

It all started with an eBay auction for a new G4 Powerbook. My friend Cory wanted me to sell it for him just days after he bought it. Probably because he realized, aside from looking cool, he had no real use for it. For the sake of an easy sale, I just pretended to sell it as my own, with a starting price of \$1700, and the buy it now option for \$2100.

You are bidding on my 19 day old G4 Powerbook. This was purchased for a project that fell through. When I tried to return it, I was informed of a 10 day limit for returns!

Your new laptop comes with its original box, all of its documentation, all of its original accessories, and the blue tooth mouse.

Laptop Details: (Screen size, RAM, HD Space, blah blah blah) Free Shipping yadda yadda yadda

Days went by with no sign of interest, when I receive this email from an interested eBay member . . .

Hello I am very interested in your unit. I would like to know your best price to buy it now and if you ship international. I am in London UK right now. I would also want to know the condition of the unit. Please let me know I am very interested. Thank you in advance

To view the item, go to: <http://cgi.ebay.com/ws/ebayISAPI.dll?item=4125873654>

*Thank you,
msalamon*

Ok, I went over all of this in the auction. Assuming he doesn't know how to read, I respond.

Well, I will ship it to you in London, but I will not do it for free. I'm sorry, but that is too much out of my own pocket. Please give me you address and I will go get a price for the shipping to London.

As for the condition, it is pristine. I've only had it for 21 days now, only being used at my office. (although I've stopped using it now) If you would like, I can take more close up, high resolution pictures.

*The buy it now price is \$2,100 (US currency) + the shipping to London.
Please let me know if you are interested!*

*Thank you!
Jeff*

Seems like a smooth sale so far, right?

Then I get this:

-----Original Message-----

From: Gianluca [mailto:scont06@yahoo.com]

Sent: Friday, April 23, 2004 6:29 AM

To: MyNameIsJeff

Subject: RE: Question from eBay Member: 19 Day Old 1ghz g4 Loaded Airport Extreme/Ram Upgrade

Hello,

I'm very very interested for this item and I'm ready to pay you the best price \$2100+ overnight or 2 days shipping charges (UPS DHL FEDEX OR FEDEX OR PARCEL FORCE) if we will use an escrow service to handle this transaction. As for the escrow service, I am already registered with www.set-ltd.net and my username is the same with my email address. I will pay the express shipping and also, the escrow fee. The escrow service will release you the money as soon as I will let them know that the item passed the inspection and is 100% ok.

The escrow fee is on my charge, don't worry. Please let me know if my offer is good enough for you. If it does, I will initiate the transaction with the escrow service as soon as I will have your confirmation. If it is ok please register in order to make the deal and start the payment procedures. Hope that everything will be ok and close the deal in the best conditions.

Kind regards !

Ok. I watch King 5 news. I've seen this on CNN. Welcome to your textbook eBay scam. At first, I was just going to reply with a 72pt font FUCK OFF, or perhaps a disgusting picture, but I decided to see what the upstanding members of the forums thought. And of course, right away, it is all picked apart. . .

Almost right away, **Grom** posted this:

Hmmm that escrow service doesn't look very legit - check the verisign secureid link, it's just a javascript pop-up which pretends to be going to verisign's site. The actual page it displays is just <http://www.set-ltd.net/VeriSign.php> - or have I got the wrong end of the stick?

It looks hopelessly unprofessional and doesn't seem right anyway - ask him if he will use a different escrow service. That one is either fraudulent or just plain shit.

After **Starbucks** discovers that the site is registered to:

Domain Name..... set-ltd.net

Creation Date..... 2004-04-16

Registration Date.... 2004-04-16

Expiry Date..... 2005-04-16

Organisation Name.... Saral Surakul

Organisation Address. 851 Foxcrest Court # A

Organisation Address.

Organisation Address. Terre Haute

Organisation Address. 47803

Organisation Address. IN

Organisation Address. UNITED STATES

Almost right away **P-niice** discovers Saral is a college professor!

Could it be this Saral Surakul?

http://www.indstate.edu/fcs/facprof_surakul.html

Indiana State university is in Terra Haute.

Of course we all dig up a bunch of this information on this guy, and his office contact information. I draft an email to send him with all of the info we dug up, when we get a better idea. Why don't we string him along? Lets see how far I can take it. . .

Well that sounds ok to me! I was able to log onto your internet web site. (Which I must say looks very nice to me!)

I just had a few questions. . .

What should I use for a user name and password? I like to use the same thing for everything. Ebay, paypal, email. . . is that ok?

In your FAQ, I noticed that you can use the set-ltd.net services, and it does not have to be an "online" purchase. But if its not online, how do they get to your website?

Thank you!

Jeff

While we wait for our response, I post his email address and we go to town on his eBay account. Almost everything is in German, and the feedback isn't that bad. Translators come in to help with some of his feedback entries, but pretty much prove useless.

Our next email is pretty short and sweet:

*Please retry to enter www.set-ltd.net and let me know your user name there.OK.
Thank you.*

So, I register on the site, and let him know.

-----Original Message-----

From: MyNameIsJeff [mailto:mynameisjeff@bootsix.net]

Sent: Saturday, April 24, 2004 2:52 PM

To: 'scont06@yahoo.com'

Subject: What is the next step?

Hello!

I have just finished creating my account on the escrow site that you suggested. My escrow username is MyNameIsJeffHarris.

Before we continue, I wanted to ask; do you know if this site had a strong digital defense?

I read that escrow services who do not utilize a strong digital defense can often be attacked, and the buyer and or seller can lose money or their item. I really don't want this to happen! I'm sure you don't either!

*I don't mean to ask so many questions; as you can see, I am new at ebay. By doing it this way, will I get to skip the extra ebay fees? That would be really great. I don't want to pay them extra money.
What is the next step? I have never really used escrow.*

*Thank you!
Jeff*

Here is where our friend gets excited. . .

-----Original Message-----

From: Gianluca [mailto:scont06@yahoo.com]

Sent: Sunday, April 25, 2004 7:51 AM

To: MyNameIsJeff

Subject: Re: What is the next step?

