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THE SCAVENGER

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Online dating swindler poses as war hero



Romance con artist stole the identity of war hero Sergeant First Class John Adams

The Scavenger

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Call it the Nigerian scam of the online dating world. [CBS5's Anna Werner](#) investigated the case of a man who tugged at one woman's heart to get her money. His name was Sergeant First Class John Adams and he claimed he was in Afghanistan. He and widowed military veteran Stephanie Wilson eventually found each other online through dating service, Tagged.com. Their Internet relationship bloomed and soon he professed his love for her. But the red flags went up when Adams asked Wilson to buy him a \$1,000 satellite phone. She eventually discovered that he was not who he claimed to be. In fact, the real Adams is a decorated war hero who lives in Indiana with his wife and daughter.

Well, if it makes Wilson feel any better, she is far, far from alone. MSNBC reported a few years back on "[sweetheart scams](#)," which happen so often that victims are outing fake dating sites and posting photos of perpetrators on a [Yahoo message group called RomanceScams](#). Its eponymous site also has a searchable "scammer database" of profiles and photos, and offers tips on warning signs that your potential love is a con artist. [Check it out](#).

[Related links: [Watch Anna Werner's report](#) | [Profile on the real John Adams](#) | [Search Romance Scams](#) | [All about Nigerian scams](#)]

Posted By: [Aileen Yoo \(Email\)](#) | October 30 2009 at 02:14 PM

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steldog1 10/30/2009 5:04:13 PM

I'm surprised these scams aren't worse. Sadly, this world is full of evil people and all people can do is to be aware and protect themselves.

I think the idea of a site that exposes these creeps is a good one.

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steldog1 10/30/2009 5:22:12 PM

Is the web site RomanceScams also a scam? Feels like one.

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oshngri 10/30/2009 9:32:03 PM

This is just one case scenario of a problem that has plagued the internet in so many forms. Admittedly, a war hero being impersonated is a bit beyond the pale but dating impersonation is nothing new.

Here's a thought. If you're going to attempt an online relationship, demand a web cam. Pretty effectively eliminates impersonation at least, photographically.

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