

Avoiding Internet Dating Scam & a Broken Heart

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Lynchburg, VA - You're hoping for a **romance** and instead, your heart is shattered by deception. Wednesday night, we told you about George, a man who went looking for love online and paid a big price.



He lost more than \$800 when he fell victim to a scam that targets people who log onto dating websites. But while thousands have fallen into the trap, you don't have to. Now, the warning signs to keep in mind.

George - "I got taken. It was a significant loss, not a catastrophic loss."

For George, it was all so easy. He met a beautiful woman on a dating website and when she got hurt and needed some money, he sent it to her. He knows now, she never existed.

George - "The general way it works is that it's a group of men in an internet cafe in one of the cities in Nigeria."

Using dating websites to pull one of the bigger scams to hit the World Wide Web.

George - "In my mind, I just had this picture of a bunch of people sitting before computers, and somebody saying 'Hey, come over! Look! I've got a live one!'"

George learned more about the scam at a support group on Yahoo.com. He also read messages from many more victims.

George - "I remember reading about one woman who lost \$2,700, which happened to be all her life savings. And she was left with nothing."

The group's director says all it takes to be duped is a big heart.

Barb Sluppick, Director, Online Romance Scams, Yahoo.com - "This is a very, very highly-organized crime. They know how to get to somebody. I have come to believe it's almost a sort of brainwashing. If someone tells you something often enough, you tend to believe it."

Often, as in George's case, they tell you they're in love.

George - "Playing with a person's heart."

But there are warning signs that the person you meet is NOT who he or she claims to be.

The picture looks professional. Scammers often take them from modeling websites. They seem to fall in love with you quickly. They overuse emotions and equate money with love. And they claim to have some sort of emergency - that you and only you can help them with.

Don't believe it. George says your only option is to stop the communication immediately.

George - "It doesn't really do any good to try to call them out for what they are. What will happen, I've been told, is they will respond to you with threats to kill you."

The Federal Government points out this scam is originating frequently out of Nigeria right now. But it can come from anywhere. The best advice on this is to be very skeptical and be very careful.

We'll have a number of links about this set up. [Click here to go to Looks Too Good To Be True. Com](#), [click here to go to Fraud.org](#), or, [click here for the Yahoo Group Romance Scams](#).

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