinyere and others at large were alleged to have conspired among themselves to commit the offence punishable under section 516 of the criminal code cap C.17 Vol. II Laws of Lagos State of Nigeria, 2003.

They were also alleged to have fraudulently obtained the sum of N1.3 million cash by false pretence which is an offence punishable under section 419 of the criminal code, cap, C.17, Vol. II Laws of Lagos State of Nigeria, 2003.

Thirdly, Chinyere was accused of stealing the sum of N1.3 million, property of Mrs. Sylvia Tony and thereby committed an offence punishable under section 390(9) of the criminal code cap, c17, Vol. II, Law of Lagos State of Nigeria 2003.

The accused person pleaded not guilty to the three-count charge.

The presiding magistrate Mrs. O.A Adegbite in her ruling adjourned the case to April 27, 2010 and granted her bail in the sum of N100, 000 with two sureties who are gainfully employed.

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

<http://www.sunnewsonline.com/webpages/news/national/2010/apr/25/national-25-04-2010-008.htm>

19 APR 2010

Ultrascan AIG sent this in sourced from the Ghanaian Times:

Crime, 419 scams rise in Western Region

The Western Regional Police Command, has warned the public about the influx of criminals and increased activities of 419 scams in the region since last year when the oil and gas activities got to its peak.

He assured that the police and the other security agencies are up to the task and would deal firmly with the fraudsters.

The Western Regional Police Commander, DCOP Alhaji Hamidu Mahama, gave this warning when he presented an overview of the crime situation in the region from the first quarter of 2009 to the first quarter of 2010 at end of year (WASSA) programme here on Friday.

Advance Fee Fraud known as 419 which hitherto was little known in the Western Region has suddenly emerged due largely to the recent oil find in the region.

"Unsuspecting individuals are stripped off their hard won fortunes by these miscreants", DCOP Alhaji Mahama told the gathering.

He said that, in the first quarter of 2009, 375 fraud cases were reported as against 562 in the first quarter of 2010 saying that the percentage increase for the period was 33.3

"Even though we had a difference of plus 187, we have arrested all of them and dealt with them".

The Police Commander further explained that some of the 419 fraudsters told their victims that they had special drilling pipes meant for sale to Tullow Oil Company to sell to them (victims) at \$1,500 per pipe so they can sell them to Tullow at \$2,700.

Others too, he said, claimed that they had charm diets which if fed to marine life, could multiply fishes in the sea.

"They also ask you to pay \$1,000 in advance for a total cost of \$3,000," he said, adding, "all these are lies".

According to DCOP Alhaji Mahama, the oil find had attracted to the region people of diverse nationalities who are desperate "to hit the jackpot" adding "But we're on the ground to get them.

"People are coming to see what's happening. But whoever comes with ill motive will be not succeed.

The Navy, the Air Force, the Police and the other security agencies have arrested a number of them and put them before the courts," he stated.

He further warned, "They can ran, but they cannot hide"... [the rest of the article covers non-419 matters]

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://news.myjoyonline.com/news/201004/44911.asp>

24 MAR 2010

Brought to our attention by Ultrascan AIG:

Nigerian National Found Guilty for Role in Advance-Fee Fraud Scheme

A federal jury in the Western District of North Carolina convicted Ugochukwu Enwerem yesterday on charges stemming from an advance-fee fraud scheme, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division and Deputy Chief Postal Inspector Zane M. Hill.

Following six days of trial and four hours of deliberation, Enwerem was found guilty on one count of conspiracy to commit mail and wire fraud, and 14 counts of wire fraud charged in a July 2007 indictment stemming from an "advance-fee" scheme. Forfeiture of more than \$9.5 million has also been ordered. In September 2009, co-defendant Kent Oserumen Okojie pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy and two counts of wire fraud. He is awaiting sentencing. Okojie and Enwerem, Nigerian citizens who resided in the Netherlands, originally were charged in a June 2007 complaint and were subsequently extradited to the United States from The Netherlands, where they had been in custody on Dutch charges.

