

Meet the man who accidentally started an assassin hiring website

Level: Elementary

1 Warmer

a. Match the halves to make words that describe people who kill others for money.

hit	killer
contract	gun
assas	man
hired	sin

b. Scan the article to see which of these words are used in it.

2 Key words

a. Write the words from the wordpools next to the definitions below. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

pretended realized respond services wanted

1. work or help that a company can provide for you _____
2. reply in writing (e.g., via email) _____
3. behaved in a way that makes people believe you are something else

4. when the police are looking for you in connection with a crime

5. knew and understood something _____

act clues crime fraud wacky

6. funny, silly, crazy _____
7. an action or activity that is illegal _____
8. information that helps you understand something _____
9. the crime of obtaining money from someone by tricking them

10. do something in a particular way _____

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b. Use some of the key words above to complete these sentences.

1. She did not _____ to any of my messages.
2. We must _____ now to save the rainforests.
3. He was _____ for murder in three states.
4. He _____ that he was going to be late again.
5. He _____ to be happy for her, but he was secretly very sad.

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- 1 In October 2005, Bob Innes bought the website domain name "rentahitman.com." *. The "hit" in the name was a play on words about the number of clicks on a website.
- 2 He had no idea that he would later tell the police about lots of people who wanted assassin services.
- 3 In December 2021, a woman was found guilty, after she asked Innes, via his website, to kill her husband.
- 4 Innes also received a message from a woman named Helen. She was in Canada and wanted three family members in the UK murdered. He didn't respond.
- 5 But she sent a second email, which included names, addresses and other information. Innes knew he had to do something. So, he responded, and pretended he could do what she wanted.
- 6 Within hours, Innes had her real name, location, and phone number.
- 7 "I knew that three people's lives were in great danger," he says.
- 8 Innes gave the information to the police, and soon found out from detectives that 'Helen' was wanted by the police in the UK.
- 9 Innes realized his \$9.20 website had just saved the lives of three people.
- 10 Innes never planned to be a detective, or a criminal catcher. He didn't have the training. He was just a man with a wacky website name who happened to stop a crime.
- 11 He kept the website running. He filled it with jokes and clues to show it wasn't real. "Your point and click solution," the website says when you search for it on Google.
- 12 The warning message on the front page reads: "Everyone should know by now that the Dark & Deep webs [sic] are not safe places. There are lots of dangerous sites, full of viruses and fraud. Other people might get your information, including law enforcement!"
- 13 But, the email requests for assassin services kept on coming.
- 14 Innes does not make any money from the site, but people give him money to help with the running costs. He also plans to set up an internet safety program to help teach people about the dangers of the internet.
- 15 Does he ever worry about keeping the website? "As long as these emails keep coming in, I will continue to act," he says. So far, he has saved nearly 150 lives because of the site.

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* *rentahitman.com* = "rent a hitman dot com"

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3 Understanding the article

a. Are these sentences True or False according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. Bob Innes bought the domain name *rentahitman.com* over, more than fifteen years ago.
2. The domain name costs him just under one hundred US dollars.
3. He got an email from a woman who wanted him to murder three people.
4. He wrote back the same day and asked her for more details.
5. After she gave more information about herself and the people she wanted killed, Innes contacted the police.
6. Unfortunately, the police never found the woman.
7. Since then, Innes' website has saved over one thousand lives.
8. Innes wants to help people stay safe online.

4 Key language

a. With a partner, join the words to make word pairs from the article. Check your answers in the article.

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. found | costs |
| 2. warning | enforcement |
| 3. law | guilty |
| 4. running | message |

b. Now match them with their meanings.

- a. the police
- b. the money you need for a business
- c. when a judge says that you have done something wrong
- d. written words that tell you about danger

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c. Now use them to complete these sentences.

- a. Bob Inness told _____ officers about Helen's emails.
- b. Helen was _____ and sent to prison.
- c. Other people give Innes money to help with the _____ of his website.
- d. Innes has put a joke _____ on his website to tell people it's not really a place to find a killer.

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these questions.

- Do you have an old email address, website, or social media account that you no longer use?
- Is it still active or did you delete it?
- Do you currently have a website? If you do, talk about it. If you don't, say why not.
- What information would you not put online or send via email or messaging app?

6 In your own words

a. Work with a partner.

How do you stay safe online? Work together and write a list of 10 internet safety do's and don'ts.