



Menary, Steve. (2013). Facebook Fakers, LinkedIn Liars & Twaddle on Twitter: Football Scammers on Social Media. In: Play The Game 2013, 28-31 October 2013, Aarhus, Denmark.

Downloaded from <http://ssudl.solent.ac.uk/2908/>

Usage Guidelines

Please refer to usage guidelines at <http://ssudl.solent.ac.uk/policies.html> or alternatively contact ir.admin@solent.ac.uk.



Linked 

Facebook fakers, LinkedIn liars and twaddle on Twitter: Football scammers on social media

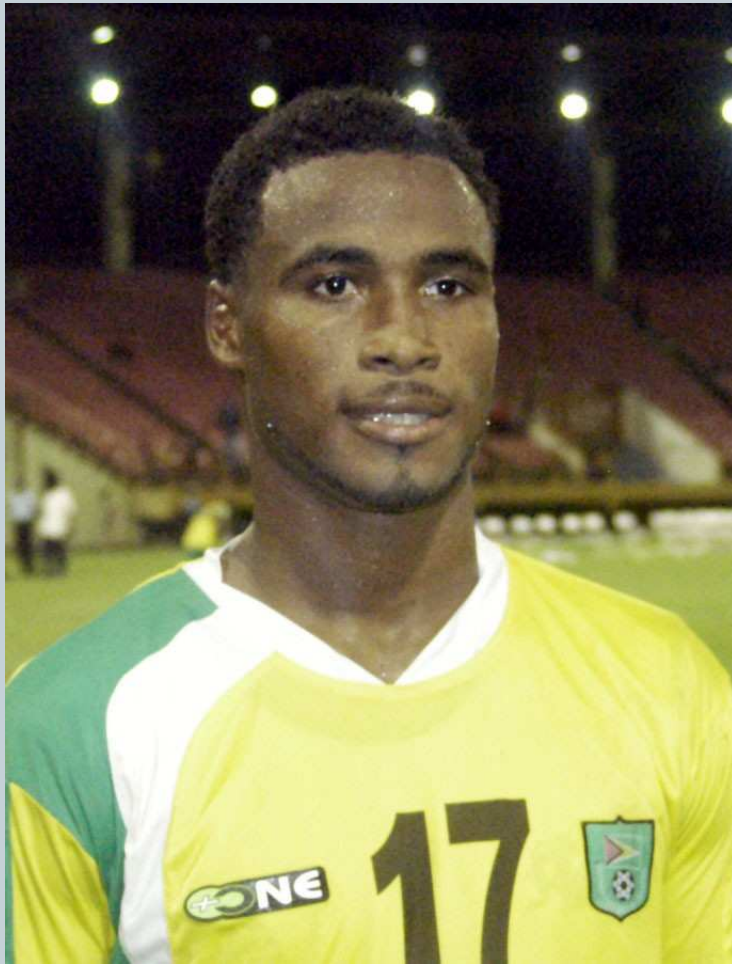
By Steve Menary

playthegame 2013
- stepping up for democracy in sport

8th world communication
conference on sport and
society

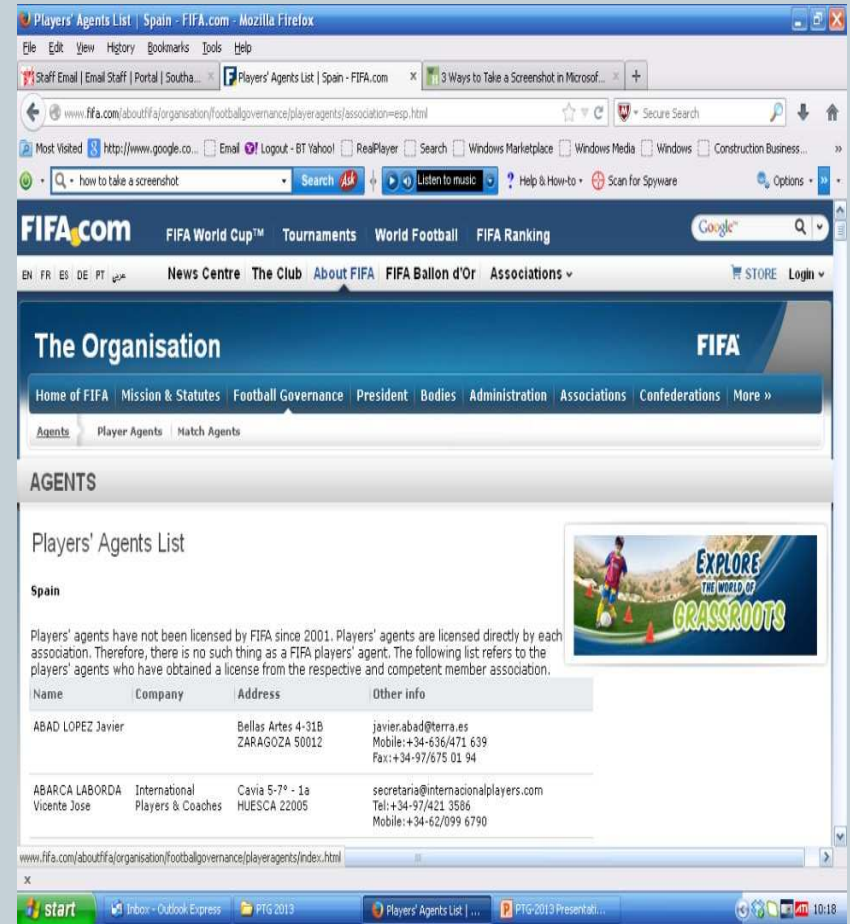
26-31 October
Aarhus • Denmark

Vurlon Mills



The approach

- Vurlon is approached on Facebook by a Spanish agent, Navarro Aparicio Jose, who offers him a UK trial but asks for £500 to cover insurance
- The agent is listed on FIFA's directory
- Vurlon's uncle agrees to pay the £500, which is wired by Western Union to an address in Germany



The screenshot shows the FIFA.com website with the 'Players' Agents List' for Spain. The page includes a navigation menu, a search bar, and a table of agent information.

Agents

Players' Agents List

Spain

Players' agents have not been licensed by FIFA since 2001. Players' agents are licensed directly by each association. Therefore, there is no such thing as a FIFA players' agent. The following list refers to the players' agents who have obtained a license from the respective and competent member association.

Name	Company	Address	Other info
ABAD LOPEZ Javier		Bellas Artes 4-31B ZARAGOZA 50012	javier.abad@terra.es Mobile:+34-636/471 639 Fax:+34-97/675 01 94