According to evidence presented at trial, between at least September 2002 and April 2007, Okojie, Enwerem and their co-conspirators solicited individuals by sending spam e-mails informing potential victims that they had either won a foreign lottery or inherited a large sum of money from a long lost relative. When individuals responded to the e-mails, the defendants or their co-conspirators, posing as lawyers, bankers and European government officials, solicited fees from victims ostensibly to pay for things such as "anti-terrorism certificates," "EU bank clearances" and legal fees in order to secure their lottery winnings or inheritance. Trial evidence established that Okojie and Enwerem instructed U.S. and international victims to wire funds through Western Union and other money transfer services to the defendants and their designees in The Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom. The Western Union servers are located in the Western District of North Carolina. According to trial testimony, at least 18 U.S. and international victims lost more than \$9.5 million as a result of this scheme.

At sentencing, Enwerem faces a maximum sentence of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for the conspiracy count and 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine for each of the 14 wire fraud counts.

The case was investigated by a team of U.S. Postal Inspectors working with the Criminal Division's Fraud Section and the Amsterdam Politie. The case was prosecuted by Trial Attorneys Laura Perkins and Nicole H. Sprinzen of the Fraud Section. Significant assistance was provided by the Criminal Division's Office of International Affairs.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2010/March/10-crm-306.html>

8 MAR 2010

From the Nigerian newspaper ThisDay:

Nigeria, UK, US Partner on Cyber-crime Legislation

From Onwuka Nzeshi in Abuja

Experts in anti-cyber crimes and terrorism from the United Kingdom, United States of America and other parts of the world will soon converge on Nigeria as part of efforts to boost the capacity of the Nigerian parliament in fighting the increasing menace of internet fraud and terrorism across the globe.

Coordinator, National Assembly Anti Money Laundering and Cyber Security Coalition, Hon. Bassey Etim, who disclosed this at the weekend said the experts will be meeting with strategic agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences commission (ICPC), Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC), Education Tax Fund (ETF) as well as the National Universities Commission (NUC) to explore the extent of the problem in Nigeria and map out strategies to combat it.

The choice of Nigeria for this event, Bassey said, was informed by the preliminary statistics taken on the increasing level of cyber-crimes across the world which revealed an alarming trend in Nigeria. Bassey blamed the Nigerian situation on the absence of adequate legislations on the subject but expressed hope that soon the story would change for he better.

He disclosed that the experts in collaboration with the National Assembly Anti Money Laundering and Cyber Security Coalition will assess the electronic payment system recently adopted by the Federal Government.

This, he said, is with a view to ascertaining the strength and weaknesses of the system and ensure that remedial measures were put in place to safeguard public funds through a strong auditing platform for the new payment system and other online transactions.

The proposed conference on Anti Cyber crimes and Terrorism, he disclosed, is to educate Ministries Departments and Agencies (MDAs) on how to protect government investment as well as government official secrets stored online," he said.

Here is the URL of this article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.thisdayonline.com/nview.php?id=168045>

419 Coalition comment: We have always found it interesting that while all the Governments involved in confabs like this always claim that the cooperation and support of Non Governmental Organizations (NGO's) are essential to counter-fraud and counter-419 efforts, we and many other prominent NGO's (like Ultrascan, Fraudaid, 419eater) etc. are never invited to these events.... much less sponsored to attend by the governments and agencies that say they Need us and Depend on us.... At least in terms of counter-419, many of the NGO's and their personnel have been dealing with 419 Longer and more continuously than many of the governmental delegates to such conferences, and have amassed a considerable amount of expertise over such extended periods. For example, here at 419 Coalition, we have been dealing with 419 on a daily basis since 1996, with some staffers direct daily work on 419 matters going all the way back to 1992. Surely that rates us (and other prominent counter-419 NGO's) an invite to these confabs :)

Additionally, just think of all the money 419 Coalition alone has saved the Nigerian, US, and other governments over the years in educating potential targets away from getting involved in 419 scams - on our Own dime, Free of charge to the Nigerian, US, and other governments. Pretty cost effective, that, for the taxpayers. One would think that the grateful Nigerian, US, and other governments could use some of those saved dollars to sponsor us (and other NGO's) to attend these counter-419 conferences etc.

But nooooo.... when the Governments of the world preach Cooperation with the NGO's in counter-419 matters, what they really mean is that We are to cooperate with Them, while they don't have to make any tangible efforts to cooperate with Us :) Did we hear someone out there say... "Tunnel Vision" or "counterproductive" :)

2 MAR 2010

From the Nigerian newspaper The Guardian:

EFCC detains American over \$760,668 fake cheques

A twenty-four year old American lady, Sharon Denis Thorpe, has been detained by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for her alleged involvement in a scam valued at \$760,668.

