Beware! This Scammer was Foiled!

Unfortunately, not all the crooks get discovered or caught. In fact, most on-line scammers are operating through portals that offer untraceable phone numbers and email addresses. Below is my true experience of a post Hurricane Ian scammer that tried to take advantage of this experienced agent. The scammer was so smooth and made things so easy, one might think they just had the listing from heaven dropped in their lap. But, like they say if it looks too good to be true, it probably is! (Some names and places have been XXX'd to protect the innocent.)

Here's how my personal interaction with one such crook played out. I have included the actual "text messages" and have re-created the twelve phone conversations over a 2 ½ month period as I remember them. I think any seller, buyer, or agent will find it interesting as they could easily find themselves in the same position and on the wrong end of what appears to be a simple real estate transaction. That's why it pays to do business with those you know, check out those you don't, and most of all use title companies, attorneys, and banks with which you or your agent has a personal relationship.

This transaction was the reason for starting PropertiesNOTforSale.com, as it became apparent of the need to expand safeguards so anyone could instantly verify what we have always taken for granted, like only owners decide to sell their property. In today's electronic world an instant verification system of a property owner's intent could stop a fast moving electronic transaction from closing. By providing immediate notice that a specific property that is 'NOT for Sale' and paired with a locally recorded "Lien Giving Notice…Fraud Alert", a fraudulent transaction can be terminated <u>before</u> a closing takes place. Here's my true story.

My first contact with Mr. Nora came from an incoming call at 8:04 p.m. on Oct. 4, 2022, which was only 6 days after Hurricane Ian had ravaged SW Florida. It was a normal call from a seller who said he had owned this lot on Mariner for a long time and thought it was time to sell but wasn't sure where to price it. I asked him if he would text me his name and address of the property and I would do a quick market analysis and get back to him in a few days. At 8:10 p.m. he promptly texted me he and his wife's name and address of the property.

I responded back saying, “Thank you Jacob! Let me do a little research and I will get back to you. I lived close to there for 20 years and know the area very well. TY!” He texted back immediately saying, “That’s a long time. Amazing, let me know what you come up with. Looking forward to working with you in this DeWayne.”

I missed a call from him the next day at 1:35 p.m. as I was so busy recovering from and evaluating Hurricane Ian damage issues on all our customer’s properties. I called him at 5:40 p.m. the next day, Oct. 6th, but he didn’t pick up, so I texted him saying, “ Tried to call but missed you. Call me back when you are free to discuss your lot sale. TY!” He returned my call later that evening at 8:03 p.m. Our conversation lasted 7 min. and 41 sec. as I explained the value of his lot before the hurricane slammed us. I discussed other lot sales in the area and went over the price ranges he could consider. The property was in an improving area, and within biking or an easy walk to Bonita Beach. If it had been on a canal lot just two blocks away it would be bringing twice the price. I shared that a very comparable lot had just sold for $230K, and with no others close by it would be worth a try at $250K if he wanted to test the market. To my surprise he didn’t want to test the market!

In fact, he said he just wanted to sell it quickly. So, I suggested we price it at $235K, which would give us a little wiggle room if someone made an offer, and we could still match the recent sales price. To my surprise he didn’t want to do that either. In fact, he wanted to underprice it so it would sell asap. He said let’s price it at $199K for a quick sale. I tried to get him to let me try for more, but he was adamant. I suggested he text me his best email so I could send him the listing paperwork, but was in shock he didn’t want top dollar. At 8:20 p.m. he promptly responded, “Thank you once again for the feedback and recommendations. Here is my email.” I texted him back at 9:31 p.m., “Received, I always recommend what I would do if the property were mine. TY!”

On Friday afternoon of Oct. 7th I emailed him the Listing Agreement and texted, “Hi Jacob, I just emailed you the paperwork. Call me with any questions. I look forward to working with you!” Later that evening at 6:39 p.m. he responded, “Ok thank you DeWayne. I will check my mail right away.”

To this point the conversation had been extremely normal except for the part about “not wanting” all he could get out of the property. In almost 50 years in the business I have never had a seller want less money than what the market would bring. A little red flag went up in my mind as to why, but I figured he needed money quickly for some reason. From here though it became more interesting.

