

FRAUD ALERT!

From the Office of Jefferson/Gilpin Counties
District Attorney Scott Storey

Avoid Foreign Lotteries!

Foreign lotteries are illegal in the United States. Let me repeat that: Foreign lotteries are illegal in the United States! It doesn't matter if they come from Canada, the Caribbean, England, Ireland, Germany, or Nigeria. All of them are illegal. So much heartache would be prevented if just that word would spread.

I receive calls every week from someone who has sent money to pay a 'Registration Fee,' 'Intergovernmental Tax' ("We're Canada and you're the United States"), or a 'Custom's Fee' so that a sweepstakes check can clear customs. Remember the dictum: "Ignorance of the law is no excuse!" No one, including your bank, is obligated to return money sent to crooks running a foreign lottery.

Just when I think that everyone knows that foreign lotteries are illegal, I get another call from a victim. Crooks do change their scheme a bit from time-to-time. Currently they send a check for the fees; it looks very real but is bogus. Your bank will typically cash this check because banks may not know it is counterfeit. Many feel safe sending off the 'required' fees once the money from the check is in their account. Days later the check returns and the victim has been defrauded.

Some Prevention Advice:

- ❖ Never respond to a phone call, letter, or E-mail stating that you've won a foreign lottery. Foreign lotteries are illegal—only crooks act outside the law!;
- ❖ Avoid entering any sweepstakes or lotteries because your name will be added to marketing lists that are eventually purchased by crooks;
- ❖ If you believe that Ed McMahon and the Prize Patrol are coming to your door—stand outside and invoke, "May lightning strike me!" You have a better chance of the latter succeeding;
- ❖ Send a brief letter asking to be removed from marketing lists to the Mail Preference Service; P.O. Box 643, Carmel, NY 10512. Include your name, address, and \$1. Sign the letter. Your name will be removed from lottery, sweepstakes, and junk mail lists;
- ❖ Remember that crooks don't buy the Direct Marketing OPT OUT List...they will continue to phone, send mail notifications, and E-mails.

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To schedule a "Power Against Fraud"
free crime prevention seminar, call:
303-271-6970