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Online Casanova Bilks Woman Of Thousands Victim Met Supposed Air Force Commander On Match.Com

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Reporting
[Pam Zekman](#)

CHICAGO (CBS) — It began as a fairy tale: A heroic fighter pilot in Afghanistan falls in love with a suburban chiropractor.

But the story soon turned into a nightmare. 2 Investigator Pam Zekman presents of the case of the Casanova con man.

"I was very happy, I thought here's a very handsome man, and I've hit the jackpot," Liselotte Schuster said.

The jackpot came in the form of a man calling himself Air Force Cmdr. Adam Arnold Smith. He found Schuster through the online dating site Match.com and sent her pictures of a man in military uniform.

"I was attracted to him, yes," Schuster said.

Smith told Schuster they could only communicate through email because of his top-secret mission in Afghanistan. "I have been out on the desert with my unit to control and prevent attacks from Al Qaida militants," he wrote in one email.

They're online romance soon heated up. Smith told her "You are my one true love ... you are my baby girl, my sweetheart, my Lilo ... my future wife."

Then Smith asked Schuster if she could send money to his daughter in London so she could take a trip. Smith claimed he didn't have access to his money while fighting the terrorists.

"So I sent a good chunk of money, about \$2,700, through Western Union to the United Kingdom," she said.

Next came a larger request to help fund his startup airline charter business. Schuster sent five more money transfers totaling \$18,000.

Her savings were wiped out. Then the emails stopped.

"I thought, 'Oh no, I think I just made the biggest mistake,'" she said.

Law-enforcement authorities say tracking these online Casanova con artists is like chasing a ghost.



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Liselotte Schuster lost thousands of dollars to an online Romeo who deceived her -- then disappeared. CBS

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"We don't have any control of money that gets wired to another country," Thomas Brady of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service said. "It's out of the control of the United States."

Brady says the name this con man used does not match anyone in the Air Force.

"Using the military in this is one of the lowest forms of scams I've seen," he said.

Schuster said she felt so embarrassed about the scam she didn't tell anyone for awhile. She finally told her mother over Thanksgiving.

"I take full responsibility for being that unaware, and not truly paying attention and not thinking that this person was a scammer," she said.

Schuster says she came forward to warn others to be more careful. Match.com has frozen the account of "Cmdr. Smith" and says they will cooperate with any investigation.

The website has 1.4 million subscribers. Representatives say they get a fraud report about once a month. Match.com offers [several tips -- the "do's and don'ts" of online dating](#) -- at its Website.

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