

## **GOLD BUYERS AND BAD CHECKS**

Victory Gold Corporation placed an ad in the *Clinton Herald* in early August, offering to buy coins, collectibles, gold or silver jewelry, or "all forms of gold and silver". They set up shop at the Hampton Inn on Wild Rose Drive in Clinton for six days, August 13 to August 18. Their ad also featured a coupon, offering an extra 15% for senior citizens with gold.

From what I heard, this "show" was well-attended. But...in the last several days, three people contacted me, telling me the checks issued by Victory Gold bounced. And I learned of two others who received payment by check, which also bounced.

This situation is still unfolding, and I am learning more about it all the time, but here's some of what I know:

- Victory Gold Corporation incorporated in Florida on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018.
- Victory Gold gave a business address at a strip mall storefront in Miramar Beach, Florida
- One man sold Victory Gold \$30,000 worth of silver. His payment checks bounced, but Victory Gold did subsequently make the checks good by meeting with him and paying him cash.
- I spoke with the man who operated the show in Clinton, who assured me Victory Gold wants to make all returned checks good.

If you're holding a Victory Gold check which bounced, let me know.

The whole situation should be a warning about what can go wrong when dealing with transient merchants. This company lacks any track record. They lack any local ties or more importantly if you want to sue them, no local assets. You should use extreme caution in turning over to such a business, valuable property in exchange for a check which you cannot evaluate for its value until it is too late.

## **FAKE EMAIL INVOICES**

The practice of scammers sending out fake invoices to businesses, government agencies, or just regular folks is not a new practice. But an interesting new wrinkle did turn up last week with a fake invoice. We can thank Carol Galloway of Dewitt

for passing this on. Carol received an email showing an invoice from Microsoft billing her \$3517 for software. The invoice displayed a phone number to call if "you have not placed the order". Carol called the number and spoke to a man who cheerfully offered to cancel the order, but needed remote access to Carol's computer to accomplish the cancellation. Carol recognized this immediately for what it was, a ruse to get into her computer, and refused to cooperate with the man.

This is a clever variation of the very prolific tech support scam. There really is no reason to ever grant someone you do not know access to your computer. No good will come of it.

## **CHECKING UP ON ROMANCE SCAMMERS**

Probably the most up and coming scam currently is the romance scam. Folks meet someone through Facebook, or online dating websites, and strike up what passes for a relationship. At some point the romantic interest needs money, or some other financial favor, like accepting packages and re-sending them, or accepting money and transferring it to other countries.

People who I talked to who fell for this scam always remind me they saw photos of their love interest on the dating profile, or on the Facebook profile. Quite naturally, these photos show attractive, wholesome-looking people, often with their children, in high-end homes or exotic surroundings.

If you visit dating websites, you need to know anyone can grab any image off the internet, and make it their own, embellishing their own profile with these fakes. But, there is a way to check up on these photos, and it's pretty simple. How simple? Well, if you can type this phrase, "how to search by image" into the Google Search bar, you can do it. Google tells us four quick ways to check out an image. Such a search can tell you where on the internet an image can be found.

For checking out dating profiles, this is pretty handy. If you check out an image of your online boyfriend or girlfriend taken from their profile, and find out it also appears in the Linked In profile of someone with a completely different name, that's a pretty good clue someone is teeing you up for a scam.

## **CONTACT SENIORS VS. CRIME**

Let me know about scams, fraud, or other crookedness you run across. Most of what I learn, I learn from you. Contact me at Seniors vs. Crime, Clinton County Sheriff's Office, 563-242-9211 extension 4433, or email me at [randymeier@gapa911.us](mailto:randymeier@gapa911.us).

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