



# DenverDA

Mitchell R. Morrissey, District Attorney - Second Judicial District  
201 W. Colfax Avenue, Dept. 801, Denver, CO 80202

Bus. Phone: 720-913-9000  
Fax: 720-913-9035



**Mitch Morrissey**  
Denver District Attorney

## Fraud Alert

### The Grandparent Scam

*“Grandma, help! I’m in Canada, and I’ve been in a hit-and-run accident. I need you to wire me money immediately so I can bond out. I’m scared, Grandma!”*

*“Jimmy is that you?”*

*“Yes, Grandma. I don’t want the family to know - they’re going through a lot right now. I’ll pay you back when I get home!”. . .* Having wired \$3,000 dollars precisely as instructed, Grandmother has just been duped by a crook in a widely circulated and audacious scam. Despite the prevention efforts of law enforcement, media, and concerned family and friends, a disproportionate number of elders continue to be victimized each year.

The ‘Grandparent Scam’ has several variations and has been around for a long time. Perhaps it is the “grandchild” on vacation in Europe who was mugged, or the “grandchild” in the military who has encountered some misfortune while stationed over-sees. Victims may be contacted several times by the same crook who calls and insists that more money is needed in order to send the grandchild home. The call may come in the middle of the night when the victim is not fully awake and more likely to be caught off guard. Often, a highly excitable voice will mask recognition. *Play on emotions scams* are extremely effective because victims are more apt to respond based on gut reaction and fear, rather than on logic or fact. This explains why so many victims fall prey. Crooks used to search the telephone directory looking for names from an older generation. Today, personal information on families is easy to get on social networking sites, email distribution lists, or even through obituaries which routinely list the names of surviving family members, and their relationship to the deceased.

### Protect yourself

- ❖ Before doing anything, call your grandchild to verify the facts. Chances are your grandchild is safe at home, or presently in the United States. If you don’t have their phone number or are too frightened to take a risk, ask the caller to verify a fact known only to the family, such as the name of a beloved pet.
- ❖ Once you realize you have been scammed, contact the wire service immediately and ask them to stop payment on your check. There is a remote possibility that you can recover your funds if the crook has not picked up the cash.
- ❖ Report the scam to the Federal Trade Commission at 1-877-382-4357 or [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov); or to the Denver District Attorney Fraud Line.

**Denver DA’s Fraud Line: 720-913-9179**

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