

Fraud: Don't Get Hooked

May 2026



William "Hank" Stuart

Sr Managing Director
Truxton Banking

 Email Hank

 Link to Bio

"This is an important notification regarding a preauthorized purchase made to your Walmart account. A PlayStation 5 special edition bundle has been ordered using your name and phone number for a total amount of \$1,537.35. If you did not authorize this transaction, please take immediate action. To cancel the order or to speak with a customer support representative, call us back immediately on the same number that appears on your caller ID for direct connection. We urge you to respond promptly to prevent any unauthorized activity on your account."

This is an actual text message I received several weeks ago. Fortunately, my fraud radar remains on high alert these days, so I recognized it as another sinister and devious attempt to motivate me to call them back and for them to eventually steal my money. However, these types of scams are very prevalent and very successful for the bad guys.

Related Content



A.I. & U
by Hank Stuart

According to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center, hard working Americans lost \$21 billion (known losses only; unreported losses probably much higher) to cyber criminals in 2025, an increase of 26% over 2024. To put into perspective, if you spent \$1,000,000 a day, it would take you over 57 years to spend \$21 billion. That is the extent of the fraudulent activities that, like bees around a honey jar, are swarming around us every day.

Perhaps the following acrostic might help all of us stay alert with an ever-increasing vigilance of the bad guys, the scammers, the schemers, the crooks and the criminals.

F – Financial Assets. No surprise here. The bad guys want access to our financial assets – our cash, bank accounts, and our securities accounts. If you receive an unexpected text, email, or phone call and it has anything to do with your finances, be on high alert. Your financial assets are at risk.

R – Relentless. The bad guys are relentless once they get a fish nibbling around their hook. Thus, do not respond or reply to any text, email, or phone call – for once you do (the nibbling), it won't take them long to set the hook.

A – Ask. Those scammers and schemers always have an “ask” – so always be on alert for “the ask”. The ask may be a call back, a click on a link, a request for personal information such as date of birth or social security number, or bank account information. Don’t be fooled by “the ask”. Instead, “ask” yourself: Does this sound fishy? If it smells fishy, looks fishy, and sounds fishy, then it is a very bad fish!

U – Urgency. The bad guys have learned to create a sense of urgency in their messages or calls. In the text message above, notice the words: important, immediately, urge, immediate, promptly. Thus, always slow down and do nothing when confronted with an urgent request for action. Once we slow down and think about the actual “urgent ask”, we see it for what it is – a deceitful and devious scam.

D – Devious. According to the dictionary, one definition of devious is: “not straight forward, shifty, or crooked; a devious scheme to acquire wealth.” The bad guys are extremely devious, crooked, and cunning – which explains the \$21 billion in reported fraud losses last year. If the “scheme” sounds either too good (or even too bad) to be true, then 100% of the time it is.

F R A U D – Fraud is nothing new, but the new types of fraudulent activity have just become much more extensive, effective, and unfortunately, more rewarding for the bad guys. If ever in doubt, slow down and call your Truxton banker at their known number. We can help you slow down and analyze the ask. That one phone call may save you from being hooked by a devious and crooked fisherman (or fisherwoman!). ■