The listing paperwork came back late on Oct. 7th, and I texted him, “Received and Thank You! I shall get to work!” I didn’t notice it until later that his electronic signature was dated Oct. 6th but his wife had signed it on Oct. 7th. Normally that would not concern me EXCEPT I had sent him the paperwork on Oct. 7th. So how could he have signed the contract, which clearly showed was done on Oct. 6th. In checking the Certificate of Authenticity it showed they both signed it on Oct. 7th. Red flag #2 went up, but I was somewhat new to using the signing system and I had several internet problems but had not experienced any data issues, especially with dates. It crossed my mind that maybe he signed it in a different time zone and thought I would watch it closely next time to see if the same issue surfaced. At this point a signing error was the least of my problems as we had just suffered a major hurricane that wrecked every rental home we managed on the beach, and we were desperately trying to save all the properties we could. I was about to text the seller with a suggestion and pictures of all the debris being put on the streets when I received the following on Oct. 10th.

His text said, “Good morning, DeWayne. How are you today? Is there any update on the listing? I followed up with three pictures saying, “Good morning, I went over this morning and took these pictures to ask your opinion on whether to wait a bit until they get the streets cleaned up. Neighbors to the West said they had 5 ft. of water in their home, which surprised me. But the whole storm was terrible everywhere. Not sure what benefits you the best? Guess all we can do is try at this point. What do you think?”

He texted me back quickly saying, “That’s fine by me. Let’s wait a bit for the streets to be cleared out. The storm has been terrible everywhere like you pointed out. Just keep me updated. Thank you.” I responded, “Will do! TY!” I was relieved he wasn’t going to force the sale immediately but 4 days later I received another text.

“Hi DeWayne how are you doing? Please what is the update on the listing?” I responded, “FEMA is picking up all the trash on the streets, but it is a massive job. Still doesn’t look any better. One would think a bomb was dropped on the neighborhood. We can put it on the market if you prefer. It might help to have the weeds and dead limbs on the trees trimmed around the fence. Not much else we can do to make it look better." He responded, "I can only imagine all the work that needs to be done around the whole of the affected areas. Having the weeds and dead limbs trimmed would be great. Can you get them sorted? And then we can put it up in the market next week hopefully?"

At this point I was elated he was appreciating the need for the property to look better, and I assumed he meant "get them started" so I responded "Let me see if any of our landscapers are available to spruce it up. Many are busy cleaning out their flooded homes but let me work on it. TY!" He kindly responded, "Ok awesome. Thank you."

Four days later on Oct. 18th I received a text, "Good morning. How are you doing Wayne? Can you give me an update on when my property can be listed?" I sent him 3 more pics and responded, "Met a clean-up crew at the lot this morning. Asked them to clean up the entire lot, mow it, remove trash that blew in from the hurricane, trim the broken tree limbs, clean up the unsightly trash that floated in from the flood. He said he would do it for $800 and would try to get started tomorrow. 95% of the debris from all the flooded homes has been removed. It is looking much better! Let me know if you want to move forward? TY!" I received no answer. It concerned me that a seller would not want to spend a few dollars to provide the best first impression possible when buyers would drive by. Again, the red flag was popping up in my head.

I texted him again later asking, "Plan B would be to put it on the market and see what happens, but it will not provide a good first impression. Please advise! TY!" Still no answer.

The next day at 12:31 p.m. I received this text, " Thank you for the update DeWayne and it is good news that have everything almost cleaned up. It would be good to have the lot cleaned up but how would he get paid the $800? Would you pay him and take it against the sale? Would he do the work and wait to take it out of the sale? And with your Plan B I am assuming you mean put it up in the market just as it is with the debris and all? Will the pictures be good enough to show buyers? You are in a better position to advice." My answer followed.

“I would just have you send me a check made out to him. After I’m satisfied with his job I will give it to him.” His answer, “There is no cash for that” and a big red flag went up. I answered, “In that case we should go ahead and put it on the market as is.” I received no answer,

Now, up to this point I had wanted to believe the person I had been conversing with was the seller but what seller would not clean up a flooded lot. I decided to ask him a few seller questions to test his authenticity and send him Plan C.