A statement by Femi Babafemi, head, Media and Publicity of the EFCC, said yesterday that Thorpe, a resident of Raleigh North Carolina, was arrested at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport, Lagos, on Saturday, February 20, 2010, while about to board a Qatar Airways flight to Washington DC.

The suspect, who has an American passport No. 457647779 issued at North Carolina, United States, on December 30, 2008, had been in Nigeria since November 2009, ostensibly on vacation with her fiance, who is believed to be the mastermind of the crime.

Thorpe has, however, told her interrogators that the counterfeit cheques were given to her by a friend of her fiance who is at large.

Thorpe, arrested by officials of the State Security Service (SSS), was handed over to the EFCC on February 24, 2010. The suspect is being interrogated.

This story also appeared in the Nigerian newspaper Daily Independent, and in the Raleigh, North Carolina News Observer - here is the URL of that article for as long as it is good:
<http://www.newsobserver.com/2010/03/01/364799/nc-woman-arrested-on-fraud-accusation.html?storylink=misearch>

21 FEB 2010

From 234next.com online Nigerian news:

Gunmen kill former aide to Nuhu Ribadu

By Tunde Eludini

A former senior investigator with the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Danjuma Mohammed was yesterday shot dead in the Gwarimpa area of Abuja. He was ambushed by gunmen as he returned home from a trip from Minna, Niger State.

Mr Mohammed, a Deputy Superintendent of Police and top aide of the former EFCC boss, Nuhu Ribadu, was responsible for several high profile cases during Mr Ribadu's leadership of the EFCC leading to landmark conviction of some corrupt government officials. He was until his assassination yesterday a deputy

investigator at the Federal Inland Revenue Service. Mr. Mohammed was one of the first casualties of the power play in the EFCC when Farida Waziri took over the agency three years ago.

His assassination is the second against financial crimes investigators. In November 2009, Abubakar Umar, a lawyer and special assistant to Ahmeed Al-Mustapha, registrar of the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), was killed and burned in his car in Abuja.

Police investigations are yet to yield any result.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
http://234next.com/csp/cms/sites/Next/Home/5530276-146/gunmen_kill_former_aide_to_nuhu.csp

18 FEB 2010

419 Coalition Update: In mid FEB 2011, 419 Coalition received, from Mr. Laolu Saraki through his attorney Mr. David Pohl of New York USA, correspondence strongly denying the allegations made against Mr. Saraki in the article reposted below, and directing us to a Rejoinder to these allegations prepared by and published by Mr. Pohl on Mr. Laolu Saraki's behalf.

Mr. Pohl also informed us that the Ghana Business News, on being approached by Mr. Pohl on behalf of Mr. Saraki, took down this article from their site. They then substituted the Mr. Saraki's Rejoinder in the place of the original article.

The letter we received from Mr. Pohl, and the published rejoinder, are given in toto below this article. In brief, 419 Coalition was asked to delete this article from our site. Being sympathetic to the concerns of Mr. Pohl and Mr. Saraki, and willing to edit or delete the article if appropriate to address them, we accordingly made a due diligence inquiry to Ultrascan AGI. Ultrascan AGI, based out of the Netherlands, is the source of the report on which the article was based. We asked them for a written statement for publication as to whether or not they stand behind the allegations against Mr. Saraki made in the article.

We received a written response from Ms. Monica van Delden of Ultrascan AGI stating that "Ultrascan AGI stands behind the report on which the article is based."

Nevertheless, in the interest of "equal time" as it were, we have posted and will leave up Mr. Pohl's letter to 419 Coalition and Mr. Laolu Saraki's (by Mr. Pohl) Rejoinder to the allegations made in this article underneath (scroll down) the original article itself. Here is the original article, followed by Mr. Saraki's Rejoinder:

From the Ghana Business News (18 FEB 2010):

Nigeria at brink of another civil war, nation dragged down by 419 scams. Intelligence report:

Nigeria is said to be at the brink of another civil war as clear and present danger signals show. The country went to war in 1967 in what is known as the Biafran war in which the Igbos sought to secede from the federal state.

An intelligence report by the Netherlands-based Ultrascan, which was emailed to ghanabusinessnews.com by its CEO Frank Engelsman says there are clear signs that Nigeria is gradually moving towards a major crisis.

