



# BE EVER VIGILANT

## A True Story

The day before closing the trustee called Michelle Allen, closer for Noble Title & Trust in Naples, Florida, from the bank where she opened the account for the trust. The bank representative faxed over wiring instructions for the new account. Upon receipt of the instructions Michelle picked up the phone and verified the instructions with the trustee and the bank.

The next morning the buyer came in with the closing funds and signed all of the closing documents. Michelle knew the trustee was in Colorado, two hours behind her time zone so she simply emailed to let her know the buyer closed and she would be wiring the proceeds out shortly.

Almost immediately the trustee replied with new wire instructions. The trustee's email indicated the new instructions were the ones Michelle should use and asked Michelle to notify her by email once the wire had been sent. The signature block within the body of the email was the same, however the email address Michelle had on file did not match. She knew the email was not from the seller and called to confirm.

The seller answered the call despite being asleep. She confirmed with Michelle she did not send her new wiring instructions. The trustee thanked her for double checking and was upset to know her email had been hacked. As an added precaution, Michelle confirmed which bank, account number and routing number for the wire instructions. Michelle then sent the wire. The trustee confirmed more than \$500,000 in proceeds were safely received in her account later that same afternoon.

The closing occurred on March 31, 2017, this was not the only file Michelle was working on, yet she did not let the fraudsters win. In her submission to our Fraud Insights newsletter she said, "Be ever vigilant – even on a crazy end of the month day!!"

**Always call before you wire.**  
When in doubt, always call our office or your escrow officer.