



News Release

June 29, 2009

Favorite Grandson Scam

Washington County Sheriff Tim Helder announced today the *"favorite grandson"* scam has been reported in our area and wants to warn the public & provide tips to help avoid being a victim.

On June 8, 2009 the Washington County Sheriff's Office received a report of identity fraud. The investigation revealed the person was a victim of the *"favorite grandson"* scam. In this case, the con artist contacted the victim from Canada and stated he needed money for bond because he had been arrested for D.W.I.. Once he received the money, he called back and stated he needed more money for attorney fees. Once he received this money, he again called back and stated he needed a much larger amount to settle the case. Fortunately, in Washington County many folks conduct their banking in small towns, as did our victim. An employee of the bank recognized something was amiss and determined the victim was being scammed. Her attention to detail kept this victim from losing much more money than she had already lost to this con artist.

The Arkansas Attorney General's Office issued a news release on November 9, 2007 warning of this common scam. The below information was obtained from their release and re-issued with their permission.

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“Scam artists will do just about anything to steal from seniors, including posing as a favorite grandson or granddaughter. The *"favorite grandson" scam* is not new, but resurfaces frequently among Arkansas' elderly population.

In the *"favorite grandson" scam*, the con artist calls an elderly person, whom he either knows or found through other means like scanning the phonebook for "traditional-sounding" names. Once contact is made, the con artist identifies himself as the individual's *"favorite grandson,"* engages in conversation and tries to entice the person into giving his or her actual grandchild's name. After talking for a bit, the con artist then tells the grandparent that he is in serious trouble or has been in an accident and needs money wired to him as soon as possible. Once the victim wires the money, there is usually no way to get it back.

Here are some tips to remember to avoid falling for the *"favorite grandson" scam*:

- Never give or wire money based on an unsolicited phone call;
- Verify your family member's whereabouts by directly calling another family member or the grandchild herself;
- Never send money to an unknown account or entity;
- Ask the caller for his or her name point blank, and if they cannot provide it, hang up immediately; and
- Contact the Attorney General's Office at 501-682-2341 or 1-800-482-8982, if you believe you have been a victim of this scam.”

For further information please contact Kelly Cantrell at (479) 530-5729, (479) 444-5791 or kcantrell@co.washington.ar.us

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