

Sit back and relax, boys and girls, and enjoy this tale of someone trying to scam me for some money, but didn't realize they're talking to an IT guy.

To set the story up, I'm fervently trying to sell some furniture on just about any online site there is. The furniture has basically just gone unused for years (besides the dogs who sneak on there from time to time), and I'm wanting to get rid of it asap so I can fully setup my new home office! (side note: furniture is still available as of this writing if you want it...dark green couch, loveseat, and chair with tons of life left!!!) SO, on a local homeowners' site that sells stuff that has been innocent with past experiences up until now, I wasn't surprised to get some responses right away and my initial contact was harmless, even with some broken English on this case. The gentleman asked typical questions..." Are you the original owner?" "What condition is it in?", etc. I answered the questions and this was his response after that...

Thanks for the update, I'm satisfied with the conditions and your asking price, I would have loved to come check it out myself and pay you with cash but the issue is I'm an Engineer and am currently offshore. I can only pay via my PayPal account b/c it is the only form of payment that I have access to right now. You need not to worry yourself about the shipment, i will instruct the shipping company to handle that and will take care of every necessary thing for me after payment have been sorted. So kindly send me your PayPal email and if you are new to PayPal, you can easily logon to paypal com and set up an account with them, its simple and easier, just in few secs; you get your account activated and get back to me with your PayPal email address for an instant payment.

Sincerely.

It was a little weird to me that he would detail a PayPal setup, but not "too" far-fetched, since maybe some people don't know what PayPal is even in this day and age, and with him saying said he was an offshore Engineer and since we're in an oil/gas area of the country that has tons of people who do that, I didn't worry too much just yet. But my I.T. brain had red flags starting to pop up. My reply to him was that PayPal is fine, but that I want this furniture gone asap, and I had others who could possibly get it in a few days, so can he get it before then? His reply....

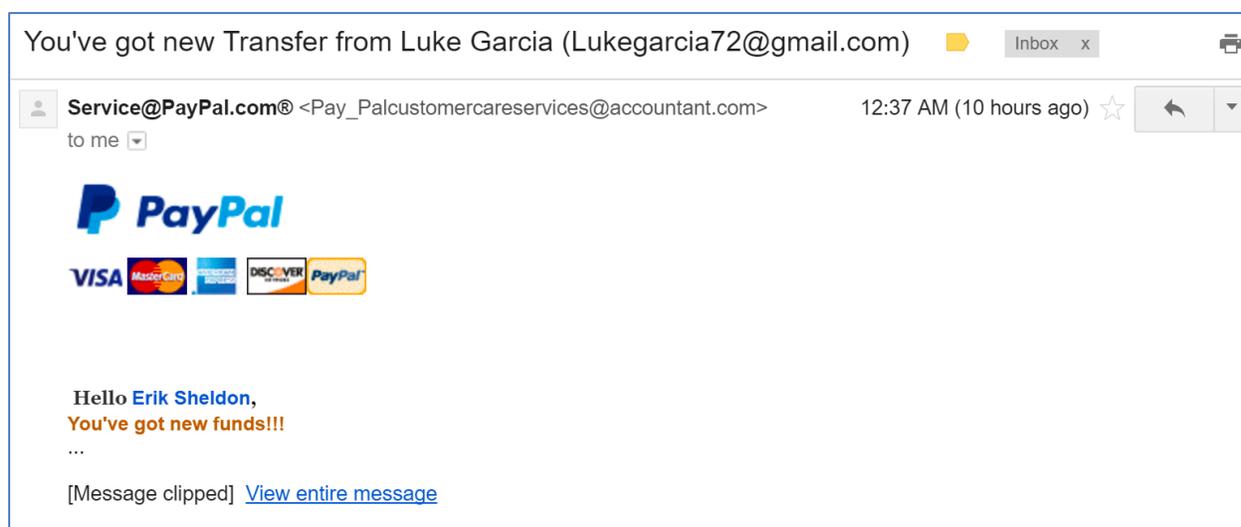
My shipping company will cone down to your preferred location once the payment has been sorted, so kindly get back to me with your PayPal info so we can get things rolling.

Okay, nothing too mischievous based off our previous replies. The next email from this person totally set up that it was a scam by this person based off the wording, but I wanted to wait around to see what happened. Read it and see if you can see some huge red flags?

Hello, I am glad to inform you that i have made the payment.. did you get confirmation from (PayPal) regarding the payment? Note;i found the copy of the message PayPal sent to me in my spam mail, should in case you haven't receive in your inbox you can as well check your email inbox or spam/junk [REDACTED] for confirmation about the payment I am sure they must have notified you to know about the payment and other necessary things you need to do in other to get this transaction completed. Kindly update me once you got the payment confirmation from PayPal regarding my payment.