ABARCA LABORDA Vicente Jose	International Players & Coaches	Cavia 5-7º - 1a HUESCA 22005	secretaria@internacionalplayers.com Teli:+34-97/421 3586 Mobile:+34-62/099 6790

The sting



Hello Vurlon,

How are you doing today ? I received your invitation letter this morning from the club i have just attached it to your mail. I received an emergency call this morning from Bristol City Fc they are trying to let me know that you needs FIFA approval letter in collaboration with our agency Cadmens Ifa Limited so i need to get your documents ready and sent to you as well but the club and agency are requesting 1,200 pounds (\$ 1,925.00 USD) to get all the documents ready, because without the FIFA approval letter you will not be able to attend the football trials in England.

I am sorry things came up so urgent but all i need from you now is just your co-operation so i can proceed in getting your complete documents sent to you immediately .

Thanks for your understanding and i promise you a contract with our agency if you impress me at the pitch of play at the football trials i will help you get a club in England.

Regards

Navarro Aparicio Jose



The reality

“We were contacted on behalf of Robert Vurlon Mills and Robert’s representative appeared to be in possession of a letter that was not sent by Bristol City FC. Unfortunately we are regularly contacted by players and agents who appear to have been sent scam invitations to attend trials. “If we ever believe a false letter or representation has been made, pretending to be from Bristol City FC, we pass the details on to the Football Association and suggest the player or agent contacts their local Police if they believe a crime has been committed.”



