



## U.S. POSTAL INSPECTION SERVICE **CRIME ALERT**

### **New Toyota for \$39.95? Postal Inspectors Call It Mail Fraud**

TUCSON, AZ – “Congratulations!” reads the mailing, “You’ve won a brand-new Toyota worth \$15,500!” A certificate of vehicle registration is “proof” of the deal.

All you have to do to claim the car is mail \$39.95 to a guy named Robert R. Townsend. And there’s the rub, say Postal Inspectors: “This is mail fraud. Anyone who mails in their money can kiss it good-bye. There are no Toyotas—and there is no Robert R. Townsend.”

In fact, Postal Inspectors in Arizona and Nevada working with state and local officials have identified four suspects they believe are responsible for the scam, and an indictment is pending. In the meantime, Inspectors warn postal customers to ignore offers that sound “too good to be true.”

Inspectors believe that about 4,000 postal customers—mostly seniors—were duped into mailing checks made out to Townsend, and some paid an extra \$20 to \$30 to get the money to him overnight. Mail fraud is a felony and carries a sentence of up to five years in prison and/or fines of up to \$250,000 for each count.

If you receive this or similar suspicious mailings, toss them out. And if you've already mailed in your check, Postal Inspectors want you to report it.

Call the U.S. Postal Inspection Service to report suspected mail fraud at 1-877-876-2455 and select option 4. Or report it online at [postalinspectors.uspis.gov](https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov).