



INSIDER GUIDE

HOW TO PROTECT
YOURSELF FROM
VOICEOVER
SCAMS



IDENTIFY VOICEOVER SCAMS

If you have not known yet, the Voice Over Community is filled with many scams.

And in this report, I will reveal to you one of the most common scams out there from start to finish.

For many years, so-called "Overpayment Scammers" have gone after people selling cars, selling items on Craigslist, looking for roommates, and even people offering services like graphic design and sign painting, for example.

In the last few months, they've been targeting us too. I've heard from scores of voice talent who've all gotten a nearly identical message from a scammer (or scammers) using names including Dean Lucas, Thomas Peters, Gary Brown, Marie Scott, Alex Cotton, Wilfred Anderson, Burke Steele, Dale Ahrens, Jamie Bridge and others.

First of all, know this: **There. Is. No. Job.**

It's all part of an overpayment scam that really has nothing to do with voiceovers, and everything to do with getting you to send them money.

And the way they set up the scam, they want you to believe that the money you're sending them is theirs to begin with, and that you've got nothing at risk. That, of course, is NOT the case.

Here's the basic scam: voice talent receive an email letting them know that they've been selected for an upcoming job.

Once you show interest, they claim to set up a recording session (apparently using Google to find the name of a studio near you), and send you a check that turns out to be fake, and written for much more than they owe you.

But it's good enough that your bank won't spot it, and they won't realize it's fake until it's sent to the "issuing bank" who, a couple of weeks later, will refuse it. '

By then, you've cashed the check, and sent "the remaining balance to the consulting engineer," (aka the scammer).

Then, your bank finds out that the check is fake and you're on the hook for the amount that you cashed and sent back to the scammer. Plus, the remaining balance of the fake check is withdrawn from your account.

In hopes of giving you a full understanding of the process so you can spot these scams more easily, what follows has been compiled from a number of reports from fellow talent.

I'll call the composite character in this example "Steven." And it's helpful to know that all of the talent whose stories are represented here knew from the beginning that they were dealing with a scammer. (FYI, there is a bit of slightly censored NSFW language from the scammer near the end of this post.)

I'll be chiming in along the way.

EXAMPLE OF A TYPICAL SCAM

Here's a typical first email from the scammer. Be on the lookout for red flags as you read:

Hello and how are you doing today? My name is Jamie Bridge. I found your profile while surfing the internet, and found it interesting. We are currently seeking voice over artist for an upcoming audition in your area next month. Kindly respond to this email if you are interested. I look forward to reading from you so we could proceed with further details. Thanks, Jamie

If you respond to that first email, you'll get something like this next (and there are a ton of red flags here):

Thanks for your response .It is a 850 CAD voice over (Assignment) for you, . A new corporate client of mine wants to create their online website.This assignment is for either professional or non professional voice. You don't have to worry about your experience, we have specialists,and Contract Studio Engineer who will bring the real perfection to the job. It's a 1 day job and wouldn't take more than that least 1 hour each day. I wouldnt be able to send you the script because my client have "copyrighted" it and confidentiality is of utmost importance until we have agreed to terms on the job.The Job cannot be done in your personal studio as it needs directing by a voice coach as well as it must be mastered by our consultant engineer.Job Location: The recording will be held at a rented studio close to your location, so you don't have to worry about traveling, the name and address of the studio will be forwarded to you before the date of the recording.

Company: TS Media

Job Description:

We are creating an animated marketing video to be distributed through web and social media. The overall video is approximately 10 minute in length with the Game Show host part being about 5 seconds. The Game Show Host voice must be boisterous, fun and entertaining.

Please title the audition file with your name to assist the client in selecting an appropriate candidate.

Sample Script:

(Contestant) Uh, I'm no rocket scientist but I'd say...traffic congestion.

(Contestant) Well, I'm no rocket scientist but that's a no brainer. Mass Transit is the better option.

