

CROOK COUNTY AND PROSECUTING ATTORNEY

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Scam of the Week

The Scam of the Week is a scam that was actually received or reported to this office. The scam worked like this. You are mailed a letter containing a check from a foreign country. The letter indicates that you have won a lottery or sweepstakes for \$100,000.00, but before they will send the money to you by a certified check you must pay the taxes due on the sweepstakes winnings. The check enclosed in the letter is for the exact amount of the taxes due. They want you to deposit the check in your account and then send the tax funds to them by Western Union. They give you a very short deadline.

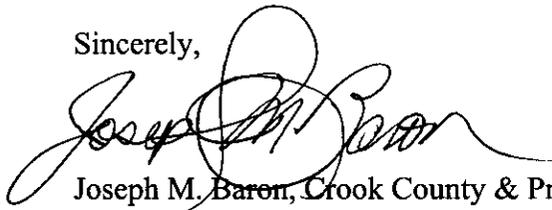
The scam is that once you wire the money by Western Union someone on the other end picks up your money in cash and they disappear. The check they sent you is a forgery and the sweepstakes is a fraud.

In this case, the individual that received the letter figured that it was a fraud. There were several clues. They never entered the sweepstake or lottery, Ed McMann didn't show up with a big check, there were misspellings in the letter, the letter was a copy, and they asked themselves why would a trucking company in Nebraska whose name was on the letter and check be involved in a sweepstakes. They were not scammed because they asked a few questions and when the answers did not add up, they sent the paperwork to me. Remember if something sounds too good to be true it probably is a scam.

These cases are extremely difficult to prosecute since no one has any idea who they are dealing with there is no way to catch the scammer.

If you are suspicious about a letter like this or any unsolicited business opportunity especially one that tells you to keep it confidential, discuss it with your attorney, your banker, a law enforcement officer, or me at (307) 283-1090 before you are scammed.

Sincerely,



Joseph M. Baron, Crook County & Prosecuting Attorney