



Headline: Don't be a sucker for scams!
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Last Tuesday, a Macau scammer, or rather two of them, thought they could pin me down to reveal my financial details. Instead I sent them packing.

These conmen and scammers are getting smarter and more creative in their attempts to get their hands on our money and personal details.

When it comes to financial scams or any other scams involving money in this country, it appears as though there is no end to the number of ill-advised or gullible victims.

As soon as they realise they have been victims of scam they lodge police reports and expect the law enforcers to help recover their hard-earned money. But it's just wishful thinking; the scammers usually disappear into thin air, only to reappear months later when things have cooled down and continue their scam jobs.

Usually the victims blame the authorities for not being fast enough to track down the criminals or what they perceive as lax enforcement of the laws. Now, let's not blame the authorities. The dupes have themselves to blame *lah!*

I am surprised there are so many gullible Malaysians, even during these difficult times, as I thought the present economic conditions would have taught us to be very careful. I am quite amused by a media report two months ago about a 44-year-old woman who lost nearly all her life savings of RM2.7 million to a man she met on a social networking site. The man claimed to be an American pilot.

After six months and becoming close to her, the 'pilot' convinced the woman to make

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money transactions to several companies purportedly for flying courses.

By the time the love-stricken woman realised it was a scam, and lodged a police report, her 'lover' did a Houdini, only this time this Houdini is not going to show up in front of her — ever again. *Palo!* woman! It's people like her and many others who encourage the proliferation of scammers.

Gullible Malaysians like the lovey-dovey poor woman are helping scammers to have a field day by allowing them to rake in a whopping multi-billion ringgit yearly.

Last year, the country lost more than RM1 billion. In 2019, gullible citizens helped scammers make more than RM2.5 billion nationwide. And in 2018, the amount was RM2.8 billion. Perhaps, the Covid-19 pandemic must have something to do with the reduced ill-gotten loot in 2020. Don't know if the figure will show a marked increase this year.

Okay, let's get back to my experience which I mentioned in the beginning.

On June 8, out of the blue, I received a phone call from a woman. Claiming that she was an investigating police officer from Seremban police station, she said I was involved in gambling, money-laundering and tax



evasion.

She spoke perfect Bahasa Melayu and flawless English. I told her I wasn't conversant in Malay and would rather speak in English though I speak better in Tamil.

Wow! This was the moment I had been waiting for. I often came across news reports about Macau scammers and conmen. Now is an opportunity to engage with these low-life vermin.

I decided to be cautious and play my cards well to engage with them for as long as I can to understand their *modus operandi*.

My conversation, though a brief one, with the scammers:

Me: *Ayuh!* Identify yourself, your ID and the police station.

Scammer: This is Insp. Rohani Kassim and my police ID is

xxx349. I am from Seremban police station. With me is ASP Li Lai Chin. We are tasked with investigating your money-laundering and gambling activities.

Me: Really *ah?* I am a pious man; my mother taught me not to lie or engage in illegal activities. I swear I tell you I am not that sort of person. I think you people got the wrong person *lah!*

Scammer: Our records clearly show your transactions. Is this your name (spelling out my name as in IC) and is this your IC no. ...?

Me: Transactions? My name and IC correct *lah*. By how did you guys in Seremban end up taking up my case? Police in Sarawak *tidur kah?*

Scammer: No. They are busy preparing for the state elections. (*Alamak!* These fellas keep abreast with current affairs.) So we are handling your case.

Me: I am saying you got the wrong man *lah*. I'm not into these sorts of activities. Perhaps you guys got my name mixed up! Maybe someone has the same name as mine, and possesses a cloned IC. You know, *Orang Malaya* many of them conmen, what!

Enter 'ASP Li: Hey, *cakap baik-baik tau?* Or we will stop this conversation and ask our people in Kuching to go to your office

and arrest you!

Me: Don't *lah Tuan*. Nanti I malu *lah*. If you want to *tangkap* me, pick me up from home.

ASP Li: So behave.

Scammer: We can help you solve the case if you cooperate with us.

Me: How?

Scammer: Give me your bank account details. We will check with Crime Division if you have been a victim of scam.

Me: You mean like Macau scam?

ASP Li: Faster, faster.

Me: Hey, bro. You guys don't sound like real police officers *lah*. More like *Jinjang* scammers!

ASP Li: *Hoi, Keling*. Talk properly okay. Or we will have the interrogation in lockup!

His remarks infuriated me and I lost my cool.

Me: Hey, don't play play with me. I am monitoring your calls. It won't take much for me to hire a junkie from Brickfields to liquidate you. Maybe RM100 is enough and he'll do the job. That's how much your life is worth!!! You watch out *f@%\$&!!*

Next moment the fella hung up.

That's it. The scammers left empty handed. Hopefully, Malaysians will learn to handle these scamming vermin.

‘There's a scam for everyone, and that means everyone is a potential victim.’

— Susan Grant, US military veteran and author