Expectations: You need to be in a good mental and emotional state of mind. Basically this is all that is required of you, Kindly, get in touch with me as soon as possible if you will take the job. More details will be provided to you and we can continue from there. Please, no time wasting. Let me know if you will take the job to commence with next arrangement. Please I'd like you to check your email on a regular basis, I might have updates for you.

If you're still up for it, the scam is on:

Thanks for keeping in touch. I received your email indicating your interest. Your total pay for the job as discussed in my previous email is \$850 .You would be paid an initial upfront deposit for \$400 to guarantee your participation for the recording and ascertain the job, and your balance of \$450 would be paid to you in cash or pay check on the final day of the recording. I will get in touch with our financier, and the part payment will be mailed to you, until you receive and confirm payment before the recording will hold. Once you receive the payment, you are expected to cash and deposit it into your bank account. After which, you deduct your initial payment of \$400 to guarantee your participation in this project, and then send the remaining balance to the consultant engineer who will take care of all technical aspect of the job and studio rental with other planning.

**That previous sentence is the key to their scam. More on that in a minute.
The email continues...**

Kindly get back to me with the details below for payment and other info if available upon request

Your Full name to appear on the Check:

Complete Mailing address (No P.O Box) where the payment should be mailed:

Phone numbers (Cell and Home):

Please be informed that we would be making arrangement for your transportation if need be. There is nothing to worry about. Kindly keep in touch with the details requested as soon as you can. The venue for the recording shall be communicated as soon as all the requested details above are confirmed. Concerning the date of the recording, you have the opportunity to choose the two most convenient days for the recording. Kindly indicate that in your next reply.

Warm regards

Jamie

P.S . Please be informed that this is a one time recording. No contracts. All necessary paper work would be signed on the 1st day of recording.

Once you've sent them your contact information, they let you know when and where the recording session has supposedly been scheduled. Some talent have told me that they called the studio to confirm the session, and of course, the studio had never heard from anyone about the session in question.

One talent pointed out that the "recording studio" the scammers claimed they'd booked the session at, wasn't a recording studio at all, but a duplication facility which, in fact, never did any recording on site, and didn't even own a single microphone. Interestingly, that studio's "Google/My Business" listing includes the designation "Recording Studio," which must have been enough to convince the scammers that it was a believable choice.

Back to the scam:

Hi Steven,

Congratulation on your new job. I want to assure you that everything would work out fine as planned. Kindly get back to me to reconfirm your interest in the job.

Venue: Realtime CD, 334 N.E. 89th St. Seattle, WA 98115

Date: 7th of March

Time: 10am-11am

As soon as i receive a confirmation from you, i would let you know when to receive the payment. I look forward to your email.

At this point, they overnight you a fake check, following up with a message like this:

I am write to inform you that gig payment has issued and should deliver to you today. You track your payment here at www.usps.com with tracking numbers 8100574610560484123119 and i also like to remind you that you are paired with the Consultant Engineer, as soon as the payment arrive, I want you to proceed to having it Deposited at your bank for confirmation/verification as soon possible and it will take about 24hours to clear at the bank and once cleared, deduct \$400 as your pre-payment for your services and have sent the rest to the Consultant Engineer who will take care of all technical aspect of the job and studio rental we are going to use for the recording with other planning. Your remaining \$450 will be given to you on the day of the recording.

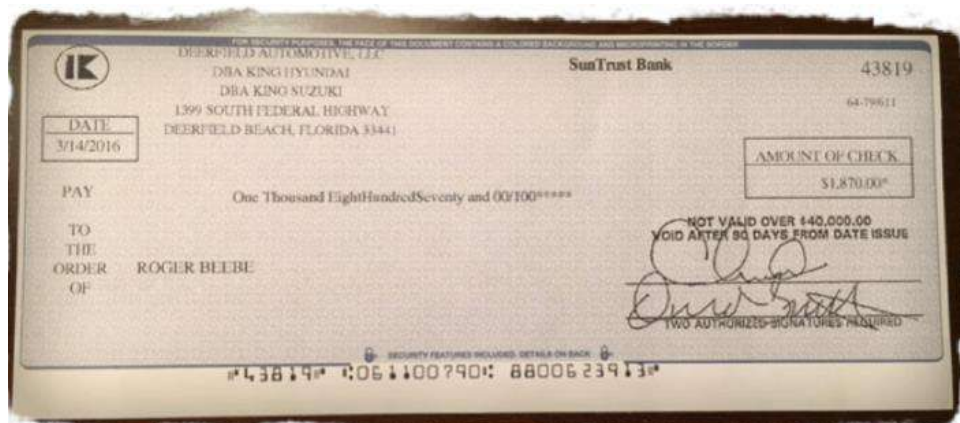
Acknowledge receipt of email and understanding of contents

