



**MZUNGU IN
KAMPALA**
with
Bryan McInnis

An open letter to Jiji Uganda

Dear Jiji Uganda,
When my family first moved to Uganda, we discovered you and genuinely believed our lives were about to improve dramatically. We scrolled your vast catalog and thought, "Wow. This is Facebook Marketplace, but upgraded. Surely this is the future." It felt like a reputable platform where friendly Ugandans were eager to part with new or almost-new items at incredible prices. In those early weeks, we even reached out to a few sellers. Some never responded. Others asked for payment upfront. A few were extremely enthusiastic about receiving our money, less so about delivering anything in return.

Confused, we turned to our trusted

Ugandan friends and asked a simple question: "What is the best way to navigate Jiji?"

Their responses were swift and merciless: "Do not buy anything on Jiji."

"Do not trust any seller on Jiji."

"Jiji is the fastest way to lose your shillings."

And so, reluctantly, we resisted.

Then your YouTube ads found me. High production value. Professional actors. Compelling storytelling.

Honestly impressive. So impressive that I began to doubt my friends.

Could it really be that bad?

I returned to my friends, cautiously optimistic: "I hear you. And I appreciate your concern for my family's finan-

cial well-being. But... have you seen the deals?"

They doubled down.

"Never judge a book by its cover."

"I am telling you. It is a scam."

Eventually, we moved on to Jumia. Reliable. Predictable. Less exciting. But safe. And yet, if I am honest, I still carry a sliver of hope.

So here is my request, dear Jiji executive leadership. Is there a path? A code? A secret handshake? Some sacred knowledge that allows a person to safely purchase from your platform without immediately entering a trust exercise they did not consent to?

I understand you cannot vet every seller. But if there exists any form of

scam protection, mediation, or last-resort rescue plan, please advise.

If you can respond in the affirmative, I am prepared to serve as your official LinkedIn advocate. I will work tirelessly to restore your reputation. I will become "Mzungu Jiji." I will wave the green banner of commerce and convenience across the Pearl of Africa. And together, united in purpose, we will quietly (and respectfully) contribute to the eventual demise of your arch-nemesis.

Yours sincerely,

Bryan McInnis

(Unofficial) US Ambassador to Uganda

Still hopeful... Cautiously

<https://fromthepearl.substack.com/>

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