My text said, “Emailed you a Plan C. Also do you have a Survey, Elevation Certificate, or a Prior Title Policy? TY! His response was quick and short, “I will check my email. No I don’t.” I responded, “TY!” Later that night the plot began to thicken.

He texted asking, ”The title company you told me you are associated with, what is their closing process? I hope there is option of electronic closing” After checking with the title company and expressing my concerns that I have a difficult seller, I responded, “They will need to FedX you a deed for a notarized signature and 2 Witnesses. You will receive a settlement statement to review prior to closing.” He asked, “Can’t they have that sent via email to me with a fedx shipping label attached? And I can print, notarize and return with the shipping label.” I simply said, That’s a possibility.” He spontaneously replied, " Great then. So are you going to get the guy to trim with the $100 like your email says?”

In all my years I have never had a seller ask such detailed questions about the closing before we even had a contract, much less even put it on the market. I sensed my $100 test was working. I answered with very explicit instructions, “I’ll get the rental company to use their handyman to clean up the parking and make it as good as possible for $100. You can send a check made out to XXXXX Rentals, XXXXX Bonita Beach Rd., Bonita Springs, FL XXXXX. They can get it done right after tonight’s storm. Will that work for you?” For a minute I thought he was going to do it. Here was his response, “ That would work. But trust me I’m Not trying to make your work harder but I’m not looking to spend a dollar on the lot until sale.” I did not respond as I was baffled why a seller would not want to spend as little as a $100 to make their property show better. I decided to see what the title company would say.

The next morning after visiting with the title company I responded once again, "The title company just informed me they will have to do original signatures, notary and 2 witnesses on the deed. Can you and your wife make that work?" He responded immediately, "Sure. If you can have everything email to me, the closing documents with a FedEx return label and we will go get the document notarized and sent back to title company."

On Monday the 14th of November I received the following, "Good morning, Kindly let me know any update. Regards." It was obvious to me he was not going to invest a nickel in cleaning up and improving the lot's presentation.

I did know I had better let the title company know my concerns and wrote the following email to them.

"Good Morning, I have brought to your attention my concern about the ownership of a lot in Bonita Springs at 4415 Mariner Rd. owned by Jacob & Myrtle Nora. They signed the listing electronically using one email. That is not unusual, but his English is not good sometimes and I have trouble trying to understand him. I am getting hard of hearing so I want to give him the benefit of the doubt, but it has made me overly cautious.

As the area was flooded the lot had a lot of debris from the neighbors and I requested they get the trees trimmed, clean up the mess, and cut the grass. They declined as the bid was $800 to do so. He tried to get me to pay it and would reimburse me out of the closing. Obviously, that isn't going to happen. I made a second request to spend $100 to clean up the trash and trim the front for $100. His response was, he wasn't spending any money on this lot.

Lastly, I discussed the closing process and they said they wanted an electronic closing. Yesterday, I told them the title company would have to FedX the deed to their address of record and they would have to get it notarized and witnessed by 2 people.
He reiterated his concern about not doing an electronic closing. When I said it had to be sent to his address, he said he doesn't live there anymore.

He is demanding I put it on MLS, and I guess I will do it and continue to try and verify ownership. Is there any way I can have you send something to him as a pre-closing letter to see if it gets there and if he can answer the questions. I asked him for a prior title policy, survey, and Elevation Certificate and he responded he did not have any of them. Don't want to spook him if he is legit. What do you all think I should do?

As usual, the Title Company answered promptly saying…

Hello DeWayne,

I did some research for you regarding this, and I am sorry it was a little later than expected. I have found phone numbers associated with the Nora's under a 301-area code, but they appear to be disconnected, hence, they are most likely old and inactive.

I also found some email addresses and did reverse searches on them to see if they were still active, it appeared that one of them was, but unfortunately, anyone can be behind an email and say they are this individual but are unable to verify.

I also found it interesting that the sellers stated they do not live at that address anymore. I looked up the tax records for them in Maryland and it says they just paid their taxes, and it is listed under their homestead.