HELLO

First of all I want to tell you that you will not pay anything because I pay the escrow, UPS and other fees. Ok? I started the transaction with the nr. 6813088950 . Now please enter www.set-ltd.net , access your account with the username that you have and if the transaction is Ok with you please accept it. Ok? Once you do that I will send the funds =2100\$ plus shipping \$180. Ok? Please send the unit express UPS or Fedex. I will send them money and they will let you know as soon as they get the amount. Then you can send the unit at my address. Ok? Do not worry I know a lot of people that used this service and it is OK. Please let me know. THANKS

At this time I posted my username and password for our new escrow site. While browsing the site under my new account, it turned out I had some other pending sales and purchases. . .

These are the details for transaction with ID 1399872290

Item name: Amanda Real Doll

Terms Details

Seller username mynameisjeffharris

Buyer username Euro

Shipping with FedEx

Who pays fee Buyer

Who pays shipping Buyer

Inspection period 8

Item price 3500 USD

Quantity 1

Escrow fee 0 from 42 USD

Shipping cost 143

Total cost to Seller 0

Total cost to Buyer 3685

Description

slightly used

After encouraging everyone to create more transfers, I sent this:

Hello sir!

Please let me thank you again for being so patient with me! It is too bad we are settling outside of ebay, because I was going to leave you "EXCELENT EBAYER!!!!11 A+++++++= WOULD SELL TO ANYTIME" I guess it is ok though because I would have to give them an extra \$300 when the auction was over.

I logged onto your preferred escrow site and saw our transaction. I did not see any place to accept it though! Did I just not see it? Sorry I am new at this. Where do I go to say OK?

Where on the site does it say where to ship it to! I am very eager to get this thing shipped so I can hurry up and start the process to get my money! Once I ok our transaction does it tell me where to ship the laptop? I am very positive you will be satisfied with the laptop.

One other thing, You seemed to confident about this escrow service, that I think I am going to use it myself for my other transactions. Is that ok? I will be buying and selling other laptops and would like the security. I will be buying many things and will need a escrow service with a strong digital defense to send my money to so I don't get ripped off.

Thanks again!

Jeff

Here are some more of my new escrow transactions!

Seller username: mynameisjeffharris

Buyer username: Mayor Wilkins

Shipping with Captain Eddie's cargo ship

Who pays fee: Buyer

Who pays shipping: Buyer

Inspection period: 7

Item price: 34500 USD

Quantity: 17250

Escrow fee: 0 from 7141500 USD

Shipping cost: 1200

Total cost to Seller: 0

Total cost to Buyer: 602267700

Description:

A lot of bear kidneys from various bears, including (but not limited to) polar, grizzly, brown, Yogi, black, panda, and Care

A lot of these were listed, and pretty funny, but we decided to stop with them, because we didn't want our little scammer to grow wise.

While waiting for his response, I decided, that because it was my original sale, I would report the account to eBay. I went through all the hoops, filled out all the forms. To sum it up, I let them know what we discovered, and asked them to take some action. This is what I get:

Hello,

Thank you for writing to eBay's Customer Support with your concerns. My name is John and I appreciate the chance to answer your question. I'm happy to assist you further.

An Escrow service allows the buyer to send their money to the Escrow Company, and the Seller then ships the item to the Buyer. Once the Buyer approves the item the Escrow service then pays the Seller. eBay recommends escrow for transactions over \$500.00.

The Escrow service affiliated with eBay is called Escrow.com. eBay encourages members to take advantage of the assurance that escrow services can provide. For more information on escrow, please see the following eBay page:

<http://pages.ebay.com/help/sell/escrow.html>

I wish you the best with your future transactions.

Regards,

*John W. S.
eBay Customer Support*

WELL THANK YOU JOHN! MY CUP RUNETH OVER! Let's see. . . someone is reporting an obvious scam and fake escrow site. Obviously he has no idea what escrow is. BETTER SCHOOL HIM!

This just plain pissed me off. Can this be their response to other reports of scams? Perhaps this email was a little too angry:

Hi John,

Not to be rude, but I know quite well what escrow is. I also happen to know that this is an obvious scam attempt. Had you actually read the form I filled out on your site, and not replied with the canned response: Escrow 101, you would notice that I did not ask what escrow was. I was reporting someone wants to settle the sale outside of ebay, through an escrow site he referred me to. A site that claims to be a VeriSign secure site, but then you click the logo, he is hosting the VeriSign page -the page that should take you to the verisign site. This is a text book rip off. This can't be your answer to everyone who reports these types of things can it? I really think you should take some action against this person.

Jeff

It isn't long before I have our next email.

Gianluca [mailto:scont06@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 26, 2004 2:21 PM
To: MyNameIsJeff
Subject: Re: Ready to ship laptop

OK I talk with escrow services and now is ok he have a litle problem with website. The money is sent express to escrow.
Please email me when you will receive the confirmation.

And when he says express, he means express! Hours later I get my confirmation!

From : Set-Ltd Customer Service <billing@set-ltd.net>
Sent : Monday, April 26, 2004 10:34 PM
To : chemically_balanced@hotmail.com
Subject : Payment received for transaction #6813088950

||| Inbox
Dear customer,

Your partner "scont06" has completed the payment for transaction ID 6813088950

Item name: PowerBook G4
Item price: 2100.00 USD
Shipping cost: 180.00 USD
Quantity: 1
Inspection period: 1 day
Escrow fee: 25.20 USD
Total cost to buyer: 2305.20 USD

Your action is required now. The next step of the transaction is to ship the merchandise to the buyer. Please send the shipping details to your partner "scont06".

As soon as your partner receives the merchandise and the inspection period ends we will contact you to complete payment.

Billing Support Team
www.set-ltd.net

But wait?? What is also sitting in my inbox right next to this?

