

The Patriot Ledger

Hingham woman loses \$1,000 to 'grandparent' scam

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The Patriot Ledger

Posted Sep 2, 2018 at 4:04 PM

Updated Sep 4, 2018 at 11:44 AM

HINGHAM — Police say a woman lost \$1,000 after a phone scammer posing as her grandson claimed he was in jail and needed the money for bail.

Police said the 85-year-old woman told officers she'd received several calls from someone who identified themselves using her grandson's first name and said they'd been arrested after fleeing the scene of a car crash. The caller asked the woman to purchase two \$500 Visa gift cards and said he would call her back.

A woman claiming to be the lawyer of the grandson came on the phone and said the grandson needed the money immediately because he was due to appear in court in three hours.

The Hingham woman purchased the gift cards at Walmart and then read the numbers on the cards to him when he called back.

The scammer then asked the woman to buy \$900 more in gift cards. She went to her bank to withdraw cash to buy the cards, but the teller told her that she was probably being scammed.

The woman called her credit card provider as well as Visa, but the cards had already been used.

This kind of ploy, known as the grandparent scam, has become popular among phone scammers in recent years and has been reported frequently to police on the South Shore. Police say many victims do not come forward out of embarrassment or fear of losing their independence.

In a typical scam, police say the scammer will often claim their voice sounds different because they were in an accident or have been crying. The scammer may not use a first name until the grandparent says it first during the conversation. They may also search online for the names of relatives. The scammers will also ask the grandparents not to tell anyone, including their parents, in order to keep family members from learning about the scam.



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