

December 17, 2007

Dear International Students and Scholars,

A UB student recently received an e-mail response to her ad in the Spectrum for someone to sublet her apartment. This is not the first time that scammers have responded to ads in the Spectrum. In fact, at least three UB international students have lost significant amounts of money (\$500 – \$3,750+) in such scams.

Below you will find the e-mail correspondence between the scammer and UB student so you can see how scammers operate.

Here is the scammer's strategy:

- 1) Contact you to express interest in renting your apartment.
- 2) Say a lot of things to win your trust
- 2) Present a complicated solution for payment (e.g. money originating from a third person, etc.) Overpayment is often included in the proposed payment plan.
- 3) Send you money via personal check, fake Western Union money order, etc.
- 4) Ask you for a refund of the money before the check clears at your bank. If extra money was included in the "payment", ask you to send the extra money back or to someone else.

Here is what really happens:

- 1) The scammer sends you a bad check or fake money order.

**AS ALWAYS, BE ALERT TO SCAMS. NEVER GIVE ANYONE MONEY IN EXCHANGE FOR A PERSONAL CHECK. IF SOMEONE SENDS YOU A MONEY ORDER, CHECK WITH YOUR BANK TO BE SURE IT IS REAL.**

Sincerely,  
Ellen Dussourd

[Response from "Maria Cyril", the Scammer](#)

Hi,

Thanks very much for getting back to me, i am very happy you have received it. **(ISSS Comment: The following underlined and bolded section reveals that this is a scam.)** **Please you have to take the payment to your bank for cashing you will have to deduct your own part of the payment deposit plus January rent and send the balance back to me through WESTERN UNION MONEY TRANSFER so that i will be able to go for my flight ticket immediately, below is my full detail for the transfer.You will also need to deduct the western union transfer charges from my own part of the money before sending the rest back to me.On confirmation of my flight ticket i will get back to you with my exact move in date.**

NAME: Maria Cyril  
ADDRESS: 112 Dongola Road, London, N17 6EE  
TEST QUESTION: For who  
ANSWER: Maria.

PLEASE NOTE; Its important you split the money into two parts and send them differently from different western union outlets,Reason, western union does not allow transfer /recieving of large amount to England.

I will need the transfer information for the two transfers as soon as you are through for pick up.

Money transfer control number (mtcn)-  
Exact amount sent-  
Sender's exact name-

Thanks  
Maria.

Response from UB Student

(E-mail deleted) wrote:

hi maria  
i just got the mail today with the money,should i deduct the deposit and your january rent. then i want you to let me know how i should send the rest back to you. Thanks  
N.B: A total of \$4750 was sent to me

Response from "Maria Cyril", the Scammer

Quoting maria Cyril :

Hi (UB Student's Name),

Thanks for getting back to me once again, I really thank you for accepting me in your place, i have forwarded your information to my mom's client so as to effect the payment, i will let you know as soon as this is done and exactly when to expect it.On confirmation of my exact move in date i will let you know so we can get things concluded.I hope to meet you in person soon.

Regards.  
Maria.

Response from UB Student

(E-mail address deleted) wrote:

hi maria  
i am happy to hear you want the place once the payment is made you have secured the room because there are many people calling me for it but if the payment is made then it is yours. my address is 21 englewood ave, buffalo,NY 14214 and my names are (UB Student's Name deleted) and my cell phone number is (Cell Phone Number deleted) so you could call me. as soon as the money gets here i would make the necessary arrangements for you to get the money but we need to keep in touch. thanks once more.

(UB Student's Name deleted)

Response from "Maria Cyril", the Scammer

Quoting maria Cyril :

Hi,

Thanks for getting back to me,I have to take up the place.I am ready to pay \$540 the amount you mentioned as rent plus deposit, and when you deduct your deposit ,you will help me in paying the rent to the landlord.I will like to pay this and secure the unit.I will let you know the exact move in date when the deposit must have gotten to you and all arrangements concluded.I really need the place secured because i wouldnt want to get stranded on my arrival and that is the basis of the payment before my arrival.the former room i was to live in was given out because i did not pay deposit to secure the room.I dont interfere into other peoples businesses.I like to respect their privacy.I am open minded and also free with anyone.I am a trustworthy person.Please you have to make the documents for the lease ready for signing on my arrival.

**(ISSS Comment: The following underlined and bolded section reveals that this is a scam.)** As regards payment my mom has a client in the US that owes her some money,he has made out money orders for the amount he owes my mom before he travelled out of the States for a business, but it is more than your actual deposit i will pay to you,He will have to send the payment to you,You will send the balance back to me when you have deducted your deposit,this will take care of my flight ticket and other necessary arrangements before coming.Well i need the name as you want it to appear on the US money orders and also the address to send it .Money orders sent within US will clear instantly.US money orders does not clear in England and even if it does it takes much more longer me.Please kindly get back to me ASAP.Hope to hear from you soon.Thanks and have a nice day.

Regards,  
Maria.

Response from UB Student

(UB E-mail Address deleted) wrote:

hey well the room is already furnished and also there is a security deposit of \$300. Actually i am the one who was living in the room and i want to move out so i need someone to continue my lease and it ends in may so what i need back is the security deposit of \$300.the is heat in the house and the rent of \$240 which includes only water. there is a bathroom and a kitchen, there is a washer and a dryer free not coin operated.there is a bed in the room and the necessary closets you may need. the living room is furnished too. well if you need to know anything let me know and also to secure the room pay your security deposit which is abovementioned \$300 then you pay your rents to the landlord. well when you are decided i will give you his name and number so you discuss with him more but i know I have told you all there is.

Response from "Maria Cyril", the Scammer

Quoting maria Cyril :

Hi,

My name is Maria Ciryl 24 yrs from England.I am interested in the room you advertised in <http://subboard.com> i am a very tolerant person and down to earth.Kindly get back to me if the place is still available for rent,also i will like to know more details as regards the room and let me know exactly what to pay as deposit to secure the place before my arrival.I look forward to hearing back from you ASAP.

Regards

Maria.