

Photographer Brings Spam Emails to Life

One person's spam email is another person's art.

When those pesky emails began piling up in photojournalist Cristina De Middel's inbox, she did something that most would consider unthinkable — she read them.

What she found were some incredible stories of open heart surgeries, a young girl asking for her hand in marriage and an African attorney looking to share some of his funds.

Each story — fabricated or not — demanded her attention and seemed engineered to make her feel somehow special. De Middel's photo series, "Poly-Spam," ran with this sentiment.

She explained in her artist statement: "Poly-Spam aims to build the robotic portrait of the senders, taking every single detail specified and translating it into images with special care in the dramatic ambient of the specific moment in which the mail was sent."

The resulting series may just make you think twice before hitting delete on spam emails. (But probably not.)



Hello,

I write to you these few lines with a lot of hesitation to share my terrible situation with you, but first, let me introduce myself. I am Mrs. ALESIA ATOLEVNA MARKINA and I am a widow, from Russia.

My husband was one of the victims of the Tsunami disaster in Thailand and I am the beneficiary of an inherited fortune of \$ 4.500.000. I am now going through serious problems with my husband's family as they pretend to take over this legacy.

Without telling anyone about this amount of money I took the precaution of hiding it in a metallic suitcase and deposit it in an Insurance company here in Russia. Nevertheless si situation is getting worse after the inquiries of my in-laws and I've asked the company to take special care of the suitcase. I would like you to help me transfer this wallet with total discretion to your country as I am planning to invest this money in profitable business there. if you decide to collaborate we would talk about the comission you would get and would transfer the money to your account as soon as the business is closed. In fact after my husband's death, the members of his family have tried in different occasions to kill me thinking that after that they would touch the inheritance legally.I implore you to realise the terrible situation I'm going through as just today the suitcase is travelling from Russia to London and I am now with no money at all and a dramatic financial situation.If you decide to help me I will send you the data of the english company so you can contact them and they can leave the suitcase at your address.I thank you infinitely for your colaboration and hope ti hear from you soon to close this business.

Mrs. ALESIA ATOLEVNA MARKINA



Dear Friend,

I am the below indicated employed in one of a leading bank here in Dapaong, a coast state bordering the Republic of Togo. I am employed in the bank's department of Data Processing & Development. This was where I discovered a huge amount of fund deposited by the late Togo Minister of Sport (Mr Richard Attipoe) who died through an air crash on June 4th 2007, See <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6715937.stm> for more insight. During my required enquiries, I discovered that this fund was deposited lacking the criterias of next of kin/beneficiary status. You will be required to represent this status and ensure the immediate transfer of this fund out of the country. The bank account as referred is credited with a cash balance of \$ 18,230,000.00 Usd. (eighteen million, two hundred and thirty). Upon your response therefore, I will give you the necessary details that you will need to ensure the hitch free representation and the fund transfer in general I anticipate your urgent response.

Best regards,
Mr David Kodjo
Data Processing & Development Department
Banque Atlantique Dapaong



Good Day Sir,

Am sorry to bore you with my mail. But I want you to understand that I truly need your assistance. My name is Grace Smith, I am 24 years old from England, I school and work as a tailor. I am the only daughter of my parents.

My father died in a fatal motor accident on 6th March 2001, My sick mother who was suffering from cancer died not too long after she heard of the death of my father in the hospital. My father, had willed part of his Real Estate and the total amounts of J5,000,000.00 to me. Now at his death, and because things have become very hard for me paying my school fees and taking care of my other needs with the tailoring job I do a sa part time after my school couldn't help, so, I went to our Bank where this money was deposited. The Bank Manager explained to me that I will not be able to draw from the money, because my father had put a clause on the will, saying that before I will be given access to the money, I will either have to be 30 years old or above, or if I get married before the age of 30, in which case, my husband will be legible to collect the money on my behalf.