Warm regards,
Gary

Acknowledge receipt of that email, and you'll get this:

Glad you have received payment. i sent you text message. Let me know when you deposit the check at your bank

According to talent I've spoken with, the fake checks they've received have been written for between \$1,600 and \$2,700, meaning each one represents a potential profit of between \$1,200 and \$2,300 to the scammer. (This check was written for \$1,870, which would have meant a \$1,400+ profit for the scammer.)



By the way, a close look at the headers from the emails above revealed that they originated from somewhere in the UTC +0100 time zone. This is the Central European Time Zone, which is in use in Nigeria and other African countries. (Researching this information led me to [this interesting and exhaustive report](#) on the lengths to which these scammers will go.)

Anyway, once you confirm that you've received their check (which again, is totally fake), all communication switches to texting.

Interestingly, their English skills improve dramatically at this point, making it likely that the original, possibly Nigerian scammers have handed the operation over to someone here in the states. And since they're hoping to be able to pick up the funds that you send them at a Wal-Mart or CVS near them soon, that would make sense.

The texting begins. (By the way, none of the talent whose stories are represented here as "Steven" ever actually deposited the fraudulent checks they received.) Interestingly, in every case, at this point the conversation completely stopped being about a recording session, and centred only on the transfer of money:

Gary The Scammer: Hi Steven, when did the bank say funds will be available. 1:13 PM

Steven: Hi Gary, the funds are available now. 1:34 PM

Gary The Scammer: You should have told me funds was available so you can send the funds of the consultant engineer today as we do not need any further delay. I am sure you can still get it sent today. Go to any walmart or cvs outlet close to you and get the money sent via MoneyGram to the engineers information below. Name: Bristol Parks. City: Portland State: OR Zipcode: 97205. 1:41 PM

Gary The Scammer: Remember to deduct your \$400 initial payment and send the remaining balance to the consultant engineer. Transfer charges should be deducted from the remaining balance. As soon as you send the funds to the engineer i will need you to text me the exact amount sent and the reference number. 1:44 PM

Gary The Scammer: Steven, Have you sent funds to the engineer? 2:41 PM
"Steven" begins to delay things.

Steven: Not yet. I'm waiting to hear from my accountant. He hasn't called me back yet, but I'm sure I'll speak with him tomorrow. 2:56 PM

Gary The Scammer: Did you try to cash the check or you deposited it. Kindly forward the excess balance to Bristol. we do not need any further delay on the project. I really do not need any further delay on this project. Funds are available to you, lets continue with the preparation and i look forward to working with you on this project and on other projects as well. 3:21 PM

Gary The Scammer: Did you get my text? 3:58 PM

Steven: Gary, my accountant said that I'll have to pay tax on the total amount that I deposited. That's a lot of money! I'll be losing more than half of the payment for this voiceover project. If you will reimburse me for that expense on the day of our session, I think that would be okay. 9:23 AM

Gary The Scammer: I will speak with the sponsors and you will be reimbursed, i assure you. Kindly go send the \$1260 to Bristol so preparations for the project can continue. Remember to text me the exact amount sent and the reference number after you have sent the money via MoneyGram at any Wal-Mart or CVS outlet close to you. 9:29 AM

Steven ignores Gary for a while. Gary gets anxious.