In the report released Tuesday February 16, 2010 Ultrascan, a global investigation and intelligence organization which also focuses on corporate identity theft, credit, debit card theft and so on listed the following as the basis for the conclusion in the report: The report indicates that the crisis arising from President Yar'Adua's absence has brought to the fore the political battle over the delicate power balancing act in Nigeria.

According to the report the Chief of Army Staff Lt. General Abdulrahman Dambazzau has alerted the nation of overt and covert moves by military adventurists to interfere in the politics of the country.

The report cited the resurgence of violence in the Niger Delta, despite ceasefire agreements between the government and militia groups adding that the CIA and other European Intelligence Agencies have mentioned Africa as a large center of recruitment for the Al Qaida terror network.

The report links the 419 scam to Al Qaida and terrorism in Africa. It says between 2003 and 2007 there was evidence of a terrorist connection in the slipstream of 419 Advance Fee Fraud networks (AFF), supporting attacks. In 2008 and 2009 there was evidence directly linking 419 AFF networks to (attempted) attacks.

In 2009 profits from 419 AFF organizations financed arms deals and the cross border crime networks were used to support transports.

During 2009 we received regular reports about extremist infiltrating southern Nigerian mosques as well.

Portraying the events in Nigeria as sectarian, tribal or economic it doesn't really matter because AQ will portray it as massacre against Muslims only, it added.

The report pointed out how money laundering gangs also pose a threat to the most populous nation in West Africa. Nigeria has a population of over 150 million people.

Citing members of the Saraki family, the report said the younger of the Saraki sons, is a special assistant to President Yar'Adua. Though still not officially into politics, Laolu, according to insiders, was part of the team that toured the country with President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua. Many believe Laolu is being groomed for a top political office come 2011 like his elder siblings, Senator Gbemi Saraki and Dr. Bukola Saraki, governor of Kwara State, it said.

It seems that the friends Laolu Saraki, Obaro Ibru (son of the troubled former MD/CEO of Oceanic Bank Plc, Chief Mrs. Cecilia Ibru) and Kojo Annan (the son of ex-UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan) are having their best of party time in South Africa and The Netherlands, the report said.

It however noted that intelligence sources report the real purpose of their travels to Johannesburg, Cape Town, The Hague and Amsterdam. As a key player, Laolu Saraki is linked to money laundering, drugs trafficking to South Africa and the purchase of arms shipments for extremist groups, AQ Africa.

According to the report, further intelligence surveillance started in July 2009 in Johannesburg, Amsterdam and The Hague established that their Personal Assistants and girlfriends are in fact cohorts for Laolu Saraki in 419 frauds and prostitution.

It revealed that in July 2009, surveillance was instigated by intercepted communications and suspicious events and activities of both Laolu Saraki and Kojo Annan in Amsterdam during the summer of 2008.

More details can be found on Ultrascan's site.

By Emmanuel K. Dogbevi

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

<http://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2010/02/18/nigeria-at-brink-of-another-civil-war-nation-dragged-down-by-419-scams-%E2%80%93-intelligence-report/>
(this link no longer works, as the article has been replaced by the Rejoinder of 9 DEC 2010)

Here is Mr. Saraki's Rejoinder (by Mr. Pohl) to the allegations against Mr. Saraki contained in the Ultrascan report on which the original Ghana Business News article was based. It was published on the Ghana Business News site on 9 DEC 2010 and replaced the original article:

On behalf of my client, Mr. Laolu Saraki, I issue the following rejoinder to certain statements made by Ghana Business News:

On February 18, 2010, Ghana Business News published an article entitled "Nigeria at brink of another civil war, nation dragged down by 419 scams - Intelligence report" on www.ghanabusinessnews.com. This article contained several irresponsible, spurious and false allegations regarding Mr. Saraki, citing as a source the "Netherlands-based UltraScan."

Mr. Saraki rejects these serious allegations. They are in sharp conflict with his values and have no basis in reality. Mr. Saraki served his country when appointed by the Late Umaru Yar'Adua and was retained by his successor, President Jonathan Goodluck, in recognition of the impressive contribution he made.

As Special Assistant to Mr. President, Mr. Saraki liaised with him daily and was responsible for scheduling appointments with Heads of States and Dignitaries, International Governmental Bodies, Foreign Emissaries, Parastatals, NGOs, multinationals and individuals. Mr. Saraki also attended the Federal Executive Council and Council of States, the two highest bodies in the country.