-----Original Message-----
From: Gianluca [mailto:scont06@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, April 26, 2004 3:44 PM
To: MyNameIsJeff
Subject: I'm waiting the track#

Hello
I receive the confirmation from escrow services about the money is received. Please

send it as we agreed: fedex ups or dhl tnt express and please put a small value on the package so I will pay less taxes .Here the duty taxes are 27,5% from the total amount wrote on the package so please do your best and send it as a family gift and with a low value.

This is my address:

*GIANLUCA SESSAREGO
9B VARLEY PARADE
COLINDALE,LONDON,UK
zip code:NW9 6RR*

*Please email me when you will send the package and give me the tracking number.
Regards*

And now we have his address. (I'm not going to insert the screen shots)
Everyone had a lot of ideas on how to mess with this guy.

lushka16 had a great idea:

Holy shit!! The next course of action is WICKED obvious, he even said it himself:

quote:

Here the duty taxes are 27,5% from the total amount wrote on the package

Put like \$8000 on the package and make the fucker pay \$2200 for it.

This was perfect! Obviously, \$8000, was high, but marking it \$2200 and having him pay the 27% is genius!

I wanted to send him something, but couldn't think of anything. It had to be something worth paying for, and worth the effort. But what?

EricFate got my imagination going:

Send a three ring binder with a hand drawn keyboard taped to the inside of the bottom flap, and a hand drawn screen taped to the inside of the top flap.

Crayon preferred.

YES. This was perfect! Trick the scammer into paying a few hundred dollars for a fake laptop! Genius! But I wanted to take it a step further. While I thought about it, I sent another email, and posted my plan. . .

Hello!

Well, it looks like I am ready to ship! I got my email from the escrow site too. I also have your email with your address so I will be sending your laptop today or the next day.

I told my friend about you and she said that she would like to sell you more if you

are interested! Would you like to buy more of the ultra powerful G4 powerbooks? She has them at her work to sell because people only know how to use them for AOL Instant Messenger and flash versions of Asteroid. So please respond as soon as you can. I would like to tell her that you would like to purchase more laptops. You seem pretty cool and trust worthy. So let me know fast. If you want more, send the money to the escrow and let me know. Once I get the email and know that everything is set up I will then send them all at the same time. I save money on shipping this way!

Thanks again for all your help with this sale. I only wish I could leave you feedback on ebay because I wanted to leave EXCELENT SELLAR A+++ W@W LQQK OMGBBQ or something like that. I think feedback is so cool! I like to come up with new and exciting ways to leave it!

I was thinking. Since you basically helped me save \$250 from ebay fees, I wanted to share some of that with you. So go ahead and tell the Digitally Defended Escrow site that I want to refund you \$100 for helping me. They can do that right? That is my gift to you.

I eagerly await your response!!!!

Jeff

(Even if he says he wants more and has sent the money for them all I will say I am sending the one first. Then the others.)

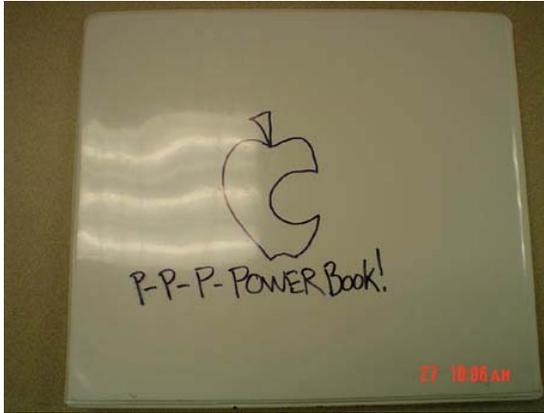
Yes. I want to mail him something.

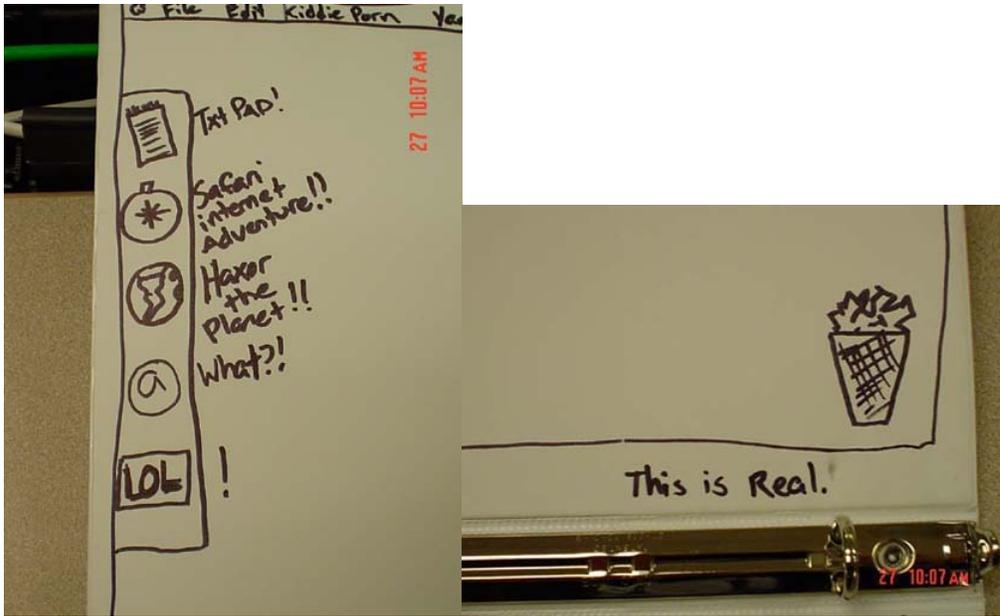
- 1.** I don't really have any laptop to smash up. So I will construct one. Crayons - 3 ring binder - glitter - failed cd burns which I will label as various programs - I will glue keys from broken keyboard. (or should I just draw them?)
- 2.** A print out of this thread Will be included (sans anything linking to SA)
- 3.** Gross pictures
- 4.** The package will be valued at \$2100 and will weight the same as a real G4.
- 5.** Pencil Shavings

I will construct this all as fast as I can. I think I can get it all done today. Yes, I will post pictures! But there is one thing: This will cost me money to send London. So I propose, after I complete this notebook, I will get the exact amount of shipping. Would any of you be willing to help pay for the shipping? I would post the tracking number of course. Just a thought.