If I can trust you, I will want you to stand in as my husband even if you are married to claim this money on my behalf as I will provide all necessary documentation and a marriage certificate between you and I to show the Bank that we're legally married before the British High Court here in United Kingdom. I am writing you this email purely on the ground of trust. While this transaction last, we must put emotions aside and face it, perhaps after everything, we might find a need for that if you are still single. Waiting to hear from you soon.

Yours Truly,
Grace Smith



Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Barrister Fagbemi Lateef i am a solicitor at law.I am the personal attorney to the Late Mr.Matthew,(Chief Executive Officer)of BIOOIL OIL SERVICING LTD,who till his untimely death was a contractor with Texaco Nigeria in port Harcourt,Nigeria.Whom here in after shall bereferred to as my client. On the 21st of April 2005, my client, his wife and their two children were involved in a car accident along sagbama express road. All occupants of the vehicle unfortunately lost their lives. Since then I have made several enquiries to your embassy to locate any of my clients extended relatives,this has also proved unsuccessful.

I decided to track his last name over the Internet, to locate any member of his family hence I contacted you. I have contacted you to assist in repatriating the money and properties left behind by my client before they get confiscated or declared unserviceable by the bank where this huge deposit were lodged. Particularly, The African Development Bank Group Plc, where the deceased had a deposit valued at about US\$3.5 Million has issued me a notice to provide the next-of-kin or have the account confiscated within the 6 weeks.Since I have been unsuccessful in locating the relatives for over 2 years now,I seek your consent to present you as the next of kin of the deceased to have the same last name so that the proceeds of this account valued at US\$3.5 Million can be paid to you and then you and I can share the money. 50% to me and 45% to you then 5% for expenses. I have all necessary legal documents that can be used to backup any claim we may make.

All I require is your honest cooperation to enable us see this deal through.I guarantee that this will be executed under a legitimate arrangement that will protect you from any breach of the lawThank you in advance for your anticipated co-operation.

Best Regards,
Barrister Fagbemi Lateef



Hello,

My name is Marisol, I am 37 years old and I've been practicing clairvoyance seriously and with passion for 19 years. I've participated in more than 50 TV shows in the last 10 years.

I started with Clairvoyance and Tarot when I was 13 on behalf of my grand father and at the age of 18 I decided (after High School) to open a cabinet in order to help people. My intention was neither glory nor money, I went through hard times, doubts, economic difficulties, torment, depression. For the first years I was many times tempted to abandon.

But clairvoyance kept on being my motivation. I've always been very aware of sharing my knowledge by giving conferences, dinners and debates. But in 1980 I created the Clairvoyance Saloon of Madrid. My Saloon includes the best professionals in Spain (clairvoyants, astrologers and tarotists). Today I am a renowned professional who can practice her vocation with all the facilities. I count within my clients with many politicians, multinational managers, celebrities, actors, models, artists but also mothers, artisans, merchants and anonymous workers. I realise in person the consultations by telephone, I work alone, and for me it is a quality assurance. I can afford not to make you pay for my services, if you want to benefit of my esquire you can call me at 806.556.336*

I wait for your private consultation that will surely surprise you.

Marisol



Dear

I want to make a proposal of business transaction value sum of GBP £30,000,000 (Thirty Million British Pounds Sterling) to you, of which I believe will be of much interest to you and also a mutual beneficial relationship to us. I will like to discuss more about my proposal with you on phone give me a call regarding the deal, I wait your call and mail.

I need your co-operation to transfer the above mentioned sum out of England to any part of the world. And I am confident that you will give your consideration to this proposal and respond positively for the success of this business. I am available to discuss this proposal with you and to answer any questions you may have in regard to this fund. As soon as you give your positive response to this proposal, I will not hesitate in sending you the details and procedures of the transaction.

Please call me on this telephone +44 703 593 1141 for more additional information or send your response to this e-mail: garricks_ronald@yahoo.com.hk. Look forward to discussing this opportunity further with you in more detail shortly.