In my general opinion, it seems that there are a lot of red flags to this especially some things you indicated in your email...

I did go ahead and mail a letter to the seller, and I will see if I can try to come up with any other listed phone numbers for them, and, as mentioned before, all previous phone number records were listed under a 301-area code not a 941-area code mentioned in your other email.

Unfortunately, these things are becoming all too common. We just found two vacant lots in Sanibel which were fraudulently listed...

I will keep you updated with anything else that I may find.

With that, I finished the MLS copy as I was sure he would be contacting me soon to see if it was on the MLS. On the 15th of November the property went live on the market, and sure enough, that afternoon I received a call, and it made him happy that the property was live on MLS. I had no idea if Hurricane Ian had put a damper on the market or whether it would just attract bargain hunters

The very next day I received the following email from the title company…

Good Morning DeWayne,

We received a closing alert from one of our Underwriters. As mentioned before, we have seen an uprise with this, especially on Sanibel in the last few weeks. I wanted to share this with you, and let you know that we will be taking extra precautions

Have a great day!

(The letter showed several properties were being flagged and should not be closed without approval from the Florida Legal Department.)

Late in the day on the 16th of November I sent the title company the following email:

The guy I have been talking to on the phone said you (being the Title Company) couldn't FedX to him because he does not live there anymore. Google says he is 77 so that could be probable, but below is info on the home I found posted by Redfin.

XXX Cabin Branch Rd,

Capitol Heights, MD XXXXX

$409,985

Redfin Estimate

—

Beds

3

Baths

1,744

Sq Ft

Off Market

This home last sold for $84,500 on Aug 30, 1983.

I commented, also, the lot at XXXX Treasure Cay in Spanish Wells is obviously a scam as it is priced on Zillow at $116,030, which is half price or less of other lots. How stupid do they think the public is and why can't they catch them.

Thank you,

The Title Company answered…

"Hello DeWayne, I did research on their homestead property as well in Maryland, and it appears they still live there. I wrote them a letter, and I am hoping they get back to me as soon as possible."

A few days later I responded…"The presumed seller has not acknowledged so I put the property on MLS. Hope you get an answer that will verify the seller is the seller! LOL!

Thank you!"

On Dec. 1, I followed up with the Title Company…"Hi, I am getting some interest in the lot. Did the letter you sent to the seller indicate anything unusual? TY!"

The next day on Dec. 2nd at 11:23 a.m. the Title Company answered…"We have not had the owner get back to us via the letter that was sent. As mentioned before, in my general opinion, it seems that there are a lot of red flags to this, especially some things you indicated in your email previously. But, after researching emails, phone numbers, and the address, I am unable to get a hold of the owners."

Later that day at 11:42 on December 2nd I sent a text to the Seller saying, " Hi Jacob, Haven't had much activity. One showing earlier and another one this week. Have had several requests for a Survey and Flood Elevation. Everyone is concerned after the storm. Odds are slim it will do this again for many decades. Anyway, at least there is some interest. People keep cleaning up, so the area looks better every week. Have a good weekend. TY!"

I received an immediate response, "Hi DeWayne, hope you are doin good? Thank you for the update. I believe the flooding is what scares any potential buyer. But that's alright. Kindly keep me posted. Thank you."

Surprisingly enough, I returned home from an evening out and had a "written offer" in my inbox. I opened it at 9:10 p.m. acknowledged Received, TY! And, as they say, "The plot thickens!"

Upon reviewing the offer it was much lower than expected but my biggest concern was I could not read who signed it. I sent the selling agent a request asking who the buyer was as it was not legible on the contract. He responded promptly resolving my concerns, but now I was suddenly more concerned about making sure the seller was a real seller. But I also was concerned if he was the real seller, and I didn't present an offer I could be sued.

I immediately emailed the Title Company saying, "I have received an offer on the property and am required to present it as I have no proof the seller is not the seller. It is a low offer so it will be interesting to see where it goes."

Next, at 1:02 p.m. I texted the proposed seller saying, "Hi Jacob, Do you have time to talk about an offer?"

