Beat: Travel

Ontario Woman Was Defrauded $3000

By An Online WestJet Scam

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USPA NEWS - An Ontario woman is warning others after falling victim to a $3,000 loss in a sophisticated social media scam while trying to resolve a travel issue with WestJet.

Traci Healy, a resident of Fonthill, Ontario, was en-route to Toronto following a trip to British Columbia in April. After missing a connection from Victoria and being denied boarding on a later flight from Vancouver, she expressed her frustration on WestJet's official Facebook page.

Within a short period, several individuals claiming to be representatives of WestJet's customer service department contacted her through private Facebook messages. They offered to refund her travel expenses and cover the cost of her flight home. To facilitate the purported refund, they requested her banking and credit card information.

Contrary to expectations, $3,000 was withdrawn from her account instead of receiving payment. Healy later discovered the scammers were operating from Kenya and had been impersonating airline support staff.

In response, WestJet emphasized that it never solicits payments, banking information, or sensitive personal data through unverified messages, WhatsApp, phone calls, or unauthenticated social media accounts. The airline recommends that customers contact its support team solely through its official website and verified customer service channels.

In retrospect, Healy admitted that she overlooked several warning signs due to her stress and desperation to get home. She hopes that sharing her experience will spare others from becoming victims of similar online scams.

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