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My new business partner (his words) in Nigeria has sworn me to secrecy. It seems he's being watched by, "The International Interpol" and the "forces of Satan". I have promised discretion, well apart from telling relating the entire story via Twitter obviously.

I told "Paul" as he claims his name to be, I am at the moment focused on the building of my boat, The Black Pig with the help of my old Navy friend Captain Pugwash. I asked if he had an interest in matters nautical.

Remarkably he does.

He's clearly trying to build some rapport between us as he asking about my life. I told him I started my career as the Dragoman to the Ottoman Court before becoming a Swan breeder in Liverpool.

Well what a coincidence it seems he has a cousin who is also a dragoman and he says he admires that I am an animal lover. I offered him a good discount on a selection of swans as we are friends. I said had various colours available for immediate shipping by air.

Paul said he's OK for swans at the moment but has graciously offered to ask among his friends at the bank in case they need any This is his first mention of a bank.

I replied offering him a commission on any swans sold if he gives me his bank details.

I sent him a modified 200 page document I found that details the business relationship between us. It commits him to selling 500 swans per year on the African continent and to provide "first line support" to all swan purchasers. I've asked him to sign and return this "post haste"

The fool signed it !

He clearly didn't read it because it details not only a sales commitment but lists the contract jurisdiction country as being 'Narnia'. I've suggested he attends our annual sales meeting being held this year in Hull "EU, City of the Swan"

I also told him we would be having dinner on my new boat during the event so we can experience the swan environment. I've said he will need to send me his swimming certificate in advance for Health and Safety reasons.

He's trying to get things back on track. Has asked me for my bank details so he can deposit what he calls,

"Account set up fee"

I replied I was in the process of changing my account because of a water skiing accident.

He took the bait,

He asked, "what water skiing accident?"

I replied,

"I'm sure you saw it on the news, swans terrified, several heron upset and of course a canal lock that will never be the same again. It was enough to see me close my account with HSBC"

I think that confused him because he just sent the same text again asking for my bank details. I replied,

"Don't forget that swimming certificate, the UK authorities will check that at the airport"

He says he wants to,
"Concentrate on the money"

I said,
"I agree, when can you send me your registration fee?"

I followed this up with several swan pictures and an offer of, "buy four, get one free" plus a link to the Hull tourist board website and a photo of a duck.

I followed up with an apology,

"Sorry about the duck picture, I haven't been 100% honest with you. I have a sideline business in urban racing ducks, that photo is Thor my championship winner".

He became somewhat strident in his response,

"I do not care about birds today, we should be agreeing our business deal and stop taking about your ducks and that things"

I said,
"Of course" and sent him a photo of a gullimont
His reply email was all in capitals,

"I NEED YOUR BANK DETAILS FOR THIS MONEY TRANSFER"

I replied,

DO YOU NEED ANY DUCKS ?

His email of reply was a lesson in brevity,

BANK DETAILS URGENTLY NEEDED NOW !!!!!!!!!!!!!

NO MORE BIRD THINGS!!!!!!

I though it wise to calm him him. I emailed,

"As the good Lord says, Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither. do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly. Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

I accompanied this with a picture of a chicken. No reason I just felt like it.

Email back almost straight away,

"BANK DETAILS NEEDED URGENTLY"

I replied,

"I agree, please send them to me as soon as possible. No time to waste."

He seems to have taken calm considered approach,

"To ensure our business deal is finished i need you to send me your bank details. Account number and name is what is needed. This is vital for God's work and Christian honour"

I sent him a picture of a church.

I have told him I am spending the evening at prayer seeking guidance for both boat building and bird related business dealings. I finished with,

"May Jesus bless your pigeon coop"

Paul (my new African business partner) may have confused me with someone else,

"You need to send travel document payment by Western Union urgently" I replied,

"Can I go with European Union instead?"

He has become angry for some reason.

"YOU ARE NOT A GOOD CHRISTIAN MAN, THESE BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS ARE THE DEALS OF GOD, BE WARNED IF YOU GO AGAINST GOD."

I said I was repentant and then asked when he expected to sell his first swans ?

He ignored my swan question and said,

"URGENTLY details needed of bank to complete our special private deal. Do not waste time today"

Sent him an email reading,

"Please confirm you have now received details i do not want to have to send them again"

He replied,

"NO! NO! NO!. INFORMATION NOT HERE, NEED THEM URGENTLY. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE SEND SO DEAL CAN BE CONCLUDED AND GOD MADE HAPPY." I replied,

"Do you mean details of swan shipping, if so I have a detailed brochure with advice on the right harness to wear"

I followed up with,

"Please note advanced swan handling will be part of your training course when you come to Hull so no need to be worried. We swan people need to help one another."

He has possibly gone mad, he sent,

"SEND BANK DETAILS NOW!"

I replied,

"Yours or mine?"

He wrote back,

"YOUR BANK DETAILS - URGENT"

I replied,

"The same ones I sent you before"

He said,

"YES< URGENT"

I said,

"Why do you need them again?"

I followed up with a 5MG file called "bank notes". It contains multiple very high resolution photos of bank branches.