In a little over an hour he called. To my total surprise he didn't say much when I explained, THE OFFER WAS ALL CASH WITH A CLOSING IN 6 DAYS! We discussed the fact the offer was considerably lower than the asking price that was very conservative to start with and given a similar lot had had sold for $30K more than our listed price, I thought we should try to improve the sale price with a good counteroffer. He didn't want to discuss a counter and told me to email the offer to him so he and his wife could sign it electronically.

I was obligated to do as he requested even though I was NOT totally convinced he was the real seller. I had discussed that a 6 day closing was almost impossible and we should think about a quick but realistic date, say the 23rd.

The next step was to get with the title company and see what they wanted done to verify this seller was real. I received the following emails.

12 p.m. Dec. 3rd. I have received an offer on the property and am required to present it as I have no proof the seller is not the seller. It is a low offer so it will be interesting to see where it goes.

At 2:39 p.m. that same day I emailed the Title Company.

Good Afternoon, I just got off the phone with the seller, Jacob Nora, and presented the offer. He said to send him the offer and he and his wife would sign it electronically. I asked if they had separate emails and he said they only had one.

Asking price is $199K and offer price is $165K, cash close Dec. 9th. I explained we may get closed by the end of the month but I doubted we could close by next Friday. He did not want to counter, which is a bit unusual but stranger things have happened. He did not ask any questions about his net but I told him it would be around $152,200, according to my rough calculations. I asked him for his current mailing address and he told me XXX Cabin Branch Rd., Capitol Heights, MD XXXXX.

I told him I had anticipated someone desiring a quick closing and so I had the title company mail him a closing information letter and wondered if he had received anything. He said he had not. I told him to expect an email or a call from you so we could expedite the closing and he said email him. I told him you would have to call to discuss wiring instructions, and get copies of a passport or driver's license, etc. He said he could email you all of that. I confirmed the property was free and clear, and he was not doing a 1031 exchange, and neither of them had a power of attorney for the other. I forgot to confirm they were both U.S. Citizens, but I had asked before.

His voice seemed muffled as it has with every conversation, so I want you to talk with him. Let me know what I can do to assist you. Sorry for a PITA closing, but I am so glad you are on my side! Thank you.

I texted the Seller again at 3:19 p.m. saying, “Hi again. I just emailed you the paperwork for your electronic approval. TY!” He answered immediately, “Hi DeWayne, thanks I’ll take a look at it shortly. I think putting that clause there where we can close on or before 23rd sounds absolutely on point. All documents have been signed.” I responded, “TY!”

At 4:57 p.m. I emailed the selling agent, “Hi XXXXX, Please find attached the signed agreement with one addition. I put a clause in remarks to extend the closing to on or before Dec. 23 if the Title Company needs more time to process the title work and do mail away documents. Sorry about the typo...the the. LOL! Thank you for your efforts. We should be able to move this to closing promptly.

Thank you,

On Monday, Dec. 5th at 12:12 a.m. I texted the seller, “I emailed you a copy of the signed contract. Thank you!”

At 12:22 he responded that afternoon at , “Hello DeWayne, any update from title company? Due to time in question, kindly have the title company email me closing documents as soon as possible.” I did not answer.

Wondering what the best course of action would be I emailed the title company the seller’s phone number, which was a 941 Central Florida area code. His email included the real seller’s name at outlook.com. The Title Company confirmed receipt of the contact information the next day and 13 minutes later they sent me the following email.

Hello DeWayne, I just wanted to let you know that I did a reverse phone number search for the phone number you provided and found that the phone number provided appears to have been created through a texting app Talkatone, and whoever created it seems to be masking their identity. I tried to do a basic phone number reverse search and it showed that they couldn't locate a specific person as it wasn't an assigned number by a specific carrier. Hence, I looked further, and it seems it was created through this app. This app supports creating custom phone numbers where you can text and call through the US and Canada. I will continue doing research, but I also sent the FedEx for delivery tomorrow with signature required. Warm Regards, XXXXXXXXXX. I responded, “Got it, thank you!”