In connection with his appointment as Special Assistant to Mr. President, Mr. Saraki underwent standard vigorous security screening and vetting by the Nigerian Secret Service in coordination with other International Security Organisations.

Mr. Saraki is currently CEO of Ensoles, an environmental consultancy firm he co-founded. Mr. Saraki's family is also regarded with the highest respect worldwide. His father, The Waziri of Ilorin, was the former Senate Leader. His brother, Dr. Bukola Saraki, is the current Governor of Kwara State and his sister, Gbemi Saraki, is a Senator of the National Assembly of Nigeria.

We request that Ghana Business News acknowledge that the above referenced-allegations lack substantiation and take appropriate remedial action, including retraction of the article and its removal from www.ghanabusinessnews.com and other sites on which it appears.

Source: David M. Pohl
Lawyer for Laulo Saraki

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

[Click Here](#)

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

<http://www.ghanabusinessnews.com/2010/12/09/rejoinder-nigeria-at-brink-of-another-civil-war-nation-dragged-down-by-419-scams-%E2%80%93-intelligence-report>

Here is Mr. Pohl's letter on Mr. Saraki's behalf to 419 Coalition of 17 FEB 2011.
It was sent to us as a pdf file, so it is reproduced as one here. You will need
Adobe Acrobat to read it:

[Click Here](#)

17 FEB 2010

From PC World magazine, brought to our attention by
Ultrascan and also by a concerned Nigerian:

US Jury Convicts Nigerian on Wire Fraud Charges

Jeremy Kirk, IDG News Service

A 31-year-old Nigerian man could face up to 20 years in prison after being convicted
Tuesday of charges related to running advance fee fraud scams for five years, according to
the U.S. Department of Justice.

Okpako Mike Diamrean lived in Nigeria, Ghana and the U.S. between August 2004 and
August 2009, running scams that involved sending e-mails and making phone calls in order
to perpetrate advance fee fraud (AFF).

The scams try to entice victims into sending money with the false promise they'll receive a
greater sum of money in the future.

Diamrean posed as a government or bank official, sending fake documents to victims in
order to persuade them to send money via money transfer services such as Western Union.
Prosecutors alleged "numerous" victims sent money to Diamrean, both directly and
indirectly.

Diamrean is scheduled for sentencing in U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut on
May 7. He could also face a fine of \$250,000 for each of three wire fraud counts, the DOJ said.

Advance fee fraud scams have existed for many years, but fraudsters have been able to
canvas an ever-increasing number of people using spam e-mail. The type of scam is also
known as 419 fraud, named after part of the Nigerian criminal code that deals with fraud.

Advance fee frauds are believed to be a multi-billion dollar industry, but prosecutions are
rare. Technology companies such as Microsoft and Yahoo have filed some lawsuits due to
the use of their brands in a version of the scam that falsely informs potential victims they've
won a lottery run by the companies.

The top three countries for AFF losses in 2009 were the U.S. at \$2.1 billion, U.K. at \$1.2 billion
and China at \$936 million, according to figures released last month by Ultrascan, a Dutch
private investigations company. The figures are estimates based only on the cases
Ultrascan has seen, and the actual fraud figures are likely much higher, according to
Ultrascan.

Here is the URL of the article for as long as it is good:
http://www.pcworld.com/article/189541/us_jury_convicts_nigerian_on_wire_fraud_charges.htm

21 JAN 2010

From the Saskatoon (Canada) StarPhoenix newspaper:

Fraud nets 30 months in jail

By Betty Ann Adam, The StarPhoenix

A Montreal man who brought a satchel full of fake money to Saskatoon was
sentenced to 30 months in jail after astute bank employees warned a local
woman to call police instead of handing over \$30,000 in cash.

Yiuiti Hugues Tomdio, 31, will also be deported to his home country of
Cameroon after pleading guilty Jan. 14 to the indictable offence of fraud
over \$5,000.

The woman, who is in her mid-50s, fell "hook, line and sinker" for the
what's known as the Nigerian e-mail scam, Crown prosecutor Paul Goldstein
told Judge Doug Agnew.

The woman had come to believe a distant relation she had met once years
before had died and bequeathed her a legal briefcase containing \$12 million
in American \$100 bills.