Gary The Scammer: Waiting to hear from you. Have you sent funds to the engineer? 10:34 AM

Gary The Scammer: Steven, did you receive my text? 12:08 PM

Gary The Scammer: as soon as you have it sent the money. get back to me with the necessary information for record purposes. 12:47 PM

Gary The Scammer: waiting to hear from you 1:33 PM

Gary The Scammer: Have you sent the funds to Bristol? 2:19 PM

Steven tries a new stall tactic. Gary gets angry, and even plays the sympathy card.

Steven: My accountant said that I should not send any money to Bristol; He said that I should bring cash to our session instead. 4:32 PM

Gary The Scammer: Steven, Bristol needs the money now to pay for the studio rental and also for the logistics of some equipment needed for the recording. I made this clear to you before you received payment. This delay is making me look incompetent to my boss and my job is on the line, 5:21 PM

Gary The Scammer: i am a single father and i need this job to put food on the table for my three kids. Bristol needs the money to finalise preparations for the recording. Please go and send the money to Bristol without further delay. 5:26 PM

Gary The Scammer: Did you get my text? 5:31 PM

Gary The Scammer: Waiting to hear from you 5:54 PM

Gary The Scammer: Where are you? I told you to always answer your texts! 6:22 PM

Gary The Scammer: You have to get back to me now! 6:48 PM

The next morning, Steven offers to help. Gary gets angrier.

Steven: I'm really sorry Gary, I don't mean to make you look incompetent. Please apologize to your boss for me. Also, what extra equipment do you need for the recording? I've been to this studio before and they have everything you could possibly need. (I have some equipment I could bring too, just let me know what you need.) 11:12 AM

Gary The Scammer: You want to get me fired? You agreed to the pairing of you and the engineer. This isn't funny anymore. i have your emails as prove. Stop this delay and go send money to the engineer. 11:22 AM

Steven: Of course I don't want you to get fired! And since our session is on Monday, why don't I just bring cash with me to pay Bristol? Wouldn't that be easier? 11:31 AM

Gary The Scammer: She needs funds for logistics. Don't you get 1:01 PM

Gary The Scammer: waiting to hear from you 2:00 PM

Gary The Scammer: Did you get my text 2:15 PM

Gary The Scammer: since you have refused to do as agreed, will you return the check? if you decide to return the check, the recording will be cancelled 3:55 PM

Gary The Scammer: if i don't hear from you, i will go ahead and cancel the recording and you will have to return the full payment. 4:51 PM

Steven: What do you mean by "logistics"? Won't the studio provide all of that where we're going to record? 5:12 PM

Steven: Gary, did you get the last text that I sent you? 6:10 PM

Gary The Scammer: Proceed and have funds sent to Bristol as instructed if not the gig will be cancelled and you will have to return the money in full. I have tried my best for you. Right now my client is involved in the matter. 3:12 AM

The longer this takes, the more anxious the scammers get, since they've only got a limited amount of time before the bank lets the talent know that the check they deposited was fake.

Gary The Scammer: Did you get my text? 7:43 AM

Gary The Scammer: Did you get my text? 8:02 AM

Gary The Scammer: Why aren't you answering me? 8:59 AM

Gary The Scammer: Did you get my text? 9:41 AM

Gary The Scammer: Did you get my text? 10:34 AM

Steven: Gary, I will be happy to return the money to you by mail. Where should I send it? 12:02 PM

Of course, the scammers aren't likely to give Steven a mailing address...that would be traceable.

Gary The Scammer: The gig is cancelled. Kindly send all the funds with you to Bristol; She will get the funds back to the company. If you refuse to send the funds to her within 24 hours, it will be obvious you don't intend to let go

of the money and we will be force to involve the appropriate authorities. 1:22 PM

We have to assume here that Gary hopes that his empty threat will encourage Steven to send "the funds" back to Bristol by MoneyGram. This would also be a successful scam for Gary, since Steven would be sending money that he got when he deposited Gary's fake check. And Steven would still have to pay that amount back to his bank, once they were told that it was fake. (Remember, Steven never really deposited it.)

