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More and more falling victim

Macau scam has innocent bosses getting sacked and firm losing RM4.35mil

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PETALING JAYA: There may have been thousands of stories written about how Macau scammers left their victims penniless.

However, in one case at the Industrial Court last week, the scammers even got the victim's bosses at a multinational company sacked and the firm to lose RM4.35mil in online transactions.

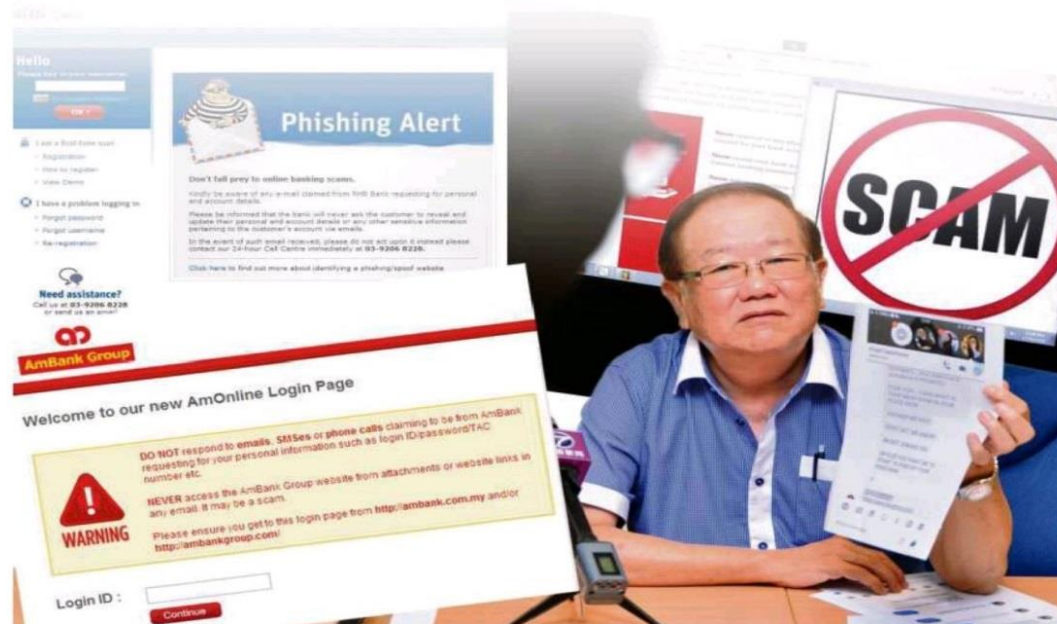
The woman, who was scammed into transferring the millions to various "authorities" at the end of 2013 to help free her "lover", ended up in custody for embezzlement.

Her two bosses – a chief financial officer (CFO) and a marketing and sales operations (HOM) head – had their services terminated in 2014 and were in limbo for over four years as they fought their dismissal in court. They were 55 and 52 years old respectively.

Alice (not her real name) was just over 31 years old when she was introduced to George, a British national, during a casual dinner with a mutual friend at a restaurant five years ago.

She only met him that one time but kept in touch with him online for several months after that. George even proposed marriage.

But then, George claimed to have gotten into trouble with the authorities.



One thing led to another and a desperate Alice began stealing her bosses' passwords to the company's online banking account and transferred RM150,000 to RM500,000 in 13 transactions between October and November of the same year.

Investigations by the company revealed that Alice, who worked as an accounts executive and was trusted by her bosses, had made RM4.35mil in fraudulent withdrawals from the company accounts. She confessed to the crime and

also how she stole the safeword token and password of the CFO.

And, the company's security manager said at the trial that the HOM was also never informed of the activation of the new safeword token and its password.

The two bosses fought their cases and finally, got their jobs back with backwages totalling nearly RM1.6mil after the Industrial Court ruled that their dismissals were unjust.

They are to report back for duty on Oct 1. They will not lose seniority of service nor their benefits.

The court could have ordered for backwage payment of up to RM3.2mil but court chairman Bernard John Kanny held that he did not want to cause an economic distress to the company and slashed the figure by half.

One of the bosses' lawyers Anand Ponnudurai said that the company had to pay the backwages by Oct 14.

The court also found that the security manager had breached his duty of care when he allowed Alice to log in using the new token and password.

"The court is surprised that the company took no action against the security manager.

"The company's conduct against the HOM was not fair and would appear to be selective persecution.

"The company persecuted and victimised the HOM and made her a scapegoat to cover its own shortcomings in the payment process system."

The court held that "to blame the claimants when things go wrong in light of company's shortcomings was totally unfair and unreasonable".