Bristol City FC spokesman

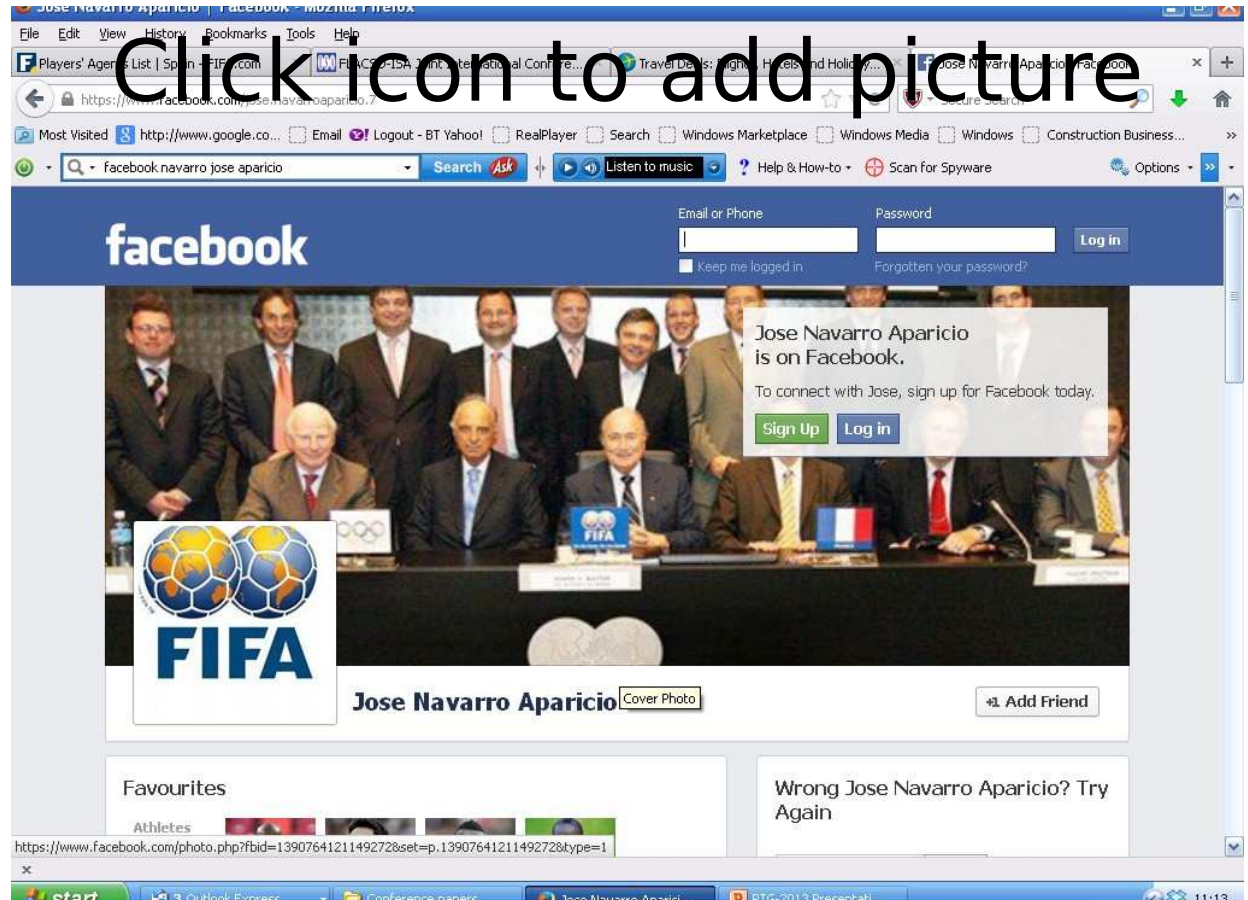


A Jose Navarro Aparicio is licensed to operate as an agent by the RFEF

Facebook contains profiles for a licensed football agent called navarro aparicio jose

'Friends' include aspiring young footballers from developing countries, where English is often not the first language

Click icon to add picture



Does Navarro Aparicio Jose really exist?

The Cadmens Agency?



<http://cadmenssportintl.blogspot.co.uk/>


Q - Does the UK Cadmens Agency that Navarro Aparacio Jose claimed to work for really exist?