An hour later on Dec. 6th the seller texted me, “Hi DeWayne, when am I supposed to receive contact from title company?” I answered, “I will find out.” He responded, “Alright”

Dec. 5th 7:19 p.m. Later that evening I texted a detective friend I have known for a long time and explained, “I think I may have a fake seller. I have a contract and I’ve alerted my Title Company. They think there is a 99% chance. But I don’t want him scamming others and would like to catch him. Need your advice if it is worth trying. Call me when you have a moment. TY!

In hopes the detective would contact me I waited until the next day on Dec. 6th, and as late in the day as I dared to wait, 5:20 p.m., to respond to my illustrious seller, “The title company received the deposit. I gave them your contact information and they should be in contact soon. TY!” I was hoping the FedEx sent by the title company would confirm what we all suspected.

The next day on Dec. 7th at 1:44 p.m. I received an important email from the Title Company.

“Hello DeWayne, I just wanted to let you know that the FedEx we sent was received and signed for by Jacob Nora. I am hoping they get back to us soon regarding the FedEx.

Thank you!

Warm Regards,

Now, it was a waiting game to see if we received a response from the real seller.

I texted the self-proclaimed seller at 7:48 a.m. on Dec. 8th, “Good morning, Has XXXXXX Title reached out to you yet?” At 11:13 he responded, “Good morning, Nope not yet.”

I emailed the Title Company at 11:27 a.m. “Here is a text I sent to Mr. Nora this morning and his answer.

To Mr. Jacob Nora from DeWayne:
‘Good morning, Has XXXXXX Title reached out to you yet?”

The response from Jacob Nora: Good morning. Nope not yet.

Now it was a fact that the person I had been talking to was indeed a fake seller as the FedX had been signed for as received. I decided to reach out to the detective again. I was not surprised I did not hear from him because he is so busy chasing cyber criminals. I decided to text him again to let him know the FedEx was received and signed for at the seller's northern address, but my fake seller said he did not receive the FedEx and we were in hopes of hearing from the real seller soon. I said I will let him know if he responds.

Title Company answered at 11:33 a.m. on Dec. 8th:

Hello DeWayne, From the information you provided and from the information we have gathered it does appear that this is a fraudulent listing, I have the receipt of the FedEx package being signed for by a Jacob Nora. After discussing with XXXXX, we don't feel comfortable moving forward with this transaction with all of the red flags.

Warm Regards,

I commented on the Title Company's email. I think your odds of the seller on the contract being fake just went to 100%. The fake seller did not get your FedEx package and hopefully, you hear from the real Jacob Nora today. I have made Detective XXXXXXXXX aware of this situation. Thank you!

I sent On Dec. 8th at 7:48 a.m. I asked my assumed fake seller, "Good morning, Has the Title Company reached out to you yet?" At 11:13 he responded, "Good morning. Nope not yet."

I did not respond in hopes our detective could come up with something that would confirm the real identity of our fake seller.

Four days later on the 12th of Dec. at 5:04 p.m. the suspected fake seller texted me, "Hi DeWayne, still got no contact from title company." I answered a couple of hours later at 3:24 p.m., "Do me a favor. Call the (Title Company) owner, XXXXX XXXXXX, and give them your wire instructions to where you want your funds sent and see what else they need. (XXX) XXX-XXXX. TY!"

Several hours later at 5:04 p.m. he answered, "Sorry who is (owner) XXXXX XXXXXX? Your referred to XXXXX as the owner, owner of what?" I did not answer and he quickly asked, "Ok so I have called XXXXX and XXXXXX (the owner's) twice and none of them seems to be answering their calls."

Late the next day, Dec. 13 at 5:38 p.m. I asked him, "Did XXXXX reach out to you? XXXXXX retired on me! She had been working part time. XXXXX is her XXXXXX and owns XXXXX Title. TY!" He responded immediately, "DeWayne I have not been contacted by anybody or any title company. No one returned my calls from the other day even. So I don't know what is going on with this closing at the moment."

On the morning of Dec. 14th I texted him at 10:25 a.m. saying, "XXXXX said she emailed you processing instructions and also called you. Sorry for the delay as the buyer is wanting to close as well. Let me know if you receive anything. TY!"