He's quite angry now,

"WHY YOU BAD MAN SEND ME THESE PICTURES, THIS IS NOT HOW CHRISTIAN MEN DO INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS." I said,

"International Interpol watching me I think, have to be careful. See picture number 28 for message"

I sent him another email with made up bank details. He immediately responded saying the money is all ready to be sent to me but I need to send him a 'processing fee of \$2281 so it can be released.

I said this worked out well because his registration fee for the swan distribution franchise is \$2500 so he can just send me the balance.

He did not like that at all !

"These are not the same things, we must keep our business deals apart for tax effects (?) so please send processing fee by Western Union and then let me have transfer number details. Now very urgent, do not mix up different thing, go with God"

I wrote back saying I can do a direct bank transfer but not Western Union because I am opposed to their policies regarding interdenominational church services, I added "as a fellow Christian I am sure you understand this"

He now wants me to share my phone number so he can send messages "under the private" as he calls it. I still have three 'burner' phone sim cards left so gave him the number of one of those.

He straight away asked me to download the 'Telegram' app.

I have replied

"Have downloaded the Daily Telegraph app. A mixture of news, sport and politics, a little too right wing for me but thanks anyway for the recommendation.

Sent him this link

<https://t.co/DQYdkRM8IL>

He texted me back,

"No, telegram not telegraph. It's a special app so we can talk and be private"

He included a link to the telegram app download which I of course ignored.

I sent back "This one?"

<https://t.co/OIU1x9TEmC>

He again sent me the link so I replied,

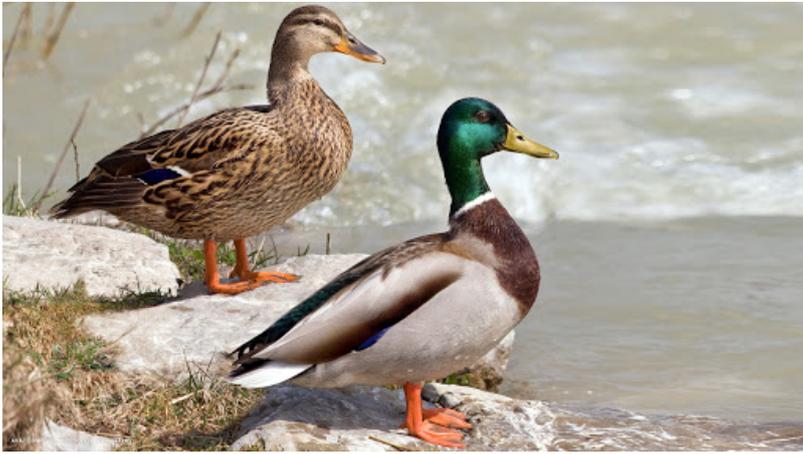
"I think we have both got confused, start from the beginning. Why don't you want to use Western Union?"

I always find that an excellent way of sending money around the world. You can use that to send me your franchise fee if you wish"

He's angry again now, said it was me that didn't want to use Western Union (this is true) but I replied that he was confused. I asked if we could use the Daily Telegraph app to communicate or failing that I could simply send him cash in the post.

He likes the idea of cash (I best he does) Have asked for an address to send it to.

I also included a picture of my champion urban racing duck pair, Terry & June, I said sponsorship opportunities were available if he was interested. The sport is getting very big here I said **<https://t.co/dNhYcB67VD>**



He's replied with a PO box address in Chad.

I replied to him with a PO box address in Lagos Nigeria.

He asked if I was in Nigeria, I said yes often but did not say why.

I followed up with,

"My associates and I would be pleased to meet you in person. I will be staying at the The White Orchid Hotel for meetings with local business leaders. I would be pleased to introduce you as my new agent for West Africa"

No reply which is unusual as mostly he is straight back to me, I may have spooked him with that.

And he's back.

He's returned to the Western Union transfer request. I replied,

"Fine by me, just transfer the money to me and we will get your franchise all set up. We look forward to seeing you in Hull, England for the sales meeting - As we say, it's going to be a honk"

He's angry again,

"No ! No ! No! I have told you so many times now, you must pay the transfer fee first before I can send you the other money from the holding account. This is very important and failure to follow my instructions could see you formfitting (sic) the payment"

I decide to ask some questions

"While I have your attention do you know anything about the breeding patterns of geese, it's a real weak spot in our organisation so any knowledge you have could be helpful also what's your view on the whole 'swan can break a mans' arm debate"

I think he's losing the will to go on, this time all I get is,

"please send money"

I tell him I've had a "great idea". I say,

"The solution here is obvious, when you come to Hull for the sales meeting I simply give you the money then in cash, all agreed?"

His reply was one of his best

"NOOOOOOOOOO ! WHY WILL YOU NOT LISTEN ?

SEND MONEY BY WESTERN UNION OR DEAL IS OFF !!!"