(Its getting shipped - help from anyone or not so stay tuned)

Then it was born . . .





The P-P-P-Powerbook was a huge success. Here are a few comments:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>Hamburglar
Joined: Dec 30, 2000</p> | <p>I am seriously in tears here from laughing so hard. Your plan is completely brilliant.</p> |
| <p>ChlamydiaJones
Joined: Sep 27, 2002</p> | <p>Holy shit that's the funniest spoof on the planet ever in history. I couldn't stop laughing at "fire wire" for some reason.</p> |
| <p>Shemp Howard
Joined: Jul 27, 2003</p> | <p>That is the greatest notebook ever created. I laughed so hard I clapped. Bravo.</p> |

Not long after I finished to PBook, I received an email from eBay regarding the account out scammer used to contact me. (I have edited out the instructions to file for an eBay fee refund)

Hello Jeff,

Thank you for writing with your concern over the member, msalamon.

The recent bids placed with this account were the result of an unauthorized account takeover. Unfortunately, we were not aware of this activity until some time after the bids were placed. Once we became aware of this activity, immediate action was taken. We are now in the process of restoring the account to its owner.

I have reported the escrow site to the appropriate department to have it looked at. Since the account holder did not initiate this sale, you may consider the transaction null and void if you have not already shipped the item.

Let me also suggest a few ways this takeover could have occurred.

If the user had a relatively simple password or password hint question it is possible that a third party was able to gain access to the account by guessing the password.

It is also possible that the user could have unknowingly provided his or her password to another party. Some eBay members have reported receiving messages asking for User IDs and passwords. These messages appear to come from eBay Support, but in fact are not. eBay will never ask for sensitive information of this nature through email.

Finally, there are a number of computer viruses in circulation that log and record keystrokes. It's recommended that computer users keep their virus alert software up-to-date, and check their system often for problems. A firewall for high-speed Internet users is also highly recommended.

***I have reviewed your email history and see that the email from <msalamon> was in regards to item # 4125873654. After reviewing this listing, I see that you did end up with a winning bidder, zoeviolet01.*

We are concerned about violations on the site and have taken the liberty of investigating this member's account. Please be assured that we have taken appropriate action in accordance with our site policies. Such action may include issuing a warning, a temporary suspension, an indefinite suspension or terminating the membership.

As you may know, we are unable to provide specific information regarding the result of our investigation to third party members. Please understand that this is for the protection of all eBay users. However, we can tell you that our records indicate that the user you are reporting is currently not a registered eBay user.

Since the buyer is no longer registered on the eBay site, you may consider the transaction null and void. You can submit a Final Value Fee credit request by following the instructions below:

I appreciate your interest in the well being of our site. It is assuring to know that we have members who are concerned about the safety of our other users. I encourage you to continue to report all questionable behavior to eBay. This will give us the chance to look into the situation and take action where warranted.

<http://member.ebay.com/ad/ck/1065-11789-3840-13>

Thanks again for writing, and thank you for being part of the eBay community.

Regards,

*Cyan
Fraud Prevention Group*

Well, that explains the mystery of the strange German account! Just add the hacked account to the list of evidence.

Deviating from him usual email schedule, our scammer responds:

-----Original Message-----

From: Gianluca [mailto:scont06@yahoo.com]

Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 2004 1:22 PM

To: MyNameIsJeff

Subject: Re: One question before I ship!

OK What configuration have the apple?

Please send me today the package because I need soon.

Please email me the track number.

It seems he is so excited his scam is going to work, he can't even type correctly!

The next step was to send it. As much as I wanted to send this, I couldn't afford it on my own. Here is my post where I posted the shipping costs and asked for donations. *(Paypal info and other useless text was edited out)*

MyNameIsJeff

Joined: Dec 05, 2003



P-P-P-Powerbook.com!

Ok, I just got back from the "Pack Man." For those of you interested, It's going into a 18x18x5 inch flat panel box wrapped in brown paper. This trip to london will be accompanied by a broken cdrom drive and an informative excel 97 book. (And yes, I taped the fuck out of it.)

FedEx Priority \$80.41 2-3 Days
Global Express \$63.44 Week or so
Some other service \$40-something 2 weeks *ugh*

Ok guys, I'd like to go priority if possible. If we get close enough I will eat the rest. So if at least 70 people give a dollar we are in business!

The donations came flooding in. Shortly after this post, I went home from work, to find my power was off. After a couple hours in the dark, I logged on to find just over \$100 in donations! I couldn't believe it! Thanks to all of you who donated.

It wasn't long before I received another email from our scammer, who was growing more and more impatient.

-----Original Message-----

From: Gianluca [mailto:scont06@yahoo.com]

Sent: Wednesday, April 28, 2004 4:31 AM

To: MyNameIsJeff

Subject: RE: One question before I ship!

Please email me with all infoo soon

Someone is getting a little pushy! I replied with this:

Hello! I am sorry for the delay! I was not able to send your new G4 Powerbook to you yesterday! But I am able to send it today! I am going to be taking it down the the united states post office to fedex it to you. I am told it will take 2-3 days. I apologize, but that is the fastest I can send!

I will send another email with your tracking number when I get back!!!

chao!

Jeff

Off to the post office I went. I have to admit . . . this is where I started to get very nervous. Will he look me up through the return address? Will customs come bring the smack down for the over-pricing? What if? What if? What if?

I managed to choke it down, and go send it

When I was in the store, I'm sure I looked **very** nervous. I could feel my face turn red and my body temperature rise. As I was filling out the form, the lady asked me what the value of the package was. . . .

"Um, \$2000 will do." (I was trying to hold it, but I was smiling from ear to ear. She looked at me with a confused look.

"You know they will have to pay a lot for tax on customs."

(My smile grew even bigger.)

"I know."

Road Block: It turns out, when you send something to London from the US through FedEx, they want a phone number. No big deal., I said I would go email him, and call them to ship it off.

