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For information about fraud and scams or to schedule a presentation about fraud related issues and prevention contact:

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## Consumer Advisory

### The Grandparent Scam

*Some scam warnings bear repeating. This is an old scam, but it's still going around and because grandparents continue to pay.*

*"Grandma, help! I'm in Canada, and I've been in an accident and now I'm in jail. I need you to wire me money immediately so I can bond out. I'm scared, Grandma!"*

*"Jimmy is that you?"*

*"Yes, it's me, Jimmy. 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 preventative 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 overseas. Victims may also be contacted several times by the same crook that 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 lists the names of surviving family members and their relationship to the deceased.

#### Protect yourself:

- ❖ Ignore the "don't call my parents" request. Call the child's parents and verify. Better you call to check on your grandchild's safety than send money to a scammer. Or try calling your grandchild directly to verify the facts. Chances are, your grandchild is safe at home, or presently in the United States. If you don't have your grandchild's number or you 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 chance you can recover your funds if the crook has not yet 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

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