



OFFICE OF THE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF SHASTA
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PRESS RELEASE

“Fraud Alert - Email Scam Targets North State Attorneys”

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Shasta County District Attorney’s Office wishes to alert the public and all attorneys of an email scam directed at attorneys at large and small firms.

The scam typically goes as follows: An alleged foreign corporation contacts an attorney by email. The purported corporation claims to the attorney that it needs assistance in a breach of contract lawsuit or assistance in collecting a debt against a corporation from the United States. With all communications occurring only by email, the company retains the services of the attorney and signs a fee agreement for the attorney’s services. The “client” shortly thereafter informs the attorney that the matter is now resolved and that a settlement check should arrive at the attorney’s office in a matter of days. A cashier’s check does arrive by mail at the attorney’s office equal to the claimed settlement amount. The attorney is then directed by the “client” to keep an amount for legal fees for himself/herself, but to wire transfer the balance to the purported client at a foreign bank. While all the correspondences and cashier’s check appear to be authentic, the check is a counterfeit and the attorney can usually never recover the funds that were wired out internationally.

Recently, a North State attorney nearly fell victim to this scam, but fortunately financial losses were avoided after a bank recognized the scam and the counterfeit check.

Senior Deputy District Attorney Anand “Lucky” Jesrani of the Consumer Protection Unit recommends that everyone, attorneys or not, make efforts to verify claims as much as possible before engaging in transactions with unknown people who make solicitations via the internet. Some common “red flags” that indicate an internet scam are: (1) the other party insists on the sole means of communication be via email; (2) the other party claims to be traveling or out of the country and is unable to discuss the matter directly; and (3) the other party sends a “check” that is in significant excess of the actual cost for the product/service and requests that you wire the difference to some bank in a foreign country.

Consumers in Shasta County who believe they are the victims of fraud or false/misleading advertising are encouraged to contact the Consumer Division of the Shasta County District Attorney’s Office at (530) 245-6300.