

Garage Door Scammer Responds

His response: "Kiss ma a_ _"



By Tom Wadsworth, Editor

In 2006, we published several stories about scammers who target garage door dealers with phony door orders, bilking dealers out of thousands of dollars. Since then, dealers have forwarded many scammer e-mails to us, revealing that the scams continue.

In October 2009, for example, a garage door dealer in Connecticut contacted us about a garage door scammer who wanted him to send garage doors to Ghana. Unfortunately, this dealer hadn't read our articles and was swindled out of \$8,000.

In January 2010, another dealer forwarded us the following e-mail that he had just received. To help you identify similar scams, here (at right) is the entire text of the e-mail, with the original spelling and punctuation.

The Telltale Signs

We immediately reported the e-mail to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). In late January, the FCC contacted Door & Access Systems and advised us of several indicators of this type of fraud. According to the FCC, these scammers:

1. Are not too particular about the needed products (whatever is in stock).
2. Supply multiple credit card numbers (they're stolen).
3. Cannot provide the card's three-digit verification code number.
4. Want the goods shipped (often to Africa or a charity).
5. Will not fully identify himself and his address.
6. Change delivery or payment after the order is approved.

All these may not apply in every case. We have also noticed that most scammers use sloppy writing and an e-mail address from Yahoo, Gmail, Hotmail, or any free Web-based service.

Be particularly suspicious when someone asks you to charge an additional amount to a credit card, and then *wire that same amount to a shipping company*. That's when they get your money.

The Scammer Speaks

After receiving the above e-mail, we called the phone numbers listed and learned that this scammer was hiding behind a phone service for the deaf (as they often do). We could find



no evidence that "Johnson Bay" or his business actually exist.

We then sent an e-mail to johnsonbay47@yahoo.com. We identified our magazine and posted links to our online articles about his scam. We also notified the scammer that we had reported his activity to the FCC.

We then said, "Since you will eventually be caught and jailed, it would be wise to discontinue this activity immediately."

To our surprise, the scammer actually replied. Here is his response, exactly as we received it:

"Great..kiss ma ass i guess you have a proof on me as i am purchasing these in cash. I'm in bahamas on holiday.send them out."

Seller Beware

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised, but the scammer's callous lack of conscience is remarkable. This scammer is (1) abusing a phone service for the deaf, (2) portraying himself as a real business, (3) likely using stolen credit cards, and (4) attempting to bilk small businesses out of thousands of dollars. Plus, when confronted, he brashly says, "kiss ma ass."

What can you do?

1. Watch for the telltale signs.
2. Report fraud to www.ic3.gov, www.ftc.gov, or 877-FTC-HELP.
3. Warn every door dealer you know. ■

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