Gary The Scammer: did you get my message? 1:37 PM

Gary The Scammer: I will report you to the authorities when you don't communicate with me. 2:12 PM

Gary The Scammer: we will begin to take legal actions from tomorrow. 3:44 PM

Steven: Gary, legal action isn't necessary. I want to write you a check, to get your money back to you. Where can I mail it? 4:11 PM

Now Steven's just messing with Gary.

Steven: Did you get my text? 4:19 PM

Steven: Did you get my text? 4:35 PM

Now the real fun begins:

Gary The Scammer: I am tired of your back and forth. If you know you are serious and you don't want legal actions taken against you. go send the money via Moneygram to Bristol and send the exact amount sent and reference number to me immediately. 5:12 PM

Gary The Scammer: This is the last time i will give you an opportunity to make things right 7:14 PM

Steven: I don't want legal actions taken against me but, my accountant won't allow me to use Moneygram. I can only send a check via the mail. 8:19 PM

Gary The Scammer: does the money belong to the accountant? 8:21 PM

Steven: No, it's mine. 8:32 PM

Gary The Scammer: the money neither yours nor his because the gig is off so your opinion or his does not count. i have instructed you on the best way to return the money and if you can go get yourself a lawyer. Am done trying to convince you 8:39 PM

Steven: Yes, the money is YOURS and I'm trying to get it back to you. You don't need to convince me. I can mail you a check right away. 8:44 PM

Gary The Scammer: go do as instructed. go send it through Moneygram its instant. 8:49 PM

Steven: What don't you understand? I CAN NOT use Moneygram. 8:57 PM

Gary The Scammer: Ok, you will hear from our team. bye 8:59 PM

Steven: You don't want your money back? Now I don't understand. 9:02 PM
Gary is frustrated here because in order to maintain his anonymity, he needs Steven to use MoneyGram, which Steven's refusing to do. So Gary tries one last (empty) threat:

Gary The Scammer: Since you cant do as instructed for whatever reason that's best known to you and your accountant. you will hear from our legal team and i am sure you will pay damages for holding on to what you aren't supposed to hold on to. 9:05 PM

Steven: What are you talking about? I'm trying to get your money back to you!!! 9:07 PM

Gary The Scammer: then DO AS INSTRUCTED OR STOP MESSAGING ME. HOW HARD IS IT.... I DONT CARE WHAT YOUR ACCOUNTANT TOLD YOU 9:11 PM

Steven: And I don't care what you think about my accountant's advice. Why can't you just give me an address where I can send your money? WHAT'S SO HARD ABOUT THAT???

9:15 PM
At this point, Steven told me that he was really hoping to get a mailing address from Gary just so that he could just return the fraudulent check in an envelope.

Gary The Scammer: Moneygram is instant. Are you retarded? I will prefer that to mail that will take days 9:18 PM

Gary The Scammer: go f#@! Yourself. Stop texting me. 9:20 PM

Steven: Well that's not very professional. Anyway, I can send you a check via overnight mail and you'll have it tomorrow. Isn't that fast enough? 9:25 PM

Gary The Scammer: Moneygram is INSTANT..F#@KING RETARD 9:30 PM

Steven: Yes, it is instant. And overnight mail is ALMOST instant. And that's the only way I can send your money. Don't you want it? 9:36 PM

Steven: I still have time to get to the post office today so you can have your money tomorrow. 9:38 PM

Steven: Gary, I'll need to know within the next two hours if you want me to send it today. 9:41 PM

Steven: Are you getting my texts? 9:53 PM

Steven: Hello? 10:02 PM

Gary The Scammer: If you can't use Moneygram, stop texting me. 4:10 PM

And that's where communication from Gary stopped, at least with that particular talent. Until a few days later, when Steven got this text from Gary:

Gary The Scammer: Steven, did you tell other voice talents about me? Now they are all lying to me and f&@!ng with me like you did.

So hopefully, all of the information that's been shared in the VO community lately has made things harder for these scammers, at least in our little corner of the world.

