

Scammed by an “Immigration Lawyer”

Alondra Morales

BEFORE YOU READ: Learn this vocabulary: A *scam* (noun) is when someone tries to cheat you or when they commit fraud against you. A *scammer* (noun) is a person who does the scam. And *to scam* (verb) is the act of committing a scam.

He Said He Was Good

Like many immigrants, my family needed a lawyer to help us file our immigration papers. Unfortunately, we got scammed!

It all started when a lawyer contacted us. He said he was good. He said he could help us with our immigration cases. We did not investigate him. We trusted him.

He Charged a Lot of Money

We met in person. He was super friendly. He asked us for our documents. He said that he needed money before he could send them in. He charged my in-laws \$6000 and my brother-in-law \$3000. He gave me a discount, and he only charged me \$2800. We paid all the money. We wanted the process to start as soon as possible.

Six months passed and there was no progress in any of the cases. I called him and asked him about my case. He told me that everything was going well, that it was just a matter of waiting.

I couldn't wait. I consulted with a second lawyer who sadly told me that the first lawyer had not done his job well. He failed to upload our documents. The second lawyer also found out that the first lawyer was not a real lawyer.

Then He Disappeared

As soon as I found out about this, I tried to contact him, but he did not reply. Nor could we find him. So unfortunately, this “lawyer” scammed us. In total we paid him \$11,800 dollars.

Now we know. We are aware that scams are common. He taught us a great lesson. We no

longer trust people easily. Now we investigate until we are sure we are not being scammed.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. Tell Alondra's story in your own words. What does she do now to avoid scams?
2. “Watch out for scammers!” This is an example of an imperative sentence in English. Write other imperative statements related to scams.

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Common Scams

Government impersonators.

These are people who pretend to work for the government. Officials from USCIS will only contact you via official government channels.



In some countries, “**Notarios Públicos**” (in Spanish) can refer to a lawyer. However, in the United States, a Notary Public is *not* a lawyer.



Watch out for anyone who contacts you on **social media** and offers support, a job, or the chance to “jump the line.”



For more information, see:
<https://www.uscis.gov/scams-fraud-and-misconduct/avoid-scams/common-scams>