Thanks for doing business with you.

(hint...PayPal emails RARELY go to spam if they're legit for one, so if it was in the Spam/Junk, then the reply email is probably spam, which it was and you'll see later. And then the whole part where it says "and other necessary things you need to do in "other" to get this transaction completed". Paypal never needs you to do anything else. You GET THE MONEY and you're done!) But I digress, and got his other email which was NOT in my Spam/Junk...so it even "seems" more real, right? Read on...



This was the message I got from him. That's it. Check the reply email. "Service@PayPal.com©" I don't ever remember seeing a copyright stamp on any PayPal message, and I've done TONS of business through them, but I could be wrong. But look next to the email...Service@PayPal.com is actually just spoofing you and is actually from the email address Pay_Palcustomercare services@accountant.com. So, right away, he's put any nails left into his coffin, but I wanted to have even more fun and click on the link after I opened this in a test virtual machine I have where it won't hurt my machine, and will keep anything malicious contained. When I clicked on the link, I saw the below two screenshots of information that I took to show you...

You've got new Transfer from Luke Garcia (Lukegarcia72@gmail.com)

Service@PayPal.com® <Pay_Palcustomercare@accountant.com>

Fri, Mar 3, 2017 at 12:37 AM



Hello Erik Sheldon,
You've got new funds!!!

Payments received - March 3, 2017
This email confirms that you have received an Instant Pay Luke Garcia (Lukegarcia72@gmail.com) via PayPal MERCHANDISE Payment Service.
Reversals : This method of payment can not be reversed.
Status : Pending - Transport Company Awaiting Payment.

TRANSACTION SUMMARY

Table with 2 columns: Field (Money sent to Merchant, Invoice number, Payment terms, Total Amount) and Value ([REDACTED], 002, Awaiting Courier Agent Payment, \$265.00 USD)

Table with 5 columns: Date, Description, Qty, Unit price, Amount. Row: Mar 3, GOODS, 1, \$125.00, \$125.00

Note from merchant

I have made the payment using friend and family transfer to avoid PayPal charges and I added an additional fund meant for Pick up Fee of the Goods. I will need you to help me send the money to my pick up agent HQ in the US through Western Union Money Transfer for them to make arrangement on how to get the Goods picked up in your destination to my son with first class treatment. So make sure you send the shipping fee \$120 to the Pickup Agent as soon as possible. Thanks so much for selling to me, email me once you get the transaction completed.

Table with 2 columns: Fee Name (Courier Fee, Western Union Transfer Fee, Total) and Amount (\$120.00, \$20.00, \$265.00)

Please Follow Procedure:

This receipt confirmed that you have received a merchandise payment of \$265.00 USD from the buyer of your goods Luke Garcia (Lukegarcia72@gmail.com). The money has been deducted from the buyer's account and the money is now secured by PayPal. However, this transaction is pending as we are responsible for the hold on the money. We have placed the money on hold for security reasons due to the rate of online scams recorded last year (2016).

In order to complete this transaction to get your account credited with the total funds on pending, You are required to send an upfront shipping payment of \$120.00 USD via Western Union Money Transfer to the shipping company agent in charge of the shipping and handling of the goods bought from you to confirm that this transaction between you and the buyer is legitimate and valid before we credit your account. We will credit your account immediately after we receive the Western Union confirmation from you to confirm that the shipping fee has been sent to the shipper.

You are safe and secured to send the shipping fee upfront from your pocket as we have The FBI and The NSA monitoring this transaction to ensure the legitimacy of this transaction and to ensure you total security and safety and for you to be rest assured that your account will be credited once confirmation of the shipping fee payment has been received from you. So therefore, your money is safe with us and we will credit your account with the total funds on pending immediately after we receive the Western Union confirmation from you to ensure that you have sent the shipping fee upfront to the shipping company.

The above sum has included the transport charges and taxes as we and the Transport Company quoted for the buyer (As per New PayPal Policy). You will receive a Message from the PayPal Customer Verification Department Shortly informing you on how to send the shipping charges and taxes to the transport company with the above details as soon as possible.

Thank you for using PayPal.

Please read the above info VERY carefully. Basically, they want to "make sure my PayPal account was valid, by sending them the EXTRA \$120 FEE they supposedly sent me, back to the PayPal account that sent this to me."

People, if you've gotten this far and don't see anything really wrong just yet, if this was you I hoped you'd go check your PayPal balance and transaction history to see that you have received NO money from anyone in this amount, and therefore should NOT send any money to them.

At this point, I blocked all emails associated with these transactions to my accounts, and have informed PayPal of the potential transaction in question. They thanked me graciously and will look into further on their end.

People, be safe out there! God bless!

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