

Everyone's a Target for Spam

General

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I just got word from another family member of an email from '**Sir John Kempwelch**,' a '**senior partner in the firm of Infinity Consultants**' indicating he was being offered the chance to inherit a large amount of money, left when a person of the same last name died without any apparent heir. I think we've all received these from time-to-time, but it's always good to be a bit skeptical about offers that appear too good to be true. So, here's what I do...

A few [quick searches](#) (use the subject of the email or the part of the first sentence) turned up several pages, all with the same offer, using the exact same words, just a different name for the deceased and a different name for the 'senior partner.' Apparently, we're not the only ones getting this letter! In the past, not only have I inherited great sums of money, but I have also been 'warned' of some security breaches on my PayPal account (I didn't have one at the time), that a credit card company wanted me to verify my account information (but the email contained too many spelling errors to be legitimate), and that I could help sponsor a well-to-do foreigner that needed assistance getting into the country.

Sometimes, the only intent was to create panic and a flood of emails to everyone in my address book, who would, in turn, do the same with their address books, which mimics what a lot of viruses do.

In this case, the topic was pretty specific and its validity was easily disputed. In other cases, the email spammer plays on things that are more difficult to verify, like computer viruses and political corruption. After you've done your search using Google, MSN or Yahoo, visit [Snopes.com](#) - they are one of the largest web sites dedicated to debunking urban legends and scams. In fact, it appears [this scam](#) has been around before, in a variety of forms.

If you get an email, especially from a financial institution, don't click on any links in the email, or divulge any information to the sender. Most Internet providers have spam and fraud departments - find out where to report the spam and how to forward the email to them. Contact the financial institutions directly - go directly to their web site and find their privacy policy. In it, you will often find how to contact them for reporting fraud.

Here's the content of the letter:

My name is Sir John Kempwelch, I am a senior partner in the firm of Infinity Consultants "corporate and financial Consultants". We are conducting a standard process investigation on behalf of "HSBC", the International Banking conglomerate.

This investigation involves a client who shares the same surname with you and also the circumstances surrounding investments made by this client at "Baillie Gifford", the Private investment

arm of HSBC. The HSBC Private Banking client died intestate and nominated no successor in title over the investments made with the bank. I would respectfully request that you keep the contents of this mail private and respect the integrity of the information you come by as a result of this mail.

I am therefore contacting you independently of our investigation and no one is informed of this communication. I would like to intimate you with certain facts that I believe would be of interest to you.

Since you share similar details to the late fellow; I am prepared to place you in a position to instruct the firm to release the deposit to you as the closest surviving relation. Upon receipt of the deposit, I am prepared to share the money with you, that is, I will simply nominate you as the next of kin and have them release the deposit to you. We share the proceeds 50/50. I would have gone ahead to ask the funds be released to me, but that would have drawn a straight line to me and my involvement in claiming the deposit. But on the other hand, since you have the same very name as the depositor's would easily pass as the beneficiary with right to claim. I assure you that I could have the deposit released to you within few days.

I am aware of the consequences of this proposal. I ask that if you find no interest in this project that you should discard this mail. I ask that you do not be vindictive and destructive, if my offer is of no appeal to you, delete this message and forget I ever contacted you. Please do not destroy my career because you do not approve of my proposal. You may not know this but people like myself who have made tidy sums out of comparable situations run the whole private banking sector. I am not a criminal and what I am doing now, I do not find against good conscience, This may be hard for you to understand, but the dynamics of my industry dictates that I make this move.

Such opportunities only come ones in a lifetime. I cannot let this chance pass me by, for once, I have found myself in total control of my destiny. These chances won't pass me by. I ask that you do not destroy my chance, if you will not work with me let me know and let me move on with my life but do not destroy me. I am a family man and this is an opportunity to secure our future.

There is a reward for this project and it is a task well worth undertaking. I have evaluated the risks and the only risk I have here is from you refusing to work with me. I am the only one who knows of this situation, good fortune has blessed you with a name that has planted you into the center of relevance in my life. Lets share the blessing. If you find yourself able to work with me, contact me through this same email account. If you give me positive signals, I will initiate this process towards a conclusion.

I send you this mail not without a measure of fear as to what the consequences, but I know within me that nothing ventured is nothing gained and that success and riches never come easy or on a platter of gold. This is the one truth I have learned from my private banking clients. Do not betray my confidence.

Kind regards,