-----Original Message-----

From: MyNameIsJeff [mailto:mynameisjeff@bootsix.net]

Sent: Wednesday, April 28, 2004 10:40 AM

To: 'Gianluca'

Subject: Problem with shipping

Hello,

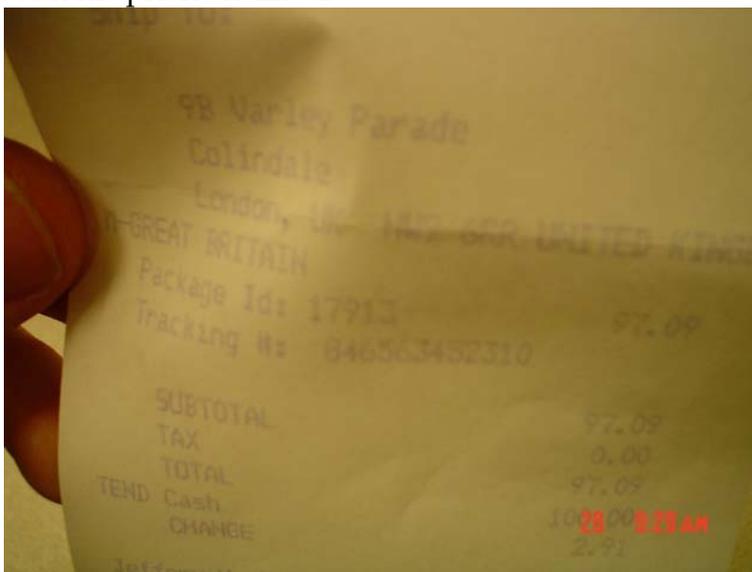
I took the package to the post office, but FedEx requires a phone number for the recipient if the package is being sent internationally.

As soon as you reply with that I will call them and tell them so they can send it.

Thanks!

Jeff

I began to wonder at this point . . . Obviously, this guy wasn't going to give me a legitimate number. I got my receipt and they told me it would send after I called with his phone number.



Taken from the post with the receipt:

For those of you who can make it out, the tracking number is 846563452310 (there is a package ID too, I don't know if you need it: 17913) Again, It's not going anywhere until I get a phone number.

It took way to long to find an angle where that shit all showed up!

In the mean time, a member named Pipski makes history. Pipski becomes our first undercover agent in London, and makes the first recon mission **into** the scammers address.

<p>Pipski Joined: Apr 18, 2004</p>  <p>Lovely barbershop. Pity I wasn't invited.</p>	<p>OK, still there but this PC is a bit more discreetly placed. It's a barbers / Internet Cafe, lots of customers. None you'd buy a used car from, few schoolkids. 9B has its own mailbox out the front of the shop, not sure where the entrance is. Going to take a quick tour of the street and see if I can see any other entrances to flat 9B. Will post again in a few hours when I get home.</p>
--	--

(The James Bond picture and title was later given to him for his spectacular stealth photography and intel gathering.)

This was getting better and better. To actually have people there! Pictures of the scammers shop! Amazing work Pipski.

Before Pipski could get home, I received my email from the scammer.

-----Original Message-----

From: Gianluca [mailto:scont06@yahoo.com]

Sent: Wednesday, April 28, 2004 1:01 PM

To: MyNameIsJeff

Subject: Re: Problem with shipping

OK no problem, this is my phone number 00447940667511. Please email me soon. Please send the package gift or small value and send EXPRESS SHIPPING.

Regards

I immediately called and had it sent. Once I posted the number, I think everyone on the site called. And of course, it was a false number. Just in case, I later removed it from the post, in case he somehow noticed the hundreds of calls. We didn't want to scare him off now do we?

Once I had his number, I sent him his tracking number.

Here is your tracking number. 846563452310. The package ID is 17913. The lady at the post office said that FedEx comes at 4:00pm to take shipments. So in about 2 hours it will be scanned in the fedex thing I guess and you can start tracking it. I

shipped it express, so it should be there in 2 to 3 days.

Also, the post office lady asked what it was, and I didn't want to lie, so I said laptop computer. When she said how much it is worth, I said, it is a family gift, but she said I couldn't do that. She said I had to tell her how much I paid for it. I don't want to get in trouble for mail fraud, or evading taxes or anything so I told her \$2000. I am sorry if that means you have to pay more. Since I screwed up, I will share the cost with you. Please let me know how much it was, and just have the escrow service refund you half of the amount. Can they do that? If not I will gladly send you how ever much you spent on it. You can even have the escrow hold my payment until I send you money for what you pay.

I hope this doesn't make you want to cancel. As I'm sure you noticed, no one ever bid on it and it didn't sell. I really need the money, so I am willing to work with you how ever to complete the transaction.

Thank you my friend!

Jeff

As soon as Pipski got back from the drop site. He posted the details of his findings. This gave us all a really good idea of the shop.

Pipski

Joined: Apr 18, 2004



Lovely barbershop. Pity I wasn't invited.

OK, I have good news and bad news. btw, thanks for all the concern but 1st thing I did when I got in was alter my p/w. I figured it was worth running the risk, but I guarantee you this is me, not the scambarber.

The bad news is about the photos. Just had a quick butchers at them - lousy cheapo cam doesn't have a screen - and they ain't so hot. In my defence, it is damned difficult to take snaps from underneath a barber's gown or a computer desk. Also, this cam is a horrible piece of crud with no image-stabilizing or anything. I'll autobalance them in PS and then sort out hosting for the very few that are even worth the effort.

On the plus side I picked up a fair but of HUMINT. For a start, the street map is misleading. The entrance to the shop is actually on the Edgeware Rd. The address given is a grotty little non-street that the properties back onto. Do we care? Well, I dunno if FedEx or UPS or whoever we're going with use GPS, but if the two streets have different postcodes and the driver just follows his GPS he might go straight to the back entrance, so that would bear watching. That said, I still think he'd end up out front because the back of the properties are totally anonymous afai could see, he would have no way of knowing which one was which. Plus there's high walls and bins and it's all very unprepossessing.

