

## **OPEN LETTER TO THE RT HON DAVID CAMERON MP**

Dear Prime Minister,

### **The Problem:**

Criminals worldwide are targeting vulnerable individuals in the United Kingdom by sending millions of scam letters direct to their homes demanding money.

These scams are specifically targeting the over trusting, elderly, socially isolated, bereaved and mentally ill members of our society.

Think Jessica was set up by Marilyn Baldwin the daughter of Jessica, who was a victim to these scams. Think Jessica is aiming to raise awareness of the dangers of scam mail, provide support to those who need help and push the government to create new legislation to protect chronic victims.

The criminals enter this country by effectively hiding inside an envelope, posing as a fictional character such as a lottery official, bank president or clairvoyant. Defenceless people are first made excited or anxious and finally deceived. The process tricks or threatens them and often results in them emptying their bank accounts and even selling their homes to keep up with the scammers' demands for money. Some helpless people have even committed suicide. For well over a decade these criminals have been allowed an easy and assisted entry into the homes of people in the United Kingdom.

Criminals collate the details of respondents, onto what they call their "suckers" list. These lists are later sold to other criminal gangs which escalates the harassment. Victims on this list have been delivered over 100 scam letters a day! They are also targeted by intimidating phone calls from abroad, often late at night, from criminals telling their victims that they will be arrested or worse if they stop sending money.

Since starting the campaign (over three years ago) we have been alerted to new scams weekly. Criminals find it easy to start up when they have no visible premises and can change the name of the scam and/or mailing address overnight; then use distributors to move it around the world to make the trail go cold.

It is estimated that Mass Marketing Scams cost the nation in the region of £3.5 billion a year, money leaking out of the UK into the hands of mainly foreign criminals. However millions of "silent" victims have never reported their loss. In addition to the financial trauma the scam mail also causes great devastation to the victims' families which have never been recorded.

### **"Think Jessica's" Action to date:**

Think Jessica has been active in an effort to highlight the huge scale of this hidden fraud. Think Jessica has done many national radio and television interviews, given presentations to bodies such as the Office of Fair Trading, Association of Chief Police Officers, Trading Standards, Age Concern, Victim Support, New Scotland Yard, Help the Aged and many regional Police Forces.

To bring this issue to the attention of the Government, Think Jessica's founder gave a speech at the House of Commons for the launch of "Scamnesty" in 2009. This was followed by a meeting

with the then Consumer Minister Gareth Thomas. He arranged a further meeting with the Attorney General Baroness Scotland who in turn invited Marylyn to the launch of the National Fraud Authority. Marilyn explained in detail the plight of the millions of people who are in the same situation as Jessica.

Think Jessica started a petition in an attempt to help the silent victims of fraud. The useless response from Gordon Brown was to **register with the Mail Preference Service**.

In 2010 Think Jessica launched "Scam Mail is Black Mail" a national awareness campaign. They displayed 1,000 posters on back lit billboards in train stations, shopping centres and supermarkets. This resulted in Think Jessica being alerted to up to 20 new victims a day. All victims were like Jessica, displaying cult like behaviour, addiction and paranoia. All were reported by relatives and others who had tried in vain to find help.

### **Suggested Solutions:**

Think Jessica believes the common sense solution is to **implement changes to the law**, to bring laws up to date with crimes of this century. These individuals spend their days trying to keep up with a deluge of illegal mail, which use the "voice of authority".

The Rule of Law should protect those who are being groomed and brainwashed into becoming "willing participants of their own exploitation". Laws need to protect people paying protection money to the low life who pose as officials & clairvoyants and put an end to the bogus charities that are jumping on the bandwagon, pulling at the heart strings of those with barely enough money to feed themselves.

Many relatives of victims like Jessica agree; criminal mail can worsen or create mental illness. Victims appear to be in control of their own thoughts, but are trapped in a delusional world scam mail creates. Why is it left to victims like Jessica, to decide whether or not they interact with criminal gangs?

**JESSICA'S SCAM SYNDROME (JSS)** needs to be recognised as a mental health condition:-

- Those suffering from JSS should be separated from the criminal mail for their own protection.
- In turn this will deter criminals who use scam mail sent into the UK as a very lucrative "business". In 2008 one Criminal gang was estimated by SOCA to be making £35 million a year!
- A system should to be put in place which enables postal workers to sound the alarm when they become aware that someone is being targeted.
- Mail to that address should be stopped and screened by a relative, trusted person or trained member of staff at the local sorting office. In many cases the only people who know that a crime is being committed are the scammer and the postal worker, as the victims do not recognise themselves as a victim of crime.

**Think Jessica needs government support** to help us to continue to raise awareness and educate others to the plight of those who can't be helped by lip service. We are struggling to fund our much needed and effective campaigns. We need to continue to create a hostile

environment which will deter the thousands of criminals that are having an easy and assisted passage into the homes of our parents and grandparents.

Think Jessica also thinks that there needs to be an age cut off point on mailing lists. It is legal for companies and organisations to sell mailing lists, but many relatives of those targeted, feel it is too easy for unscrupulous people to obtain names of potential victims. As an example Age Concern conducted surveys and sold the details of respondents online. Below is a direct copy of how this list of potentially vulnerable people was advertised by **Age Concern** between 2008 & 2010

**“These particular individuals have all responded and completed a survey distributed by Age Concern which deals specifically with issues affecting older people. As a result, these individuals are mostly aged 65 years+, retired with ownership of their home. According to lifestyle profiling, their main interests are cookery, gardening, health issues, the theatre as well as reading both books and newspapers.**

**The list currently has 110,000 0-12 month survey responders available and is currently looking to add a minimum of 100,000 new names every six months.**

**This data has historically proved extremely responsive to charity mailers, both for donor and raffle/lottery campaigns but we also expect the list to perform well for mid-market mail order catalogues promoting books, fashion and CDs/DVDs for the grey market, health products and supplements as well as hobby and collectable mailers.”**

We would like to see an “opt in” option for people aged over 70. The vast majority of victims reported to Think Jessica are over 70 with a large percentage in their 80s & 90s.

Think Jessica has tried and failed to get government funding in the past. This is mainly because it is thought there is already plenty of help available on line and via the phone, but the truth is, there is no help whatsoever for the millions of UK citizens like Jessica who refuse to co-operate because criminals have programmed them to obey their commands. Thousands of people visit our website each month and hundreds of government agencies, organisations, charities and police forces have linked to our site for education, information and have distributed our booklets and DVDs.

Please take a look through this website and read the heart-breaking stories and shocking facts and help us to help all the other Jessica and their families.

Yours sincerely,

**The “Think Jessica” Team**