A - No such company listed at Companies House in the UK.

Cadmens (IFA) Limited

This is 100% open tryout for all players all over the world whereby your talent and skill earn you a club deal and we have been in this for a while now and we are proud to let you know that we have changed many lives and changing yours will be difficult for us...Soccer is our goal.

PLAYERS



2011 players for tryout in

Other Cadmens 'agents'



- The English FA licensed Digby Reed and Peter Conning to operate as agents
- On Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn there are numerous profiles for Reed Digby and Conning Peter in Austria, London, Glasgow or Nigeria
 - They nearly all claim to be licensed football agents



Is the problem of ghost agents widespread?



“Reed Digby has contacted me on LinkedIn a number of times trying to see if I know any players that would like a trial in the UK. I have reported him to Uefa and Fifa as he is posing as an official agent yet is not registered. They told me that they were looking into it.”

Former Philippines coach Simon McMenemy

“There is a new scam from China offering a fantastic contract then asking for money to join the China Coaches Association which they say foreign coaches must do. It is always small amounts, never more than U\$D 500; this is how they catch you.”

Former St Vincent coach Stewart Hall

“There are loads of scams like it. I had one from Bahrain where they were offering me a deal but I had to pay €500 for them to vet me.”

Stephen Constantine, coach

Who are the real agents?



- The real Jose Navarro Aparicio and Digby Reed were both contacted and asked to confirm they are not involved in these scams.
- Neither responded



The real Peter Conning



- “Even though numerous links were primarily to websites that were not household names there was Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts using my name and an old photo.
 - “FIFA and the FA have a responsibility to ensure that professional agents are protected and the ambitious footballer is not ‘conned’.”

Peter Conning

The fraudsters playground



In a 2011 response to the United States' Securities and Exchange Commission, Facebook said 83 million of 855 million active users were duplicates, false or deemed 'undesirable' for reasons such as spreading spam

Why is it happening to football?



Since 2001, agents have been licensed by the national association where they are based

FIFA publishes an agents' directory on fifa.com

details are supplied by national associations

Of 149 fifa members to license agents, 38 failed to provide a telephone number or email for one or more of their licensed agents

A total of 227 agents on Fifa.com are only contactable by postal address.

Six months ago, this figure was 179

The global picture



Country	Total agents	Uncontactable Agents	Country	Total agents	Uncontactable Agents
Italy	1,059	129	Cote d'Ivoire	29	1
France	243	32	Croatia	44	1
England	452	10	Curaçao	1	1
Gabon	5	5	Denmark	42	1
Netherlands	138	5	Germany	426	1
United States	163	4	Guinea	18	1
Argentina	216	3	Indonesia	14	1
Russia	76	3	Japan	30	1
Bosnia-Herzegovina	111	2	Mali	47	1
Brazil	265	2	Norway	27	1
Guinea Bissau	39	2	Poland	68	1
Honduras	2	2	Qatar	9	1
Surinam	7	2	Scotland	71	1
Tunisia	30	2	Senegal	33	1
Belgium	93	1	Slovenia	31	1
Cameroon	38	1	Spain	578	1
Central African Republic	18	1	Uganda	5	1
Chile	18	1	Ukraine	67	1
Congo	23	1	Uruguay	52	1



The responses

Does anyone care.....

Probably not

- The English, Italian and Spanish associations and the UK-based Association of Football Agents – no response
- European Association of Football Agents – “I am not aware of this! Do you have more info about it, so that we can act?”
- FIFA – “Indications about possible and alleged non-compliance with the regulations should be referred to the member association concerned.”

How to solve the problem



"I would like to see FIFA police the fifa.com website far better than they are presently. Each and every Agent registered should only appear on the FIFA website if they disclose full information including full business address, telephone number, email and now a photograph and any data on past deals they have done so far as an agent. "This information should be checked randomly by FIFA and be updated yearly. Subject to this information not being submitted means that agents details not appearing on the website. This hopefully will prevent fraud agents from taking money upfront from young players and making off with the cash."

Vurlon Mills