OK, so, the shop itself. Two barber chairs, four or five very cramped terminals downstairs and, I think, some upstairs too. Big window, easy visibility inside from without. Under

the window (on the outside) is a mailbox for `9B' but there is no way on Earth our man is going to get a laptop-sized package in it. Were I the delivery guy I would take one look at that and then go into the shop and ask. Oh, the shop also sells toy guns for some inadequately explored reason.

The owner, or at least the guy in charge while I was there, is a black guy in his mid-20s (estimate). Credit where it's due, the haircut he gave me was of a pretty good standard (not a bad barnet, for Barnet). Not the sharpest knife in the box and he has some odd ideas relating to the police.

[They have a TV there and while I was being barbered the news story came on about a nurse here in the UK, who's been arrested - or tried, i forget which - for murdering four of her patients. Whereupon my man expressed incredulity that they could possibly know that and went on to say that he thought Harold Shipman probably only actually killed `one or two' people and that a serial rapist of the elderly currently plaguing London, who has been confirmed as of Caribbean descent by DNA tests, probably `only' actually raped one person. Although that, he tells me, `is bad enough'.]

I am a notoriously bad judge of character but I have my doubts that this is our man. He doesn't strike me as a scammer, for all his other faults. That isn't to say that I couldn't well imagine him taking a cut (no pun intended), but I don't think he's the real culprit.

No-one else turned up there for a haircut. When I arrived (and when I left) a big black guy (who looks just like the cook who has a heart attack in *Crimson Tide*) was listening to banging choons on one of the PCs and a pasty, ginger sort was on one of the others. While I was there a rather skanky looking Kappa-slapper came down from upstairs - she was clearly a regular btw, a bunch of schoolkids arrived and went straight upstairs - also well known to the owner. In fact, now I come to think about it, everyone there but me seemed to be a regular. Oh, and a dude in a red t-shirt (photo'd - badly) also came d'stairs and left the place.

The street itself is - well, it's the Edgware Rd. Rub-a-tug shops, takeaways, pool halls, minicab firms and dodgy boozers. There is a Wetherspoons pub right next door to the shop. That could be handy if - on the day of arrival, and assuming the package didn't arrive before opening time - we could occupy seats by the window with a good view. Waiting in the warm with a beer sounds infinitely preferable to shuffling about on the pavement in the

pissing rain. Not sure about local parking restrictions but it ought to be possible to park up in a position with a good view of the entrance too, at reasonable times of day.

The scenario that presents itself as plausible - although it is arguably pointless to try and predict these things - is that UPS man (or whomever) will end up going into the barbernet cafe, with his delivery. If I was our scamboy, I would make a point of heading for the place - assuming I didn't own it - when tracking suggests delivery is imminent. That would be ideal for our purposes because a goon watching the front, one watching the back and one inside, all with mobile `phones, could pretty much sow that location up. Apart from a parked car or the pub there are no real vantage points sadly. Of course, what would be ideal for any `capture-the-moment-when-the-long-arm-of-SA-reaches-out-&-touches-someone' exploits would be a couple of yuppie-goons with Wifi laptops and webcams.

Pipski also posted his photos. A little blurry, but excellent work none the less. For the sake of the document size, I am going to leave them on the site.

While we waited for our ringer to be delivered, we had to keep busy, so we started to look at the internet headers of his emails.

Internet Headers:

Return-path: <scont06@yahoo.com>
Envelope-to: mynameisjeff@bootsix.net
Delivery-date: Wed, 28 Apr 2004 17:32:01 -0400
Received: from [66.218.93.77] (helo=web41411.mail.yahoo.com) by h-2.properhosting.com with smtp (Exim 4.24; FreeBSD 4.8) id 1BIweu-000CLR-WC for mynameisjeff@bootsix.net; Wed, 28 Apr 2004 17:32:01 -0400
Message-ID: <20040428213158.18228.qmail@web41411.mail.yahoo.com>
Received: from [81.196.100.243] by web41411.mail.yahoo.com via HTTP; Wed, 28 Apr 2004 14:31:58 PDT
Date: Wed, 28 Apr 2004 14:31:58 -0700 (PDT)
From: Gianluca <scont06@yahoo.com>
Subject: RE: Problem with shipping
To: MyNameIsJeff <mynameisjeff@bootsix.net>
In-Reply-To: <001001c42d64\$3186e4c0\$70c9a8c0@STEALTHBOOK>
MIME-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: multipart/alternative; boundary="0-770428758-1083187918=:17958"

Muti ran a trace route

```
12 90 ms 121 ms 90 ms ge-2-1.hsa4.sanjose1.level3.net [209.245.146.25]
13 30 ms 40 ms 31 ms so-2-1-0.bbr2.sanjose1.level3.net [4.68.114.157]
14 90 ms 100 ms 101 ms so-0-1-0.bbr1.newyork1.level3.net [64.159.1.41]
15 160 ms 171 ms 160 ms as-0-0.mp2.london1.level3.net [4.68.128.105]
16 * 180 ms 180 ms so-2-0-0.mp1.frankfurt1.level3.net [212.187.128.93]
17 180 ms 170 ms 180 ms so-10-0.hsa2.frankfurt1.level3.net [195.122.136.162]
18 170 ms 171 ms 170 ms fra2-cr2-p6-1.rdsnet.ro [62.231.127.41]
19 200 ms 201 ms 190 ms buh1-gsr1-p6-1.rdsnet.ro [193.231.252.229]
20 190 ms 201 ms 190 ms buh1-htb-ge0.rdsnet.ro [62.231.74.30]
21 370 ms 311 ms 280 ms buh1-cr1-vlan4.rdsnet.ro [193.231.252.73]
```

Was sent from a hijacked connection/proxy in Romania.

<http://www.dnsstuff.com/tools/whois...=81.196.100.243>

We noticed, as soon as he had confirmation, that obviously trustworthy escrow site went down! But not before *Sejanus* archived it! (Available on the site)

While we sat and waited for the delivery of the P-P-P-PowerBook, we all just posted different ideas and other funny things that would be funny to do. Nothing really relative to this.

