

## **TIPS TO IDENTIFY A ROMANCE SCAM TIPS AND RED FLAGS**

### **They Reach Out First**

#### **Moving the Conversation**

The scammer will often times try and move the conversation to an encrypted site such as Hangouts or WhatsApp. An encrypted message site makes it difficult for law enforcement to retrieve conversations once deleted, making it more difficult to prove the scam.

#### **Asking for Money/Gift Cards**

Scammers are in it for the money! Nothing else! If anyone you never met in person asks you for money, or to send gift cards, this is a scam! NEVER send money or gift cards to ANYONE online!

#### **Asks You to Open a Bank Account/Bitcoin Account**

Scammers may request the victim to open a bank account for them, or ask for your personal information to open a bank or Bitcoin account. Why?

1. Collect personal information to open not one, but many accounts
2. Additional information to blackmail the victim
3. To have the victim “move” money. Money Laundering is a Federal Offense.

#### **Terms of Endearment**

Terms of endearment early on in a conversation is very common with scammers. “Hello Dear”, “My Queen”, “Hi Beautiful”, are just a few of their terms. They will also profess their love to you very early on in the relationship, often times within days.

#### **Working from a remote Location**

By claiming to work outside of the country (example: in the Military, on an Oil Rig, Physician on a Humanitarian Mission) their victim is in, gives ample excuses to:

1. Never be able to meet in person
2. Have poor phone/video connection
3. Conveniently difficult to prove why money is needed (hospital bills, attorney fees, bail money)

#### **Poor Grammar**

A scammers first language is often times not the same as their victims’, making their incorrect grammar noticeable to the victim. Scammers tend to also say phrases that are not known in the country they claim to be from. For example, they often start their introduction as “Am John” or “Am John my name” instead of my name is John.

### **No Family/Has a Child**

A spouse being killed in an accident, or by cancer are common parts of the scammers story. There will often times be a "child" involved. Scammers use a child as an excuse to need money for an illness resulting in medical expenses, boarding school, nanny fees etc.

### **Send You a Package**

Scammers will claim to send the victim a package filled with personal expensive belongings, gems, gold, and or money. There is NEVER a package and there are a few reasons they do this:

1. To gather your personal information (name, address) for possible blackmailing purposes
2. Get the victim to pay a "delivery fee" to a fraudulent shipping service (money actually goes to the scammer).
3. Excuse to have the victim pay for the "package" to "get out of customers". There is no package, which means no customers and the money goes to the scammer.

### **DON'T BE SCAMMED!**

A tool to help keep you safer from an online scammer!

1. Did a stranger reach out to you?
2. Do they want to move the conversation to another site?
3. Do they have a lot of personal questions?
4. Are they working from a remote location?
5. Do they use terms of endearment?
6. Have they asked for money or gift cards?
7. Are they a single parent?
8. Can they FaceTime without "complications"?
9. Does their story sound "too good to be true"?

**2 OR MORE...OUT THE DOOR!**