He fired right back," First – I asked for closing documents to me emails to me, who ever asked for it to be mailed????? Second – I'll be doing the notary myself with my preferred notary. Third – the title company have no obligation to provide a witness for this transaction. Fifth – I never requested that the seller info sheet be mailed to me!! Your title company is up to shit."

He continued, " If nothing is emailed to me, if I can't choose my own notary, if I can't choose my own witness – we can't move forward because it seems to me you and the title company want to tell me how to sell my property."

I called my police detective to update him on the latest and he suggested I get back to him with two forms of identification with a picture I.D. and a bank statement, if possible.

I suggested to Jacob at 2:26 p.m., "Email me a driver's license and another form of identification and I'll try to get them to email it to you. I think they just want to verify you are Jacob Nora. TY!"

He quipped back immediately, "Another form of identification like? Can you list?"

I answered, "Passport, anything with a picture I.D.

Continuing I added, "Title Company said…a picture of a credit card or bank statement with his name on it! He can always mark out the account information. Hope that helps."

But, later in the evening at 9:09 p.m. he surprisingly responded, "Ok no problem"

Meanwhile I had sent Mr. Fake Seller's very rude comment to the Title Company. Naturally, I received a "Wow, Yes, at this point we will absolutely not be working with this person. These are such clear signs of fraud."

I also let the Title Company know that I sent a message to my detective to update him on our communications with regards to your closing instructions.

By midafternoon the next day on Dec. 15th at 2:51 P.M. I asked, "Were you sending your I.D. to me or the Title Company? They are waiting on you. TY!"

Late that afternoon at 4:33 p.m. he responded, "I'll be sending it to you tomorrow morning when I pull up my statement. My wife is down with the flu." I answered, "I'll let them know you are sending a copy of your driver's license and a statement. Hope your wife gets to feeling better soon. TY! He cordially replied, "Thank you DeWayne."

The next day, Friday, Dec. 16th at 11:58 p.m., I received a text, "Check your email"

The next morning Dec. 17 he sent me another message, "…your email right?" I responded, "Received, TY!" (He had attached a Driver's License with a picture of the owner and a Bank Statement.)

And, he said “Oh great then. So what is the update with the title company” I responded, “Let me send this (a driver’s license and bank statement) to them and I will find out.” He said, “Go ahead and do that. Let me know any update.” I answered, “Will do. They may not be in the office this weekend.” He answered nicely, “Alright that’s fine. If there is need to extend the closing date then do so.”

On Monday morning, Dec. 19th, bright an early he asked, “Update please”

On Tuesday, Dec. 20th, I answered for the last time, “Much to my dismay the title company has determined that the I.D. you provided is fraudulent and has terminated the transaction. May you have a blessed Christmas and put your talents to assisting those in need vs. taking advantage of them. I’ll say a prayer for you.”

He did not respond and that was the last I heard anything from him.

I couldn’t help but think, if I had been a newbie in the business and eager for a commission so I could stay in business, I might not have considered all the red flags that popped up. This crook was cordial, and exhibited a graceful can do attitude that was obviously put forth to meet the goal of stealing all he could. All we can say is Beware Scammers, we are going to find a way to track you down and protect everyone’s property from you deceitful people. I have vowed to do all I can to share this story in hopes of saving an unsuspecting buyer of losing their life savings.

Calls Logged:

Oct. 18, 2022, Returned his call at 12;26 (2 MIN. 59 sec.)
Nov. 3, 2022, He called at 4:03 p.m. (2 min. 14 sec.)
Nov. 14, 2022, He called at 11:55 a.m. (3 min. 22 sec.)
Dec. 3, 2022, He called at 1:34 p.m. (10 min. 11 sec.)
Dec. 8, 2022, He called at 3:06 p.m. (1 min. 16 sec.)
Dec. 12, 2022, He called at 5:05 p.m. (1 min. 33 sec.)
Dec 12, 2022, He called at 6:04 p.m. (1 min. 24 sec.)
Dec. 17, 2022, He called at 12:03 a.m. (missed call)
Dec 17, 2022, He called at 8:01 a.m. (1 min. 6 sec.)
Dec. 17, 2022, He called at 8:03 a.m. (1 min. 58. sec.)