All she had to do was pay a courier \$50,000 from the bag when he brought it
to her at the Saskatoon airport, Goldstein said in an agreed statement of
facts.

The attempted fraud was perpetrated starting in May 2009 and continued
through the summer with phone calls and written correspondence that
culminated in the Sept. 15 arrival of a man, later identified as Tomdio, at
the John G. Diefenbaker Airport.

The woman met him there and used a lock combination she had previously been given to open a legal briefcase carried by Tomdio, who used the alias Hamilton Marden, she later wrote in a statement to police.

The combination was 0000, Goldstein said in an interview.

The man allowed the woman to open the case and look inside, but did not allow her to touch the contents, which appeared to be bundles of \$100 bills in American currency that were wrapped in cellophane, Goldstein said in court.

The man withdrew one of the bills and gave it to the victim, who was then allowed to take it to an airport business to verify it was genuine.

The man told her there had been a change of plans and rather than her paying him in cash from the bag, she was to give him \$30,000 in Canadian funds.

She was instructed to get the cash and bring it to him the next day.

The woman went to her bank and tried to withdraw the money, but an employee became suspicious and advised her to notify the police.

"Why do they suddenly need the money up front?" the woman wrote in her police statement that day.

"At this point, I can use your help to check this out if it is real and get the package away from Mr. Marden," she wrote.

Police obtained a search warrant and arrested Tomdio, who was carrying the briefcase, at the airport the next day. The bundles of cash turned out to be bundles of blank paper with real currency on the top and bottom of each. There were 19 \$100 bills in the bag.

By that time, the woman had already received phone calls from another person who said the "courier fee" had been reduced to \$11,000.

"There's at least one other person involved in this," Goldstein said. "Essentially, right now they're pretty desperate to get the money and get out of there before Mr. Tomdio was arrested."

The Crown was not able to say who else was involved.

Police searched Tomdio's room at a nearby hotel and found a roll of cellophane. They also found a ledger book with the handwriting of at least three different people. There was a list of names with large sums beside the names. The victim's name was the last on the list.

The e-mail scams no longer originate in Nigeria, Goldstein said. Most now originate in the Netherlands, where "relatively lax laws" make it difficult to prosecute such frauds, he said.

"(The victim) unfortunately was the subject of her naivete and her greed," Goldstein said.

"After the police showed her the fake money, the cut paper, she asked, 'Do I still get the \$1,900?' "

Defence lawyer Nicholas Stooshinoff asked the judge to impose a sentence of six to 12 months, time served, for the crime. He said Tomdio was also the victim of a man he met in a Montreal bar who offered him \$2,750 to carry a package to Saskatoon.

"He made a very foolish decision to go along with it," Stooshinoff said.

Agnew rejected Tomdio's claim of ignorance.

"This was not a mistake. This was a cold-blooded decision to prey on a gullible, unsophisticated person and it was purely through the vigilance of the bank employees that the scheme failed," Agnew said.

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

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/news/Fraud+nets+months+jail/2466665/story.html>

419 Coalition Note: Kudos to the Canadian authorities and especially to the alert bank employee who brought the matter to their attention! However, it is important to note that the Prosecutor is in error when he says that most 419 scams now originate in the Netherlands due to lax laws and counter-419 efforts there... this is simply not the case. All 419 has, by definition, a West African (primarily Nigerian) connection, and there are 419 cells in most countries, including the Netherlands. Most 419 syndicates remain based in West Africa (primarily Nigeria) regardless of the location of their cells. Additionally, over the last several years the Netherlands has done much better in combating 419er cells there, as shown in their project Apollo push of several years ago in which there were raids on and mass arrests of 419er cells operating from there.

Quite frankly, we see more evidence of 419 cells operating at least in part out of the UK than from the Netherlands over the last few years, at least in terms of the telephone numbers used in 419 solicitations, though more Nigerian numbers remain used than any other.

On another point, It is also always important to remember that 419 is a Subset of Advance Fee Fraud and is defined as advance fee fraud with a West African, primarily Nigerian, connection. There is untold advance fee fraud that is Not 419, as if there is no West African connection, then it is not 419. But all 419 is advance fee fraud. Once again, 419 is a subset of advance fee fraud, rather than vice-versa, sometimes there seems to be some confusion on that important distinction.

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