

## Lost Love Online: Internet Dating Scams

Desmond Gregor was terrified. Held at ransom by armed men in Mali, Africa who beat him with machetes and threatened to 'hack off his limbs' if he didn't pay \$90,000, he regretted ever going there in the first place. His ordeal lasted 12 days. Finally the 56 year old Australian was rescued by Australian and Mali police who tricked the kidnapers into taking him to the Canadian embassy.

Mr.Gregor believes that he probably wouldn't have survived if he had been held any longer. Luckily his relatives became suspicious when they received emails asking for money and contacted the police.

The sheep farmer went to Mali to meet his prospective bride who was young and attractive. He was even offered a dowry of gold if he married her.

Internet dating scams like this abound. In one case a young Taiwanese student lost \$200,000 NT after he transferred his entire savings account to his internet date. In other cases people have shipped goods to their prospective dates who were using stolen credit cards. Some have sent airfares or other payments.

Often the scammers are from Western Africa or Russia. According to Hoax-Slayer.com they usually have a particular way of working. The scammer usually contacts a person who has placed his or her profile at an internet dating site. The scammer usually uses an attractive photo and is good at getting the potential victim to believe that a romance is very possible. After a while the scammer will begin to ask for money, such as an airfare to travel to see the date. They apparently use all kinds of excuses to request money.

Sometimes the scammers put their profiles online – which are usually very appealing with very attractive photos - and wait for potential victims to contact them. This is an even worse scenario.

Scammers find it very easy to target internet dating sites because they usually don't run any checks. Even respectable sites, such as Christian Café, have had trouble with these schemes.

Internet dating sites have become very popular with seniors. Seniors are generally regarded as easy targets by 'romance scammers.' Photos of very attractive young women are often used to appeal to older men. In some cases they even offer them sex.

As the story of the Taiwanese student shows, however, these scams can target anyone. The schemes which ask for shipments of goods are reasonably new, for example, and have affected people from many age groups. Apparently online retailers are wary of shipping to West Africa because of the danger of stolen credit cards.

The schemes have also affected people on internet chat rooms.

Online dating is fun and a respectable way to look for love today, but be wary. If potential dates begin asking for money be especially suspicious and contact the police. There are many websites and forums devoted to the dangers of these scams – some even list the photos of known scammers. If a date seems too good to be true it is a good idea to look them up. Also it is probably safer to date locally so that you can actually meet the person.

Dating blog: [The Best Dating and Marriage blog](#)

## About the Author

My blog: [The Best Dating and Marriage blog](#)

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