The time was ticking, and we were getting closer and closer to our delivery time. At this point, Starbucks, and Rhig joined the stealth recon with Pipski. They were going to be at the shop during the time of the original delivery. Starbucks took his USB key with several tools to gather even more intel.

rhig

OK I'm just leaving for my coach at 3:45, I arrive in London at 9:20 and should be at the barbers by 10:00 - 10:30

quote:

Starbucks

ntpasswd and all other tools loaded

my housemate has come back camera in hand, its a 3.2 MP Sony cybershot with 3x Optical zoom 🤪, also with a mpeg movie option. My next post will be from London Paddington, good luck guys, any info SMS me or call me

I dont care about anyone crank calling, it will help keep me awake and amuse me

As soon as they all posted to let us know when they were going, and their plans, we had a problem:

Anaclisis Joined: Apr 17, 2003  ceci n'est pas une grenouille	trouble quote: <hr/> Apr 30, 2004 3:19 am Package status STANSTED GB Regulatory Agency Clearance Delay
--	--

Not knowing what this means at the time. . . I began to **PANIC**.

By panic I mean;

MyNameIsJeff Joined: Dec 05, 2003  P-P-P-Powerbook.com!	quote: <hr/> <i>Anaclisis came out of the closet to say:</i> trouble <hr/> SHIT SHIT SHIT SHIT SHIT
--	--

All those things I was worrying about, came back 10 fold. Begin hyperventilate.

MyNameIsJeff Joined: Dec 05, 2003	 Apr 30, 2004 3:19 am Package status STANSTED GB Regulatory Agency Clearance Delay WTF DOES THAT MEAN!!!!??
---	--

As you can see this did not set well with me.

MyNameIsJeff
Joined: Dec 05, 2003



P-P-P-Powerbook.com!

Maybe its the bum phone number?

Whould they try to call him at 3am?

I think I just instantly became diabetic.

EDIT: Anyone near north seattle. Please come fast. I am going to be needing CPR.

quote:

Scotsman came out of the closet to say:

This is apparently normal for Powerbooks. There's a thread about it [here](#)

Edit: Reading a bit more on some other forums. Here was a quote that might ring true.... "OK, I just called Fedex. They said that customs rejected my forms because of the price that was declared." Goes on to say "I just emailed her my paypal receipt and the url of the auction. Hopefully now they will release it. So there was damn near a weeks delay just to tell me that! "

ok . . . ok . . . feel a little better . . .no PANICING! 

I need to lay down.

CURRENT THE JEFF STATUS

MyNameIsJeff decided to show you this image:



MyNameIsJeff
Joined: Dec 05, 2003



P-P-P-Powerbook.com!

That's me breathing into a bag hoping I don't pass out. Or have my heart explode. With our operatives already on the way, we had to just hope that it changed fast, and got delivered while they were there.

Starbucks was our first man to post from the shop:

<p>Starbucks Joined: Jul 06, 2002</p>  <p>Strong Coffee Drinking!</p>	<p>Okay, I am in the cafe</p> <p>here is some info, there are webcams, anyone wanna get a msn webcam recorder and i will pan and scan, they dont have memory stick readers so i cant get info from my camera, but there are plenty of pictures</p>
--	--

(He posted a log, that you can view on the site.)

It was not long before Starbucks saw a Fedex truck and posted this:

<p>Starbucks Joined: Jul 06, 2002</p>  <p>Strong Coffee Drinking!</p>	<p>THE PACKAGE IS IN THE DEN</p> <p>I REPEAT</p> <p>THE PACKAGE IS IN THE DEN</p> <p>WE HAVE FEDEX DELIVERY</p>
---	---

<p>smitz Joined: Nov 05, 2003</p> 	<p>Starbucks is upstairs with webcam, he recorded the delivery moment!</p> <p>Im downstairs with the camera, the guy who signed for it IS the barber, but he put it in the back with out opening, d'oh. Updates to follow.</p> <p>This post is coming from INSIDE THE HOUSE</p>
--	---

Basically, everyone in the thread went fucking ballistic. We had all thought that FedEx had sent it out for delivery, and just didn't update the site. After we thought it arrived, our men left. Before Starbucks left, he set the screen savers on the computers upstairs to scroll: "P-P-P-POWERBOOK!"

It was not long before the webcam feed was posted. (Available on the site.) Even more pics of the outside of the building were posted. Eeen one with a clear shot of the REAL number for the shop.

As I was unsure, and grew impatient, another email was sent.

Hello!

Today is the 3rd day so you should be getting your new laptop!

I saw on the FedEx site and it is delayed! Does that mean it is still waiting to be delivered? I don't know what time it is there, but I hope it gets there today. Or did you get it and FedEx just didn't update their web page? Sorry, I don't send things with FedEx often. I usually just use first class us mail.

Did you pay for the taxes? How much did you end up paying? I am sorry again for that. I didn't mean to cost you extra money. But like I said in my other email, we can work it out.

How long will the 'ok' process take? I am eager to receive payment!

*Thank you!
Jeff*

The thread grew very fast with posts of everyone's excitement and praise of it finally being delivered . . . but as it turns out . . . it had not been delivered.

MyNameIsJeff
Joined: Dec 05, 2003



P-P-P-Powerbook.com!



I HAVE BAD NEWS.

The ringer was not delivered. I just called FedEx. It was never paid for. Probably because the jack ass gave me a bunk phone number.

I got transferred to the International Rep but hung up before I got to them. 😞

Cue despair and a sense of let down! Oh well, the mission was not a total failure.

Gizmo_Gun did an awesome thing by calling and seeing what was up.

Gizmo_Gun
Joined: Mar 21, 2004



Pow! Bang! Smack! Kablooey!

quote:

MyNameIsJeff came out of the closet to say:
Well, I was wrong. . . It doesn't make sense. I'm too afraid to talk to the FedEx people about it. What do I say? The guy gave me a bunk phone number?

Anyone brave enough to call?