Sincerely,
Sir Garrick Ronald
Executive Member



Hello Dear,

My name is Sandrine Nzi. I will be 25 years old tomorrow. I am the unique daughter of the head (Late) Mr Joseph Nzi. My father was a gold miner of great reputation in the Ivory Coast during his days. It is sad to say that he passed away mysteriously during one of his trips of businesses nevertheless, its sudden death was tie or rather it suspects that it has been devised by my uncle who traveled there with him. But God knows the truth! My mother died when I was still a girl and, since then, my father took to me so special. Before its death, the speaker asked the secretary who accompanied him to the hospital and said to him that he had left in one of the main Bank the amount of US\$10,500,000, in Abidján, Ivory Coast. He also said to him that the money was deposited in my name . I am only 20 years and I am a student at the university and really don't know what to do. Now I want an account outside where it can transfer this money in, this must to that I have undergone a great amount of reverses as a result of the continuous political crisis here in the Ivory Coast and of the familiar problems that made me flee from house of my late father and hide in a local hotel for the security of my life of the evil hand of my uncle which killed my father and some other members of my family Dearest, I am in a sincere desire of its urgent attendance in this Respect. Your suggestions and ideas will be very necessary, please, allow me to say to you what I want you to do for me. 1. You will help me to negotiate lucrative and legal investment for the money when it is reversed wisely, as you know that I am only one girl and do not have investment knowledge. 2. You will help me to assure a permission permanent residence in your country, for me to come there and to continue my education, whereas you will be careful of the investment that will be created by you. Most important of all he is so that you are a good partner, when the money arrives at its country.

Thanks to be there for me. Kindly, Sandrine Nzi



Hello,

You may be surprised to receive this mail, as you read this, don't feel so sorry for me because I know everyone will die someday. My name is Mrs. Susan Morrison, a business woman in London. I have been diagnosed with esophageal cancer which was discovered very late due to my laxity in caring for my health. It has defiled all forms of medication right now and I have only few hours left to live, according to medical experts.

I have never particularly lived my life so well as I never really cared for anyone not even me but my business. Though I am very rich, but I was never generous, I was always hostile to people and I only focus on my business as that was the only thing I cared for in my life. But now I regret all this as I now know that there is more to life than just wanting to have or make all the money in the world. I believed when God gives me a second chance to come to this world I would live my life in a different way from how I have lived now, but now that God has called me through this way I willed most of my properties and access to my immediate and extended family and as well as few close friends.

I want God to be merciful to me and accept my soul and so with that reason I decided to give alms to CHARITY ORGANISATIONS, as I want this to be one of the last good deed I did on earth, so far I have distributed money to some Charity Organization in countries like India and Africa.

Now that my health has deteriorated so badly, I cannot do this myself anymore. I once asked my family members to close one of my accounts and distribute the funds which I have there to CHARITY ORGANISATION in Rwanda and Pakistan; they refused and kept

the money to themselves. Hence, I do not trust them anymore, as they seem not to be contented with what I have left for them.

The last of the funds which no one knows of, is the cash deposit in one of the banks here. I want to know if you can be of good help to dispatch these funds to CHARITY organizations. I have set aside 20% of the total amount \$1,500,000.00 (One million five hundred thousand dollars) for you and your time and patience for carrying out this duties. This means you will keep \$300,000 (three hundred thousand dollars) for yourself and donate the rest to any charity organisation.

May God be with you as you have decided to take a bold step to heal the world with me or even in my demise. I am going in for an operation now, and I don't think I will make it. And this hurts. If you can give me this assistance, you can then contact my lawyer who will assist you in getting the funds to you in my absence if I die or not. He would give you more details. His name is Barr. Andy Smith and his email address is: (andyssolicitors@aol.co.uk) He would guide you through receiving the funds.

Best Regards,
Susan Morrison.