I replied,

"You should have asked that earlier, no problem at all. I will drop down to their office later today"

He's obviously calmed down and thinks he's about to get his money because he replied,

"God bless and keep you, please let me know when you have made the transfer and I will then give you new instructions for receiving your payment"

I wrote back,

"As an act of good faith and to demonstrate my trust in you I am arranging the first swan delivery for you. They are a beautiful matched pair called Johnny and Hallyday. I will include as a free gift one gull. Please let me know the delivery address."

He responded immediately,

"DO NOT POST ME ANY BIRDS OF ALL TYPES, I LIVE IN A SMALL APARTMENT, I CANNOT LOOK AFTER THEM"

I ignored this and wrote back,

"No need to thank me, you're part of the family now."

Before he could reply I sent another message,

"Have just had a brilliant idea. We ship our swans in our patented 'Swan O Matic' carry box, that has a secure compartment at the bottom. Why don't I put the money there then you only have to make one trip to the post office"

This clearly worried him.

"DO NOT SEND SWANS, DO NOT SEND SWANS,
DO NOT SEND ANY BIRDS TO ME, ONLY SEND MONEY BY WESTERN UNION, DO IT TODAY, VERY IMPORTANT"

"Do not worry" I said, "The Swan O Matic is the latest in avian transport technology. My staff spent over three years on the design alone. We contracted the McLaren racing team to manufacture it, 100% carbon fibre. Both safe and light. Ideal for swan shipping.

"Of course" if you feel that is not for you I can always good back to the first idea and use Western Union ?"

He eagerly agreed so I said,

"I'm on my way"

Sent him a photo with the question "this place?" <https://t.co/cuYmLaRW7e>



His response was immediate,

"YES ! YES ! Do the transfer now and the deal can be done"

"What a shame" I said "It's closed now, if only you had asked me earlier in the day. Never mind, try again tomorrow"
He was not happy.

"THIS DEAL HAS TO BE DONE TOMORROW IT CANT WAIT ANY LONGER YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW MY INSTRUCTIONS"

"Ok" I said but are you sure about not using the Swan O Matic? We are very proud of it"
I wrote again,

"Great news, I had a word with the manager and he agreed to stay open for me. Do you still want the transfer today?"

"Yes, very important, today yes today" he said.

"Right" I told him, "all done now so we can move on"

His reply was of course immediate,

"What is the MTCN number"

"What's that?" I said

"It's on your receipt"

"O I threw that away, was it important?" I asked

He went berserk.

He swore at me, he called me names, he made threats, he promised retribution, he said to never contact him again.

I gave him 40 minutes and then sent,

"Good news, I found it"

Overnight 18 emails and 6 text messages asking for the number. I replied,

"Sorry, been up all night catching swans"

I sent him a very long email where I had cut and pasted around 700 words regarding the care and breeding of swans.

He replied,

"Need number urgently to conclude deal today"

I replied,

"Yes of course but did you see that section on cygnets ? fascinating !

Sent him a message

"Do you want me to send you the MTCN number ?"

He sent both an email and text message in reply,

"YES - IMMEDIATELY - VERY URGENT"

I sent him a five digit number (it's supposed to be ten) and a note saying,

"Busy today until later, not available until 5pm"

In addition to that I sent him a delivery note from my company,

"The International Swan Exchange" for two swans arriving on a flight from London Heathrow, Friday 4th of September with all his details as the contact person together with a VAT invoice to be paid by him.

I have just checked the 'burner' phone I use for this guy and there are 84 text messages. A wonderful collection of begging, threats, demands, requests and attempts at intimidation. I replied,

"All ok with that number I sent?

It's obvious to me now that this is not one man.

The changing tone of the messages, the 24 hours nature of the contact and the spelling mistakes point to a gang monitoring the phone and email account.

All the more enjoyable for me knowing I am wasting their time.

I sent a message,

"You know what, I think I may have made a mistake with that number, it could well be more digits than I sent you. Does that make sense to you as well?"

This has taken a dark turn, he (they) replied,

"Your life is in danger if this deal is not completed. We cannot help you if you do not help us. Time is very important here"

I replied,

"I have been feeling a little pecky recently, I thought it was mange from the dog"

Mr shouty capital letters is back with,

"URGENTLY NEED THE NUMBERS, SEND FULL LIST ALL TEN NUMBERS NEEDED

URGENT
URGENT
URGENT"

I replied,

"Am just checking the swan pens, will be with you in a few minutes. Do be patient as we have a possible beaver infestation here"

I wrote again,

"It's not good here, I think we all know what an angry beaver can be like and boy have we all seen one today!

There is hair and feathers everywhere. My swan wrangler is in tears and will probably never play the piano again, pray for us all"

I have had lots of text messages and emails from 'him' so I sent a random ten digit number together with a note saying,

"Thank you for your order of two Venetian show swans, your birds called Mike and together with his brother Bernie are part of the Winters collection"

Just seen a text from him I missed earlier.

"Please stop talking about swans, we do not want any swans, we have no storage for swans here or any others birds. Please just talk about our business deal - thank you"

I replied,

"I understand because they are a commitment.

If it's a more manageable bird you are looking for such as a Chaffinch we can help via my wife's company (The North Yorkshire Retail Chaffinch Emporium and Disco Fish Market). Do please let me know"