I'll do it.

Gizmo_Gun

Joined: Mar 21, 2004



Pow! Bang! Smack! Kablooney!

Okay, I just called FedEx and told them that my husband and I (sorry Jeff) were concerned about what was going to happen to the package at this point.

She said that they were currently waiting for him to call and give them further information. I did NOT, I repeat, I did NOT authorize the ability for him to pick up the package at FedEx. It has to be delivered.

She made a notation that we were going to contact him via email and get him to contact the office of FedEx.

So, now we wait until he contacts them. We can always call back and check up on the status.

Thanks for doing that . . . my dear wife.

So it came down to, FedEx could not deliver it, because the number they are trying to call him on is fake. They can't have him pay the taxes if they can't find him right?

At this point, we sat, and so began, the many days of Regulatory Agency Clearance Delay. For about 7 days, right about the same time in the morning, the FedEx tracking page was updated with Regulatory Agency Clearance Delay. With no emails from the scammer, we thought it was over. Our ringer was to sit in the purgatory of FedEx customs for ever.

Sometime around this point my title was even changed to Regulatory Agency Clearance Delay.

Then, something happened . . .

Gizmo_Gun

Joined: Mar 21, 2004



Pow! Bang! Smack! Kablooney!

JEFF! We have a situation!

FedEX just called me (I gave them my number on the spot to contact, since yours was MIA) and asked if we had gotten a hold of the receiver. I obviously said no, and said that we were very concerned. Well, FedEx wants to know if we will pay the dues and have it delivered anyway, or we will be charged a storage fee.

I told the woman at FedEx that I would confer with you and have you contact them.

(I still have the mark where my head hit the desk.)

With this information in mind, a new email was in order.

*From: MyNameIsJeff [mailto:mynameisjeff@bootsix.net]
Sent: Tuesday, May 04, 2004 2:34 PM
To: 'scont06@yahoo.com'
Subject: Package cannot be delivered!*

Hello!

I received a call from FedEx saying that they are unable to get a hold of you to deliver the package. I really need payment for my laptop, so the sooner you get it and approve of it, the sooner the escrow can release my money to me. They said that they will have to charge me to hold it if they cannot deliver it. If that is the case, I will just pay to have it sent back.

Do you have another phone number? I was going to try to look you up by address maybe, but I don't think that will work, so I thought I'd ask you first! Please respond as soon as you can! I am very eager to complete the transaction!

*Thank you!
Jeff*

I had hoped this would do it. And it did. He next day he replied:

-----Original Message-----

*From: Gianluca [mailto:scont06@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2004 1:59 PM
To: MyNameIsJeff
Subject: Re: Package cannot be delivered!*

Hello

I call to fedex and he tell me tomorrow or of friday will send me the package to my address. The money is ready in my hand to pay the taxes. What insurance do you put for this?

*I will email you when I will pick up the laptop.
Thank you and sorry for this inconvenience.*

Gianluca

There were a lot of posts from a lot of excited people. The thread had come back to life. Not long after our last email, I received this:

-----Original Message-----

*From: Gianluca [mailto:scont06@yahoo.com]
Sent: Thursday, May 06, 2004 2:49 PM
To: MyNameIsJeff
Subject: Re: Package cannot be delivered!*

Dear sir,

Today I have made the payment for the duty taxes. I went personal to FedEx and made the payment. Everything now is ok and they told me that they will deliver it to me tomorrow or latest at 10 o'clock in the morning on Monday. Sorry for this delay but FedEx told me that this is the best they can do. Anyway they will deliver it till

*Monday afternoon and will be fine.
Next week we can finalize the deal.
Thank you for your patience and hope to be ok now.*

AT LAST! And even more pics posted by Smitz (On the site)

As we wait for FedEx to update the tracking page with the status, there is this giant flame war. A good page and a half.
The Tracking site is updated again on the 10th about 4am with? Yes, you guessed it, Regulatory Agency Clearance Delay. God damn you FedEx.
But wait! Many hours later!

*10, 2004 6:10 pm
Package status
STANSTED GB
Released for Delivery*

*6:10 pm
Package status
STANSTED GB
Package available for clearance*

IT WAS PAID FOR! HAHAAHAHAHAHA!! The thread is once again flooded with posts of happiness and glee!

And then, as fast as it was released, it is delivered!!!! Rhig was there and able to get even more pictures which are on the site.

*May 11, 2004 10:01 am
Delivered
COLINDALE GB*

*7:09 am
On FedEx vehicle for delivery
ENFIELD GB*

*6:51 am
Arrived at FedEx Destination Location
ENFIELD GB*

*May 10, 2004 10:19 pm
Package status
STANSTED GB
In transit in destination country*

Eager to hear from our scammer, I drafted an email and sent it. When I returned to the thread to post it, the thread was closed!
I think I had a fucking heart attack. But, OMGWTFBBQ re-opened it, because we are not finished yet!

Here is the email I sent:

-----Original Message-----

From: MyNameIsJeff [mailto:mynameisjeff@bootsix.net]

Sent: Tuesday, May 11, 2004 9:56 AM

To: 'scont06@yahoo.com'

Subject: Ready to complete transaction

Hello friend!

It sure took a long time, but it got there! I was worried for a while! I thought I had lost my powerbook for good in some kind of scam.

I wish I didn't pay for such fast shipping, now that I see how long FedEx takes. Please let me know when you are done checking everything and making sure it works. I packed it pretty well. I hope shipping didn't bang it up. You will see I included some extra books. I didn't really need them now that I got rid of the powerbook.

Anyways, I still cannot log onto the escrow site. Will payment still be sent even though they are having connection problems? I realized I never gave my address or any bank account information for payment. If I were to give that to you, would you be able to get it to them so they can send the payment? That would be great. I need this money to pay my rent.

I am curious . . . What did you end up paying for the taxes? I wanted to know because I still want to refund some of the money to you.

Thanks!

Jeff

And this is where we sit. We know he paid for it, and we know he has it. Now we wait for his response. If none is received, then we call and find out why.