



# DON'T BE A VICTIM

**SCAMS, FRAUDS, AND SWINDLES: THE PUPPY SCAM**



**In 2020 the Chesterfield Police  
Department investigated 45  
reports concerning scams and  
frauds totaling over \$1.5 MILLION  
in losses**



**The following slides discuss one of the  
many scams Chesterfield residents  
have fallen victim to**

**This episode:  
THE PUPPY SCAM**





# THE PUPPY SCAM

- **IN THIS SCAM, THE SUSPECT POSTS AN AD ON A FRAUDULENT WEBSITE INDICATING A PUPPY FOR SALE. THE WEBSITE LOOKS LEGITIMATE WITH PHOTOS. IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE, THE VICTIM BELIEVED SHE WAS GETTING AN INCREDIBLE DEAL FROM THE BREEDER ON THIS WEBSITE. SHE INITIATED CONTACT AND FILLED OUT AN APPLICATION FOR THE DOG SHE WANTED ONLINE**
- **THE VICTIM WAS THEN CONTACTED BY A SUBJECT VIA EMAIL POSING AS THE DOG BREEDER**



# THE PUPPY SCAM

- **THE “BREEDER” THEN CLAIMED THE VICTIM NEEDED TO PAY FOR THE DOG VIA ONLINE PAYMENT. THE PRICE FOR THE DOG WAS ABOUT HALF OF WHAT A LEGITIMATE BREEDER WOULD CHARGE**
- **ONCE THAT PAYMENT WAS MADE, THE “BREEDER” TOLD THE VICTIM SHE NEEDED TO PAY A REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT FOR THE SHIPMENT OF THE DOG VIA 3<sup>RD</sup> PARTY DELIVERY.**
- **THE DOG WAS NEVER DELIVERED AND ALL COMMUNICATION CEASED AFTER THE MONEY WAS SENT**



# THE PUPPY SCAM

- **A QUICK INVESTIGATION OF THE WEBSITE, EMAIL, AND PHONE NUMBERS THROUGH OPEN SOURCE SEARCHES REVEALED THIS BREEDER WAS KNOWN TO BE A FRAUD.**
- **THE VICTIM THOUGHT SHE WAS COMMUNICATING WITH SOMEONE FROM ANOTHER STATE, BUT IN FACT, ALL COMMUNICATION HAD BEEN OPERATING OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES.**



# THE PUPPY SCAM

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- 1) VERIFY YOU ARE COMMUNICATING WITH A LEGITIMATE BREEDER**
- 2) IF IT SEEMS TOO GOOD OF A DEAL TO BE TRUE, IT PROBABLY IS**
- 3) PERFORM A CHECK OF WEBSITES AND PHONE NUMBERS THROUGH OPEN SOURCE SEARCHES TO SEE IF THEY COME BACK TO WHO THEY SAY THEY DO**
- 4) IF DELIVERY IS TO BE DONE BY A 3<sup>RD</sup> PARTY, RESEARCH THE 3<sup>RD</sup> PARTY AS WELL TO VERIFY IT IS LEGITIMATE**
- 5) DON'T EVER BUY A PUPPY SIGHT UNSEEN**



# THE PUPPY SCAM

## VERIFYING THROUGH GOOGLE (OR OTHER REPUTABLE SEARCH ENGINES)

- a) A QUICK SEARCH OF THE PUPPY WEBSITE ON GOOGLE REVEALED MULTIPLE RED FLAGS ABOUT THE WEBSITE BEING FRAUDULENT**
- b) NORMALLY, IF YOU TYPE IN A LEGITIMATE BUSINESS' PHONE NUMBER IN GOOGLE SEARCH, THE BUSINESS WILL POP UP AS THE FIRST RESULT. IF IT DOES NOT, THAT IS A RED FLAG**
- c) DON'T TRUST AN EMAIL ADDRESS AT FACE VALUE. THEY ARE TOO EASY TO CREATE AND EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO TRACK**





# THE PUPPY SCAM

- **IF YOU ARE NOT SURE IF A COMPANY YOU ARE IN COMMUNICATION WITH IS LEGITIMATE, DO YOUR RESEARCH BEFORE YOU DO BUSINESS WITH THEM**
- **NEVER PAY MONEY ONLINE FOR SOMETHING UNLESS YOU ARE 100% SURE IT IS LEGITIMATE. YOU WILL NEVER SEE THAT MONEY AGAIN**
- **IF YOU BELIEVE YOU ARE BEING DEFRAUDED, REPORT IT TO YOUR LOCAL POLICE DEPARTMENT**
- **ALSO REPORT ONLINE TO THE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION : [FTC.GOV](https://www.ftc.gov)**