



DenverDA

Beth McCann, District Attorney – Second Judicial District
201 W. Colfax Avenue, Dept. 801, Denver, CO 80206



Phone: 720-913-9000 Beth McCann
Fax: 720-913-9035 Denver District Attorney



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Happy New Year! I am excited to be your newly elected Denver District Attorney. I have big plans for this office; one is enhancing our community outreach. It is through neighborhood collaboration that we will be better equipped to understand the issues within the community.

Another area of focus concerns crimes against older persons. Did you know that older citizens are the most vulnerable to scams? Of course in today's world, no one is 100% safe from identity theft, scams or fraud. Technology and the internet are making it easier for scammers to target just about anyone. Yet older citizens are more vulnerable to suffering a long-term impact from these crimes. Imagine being on a fixed income; there is little to no way to make up for lost income if you've been scammed out of hundreds and hundreds of dollars. The impact can be devastating. Recently the scam often referred to as the *Grandparent Scam* has escalated in Denver. (Read about how the scam works in this newsletter).

Proactively, our office sends out these monthly newsletters – please pass them along to everyone in your circle to stay informed about scams hitting the Denver area. Additionally, we offer free seminars which provide ways to spot and avoid scams, computer fraud and identity theft. Any community group or organization is welcome to schedule a presentation. And, if you believe you have been a victim of a scam, fraud or identity theft, call our Hotline, 720.913.9179 to report it. As I move forward as DA, I will find more ways to ensure Denver consumers are armed with the information and knowledge of how to spot and avoid scams that seem to be permeating our society.

I look forward to serving you and helping to make Denver a safer community.

"Grandma! I'm in jail in Mexico, I need bail money NOW"

With spring break around the corner, students are buying tickets to sandy beaches and beyond, getting ready to "*pardee*". While parents and grandparents will worry about their child's safety until safely home, scammers will use that fear and worry to their advantage when trying to get one over on you through the '*Grandparent Scam*'.

Here is how it works: the victim receives a frantic call from someone impersonating their child or grandchild who says they have been hurt, are in jail or have been robbed etc. The child urgently needs money to bail them out...before something else horrible happens.

In Denver last month, an extremely bright, well-educated 85 year-old man received a call from his grandson. While the voice on the other end of the line didn't particularly sound like his grandson, everything else made sense. The caller knew the victim and the grandson's name and that the grandson had recently been in France. (*Note to self: be judicious about how much information you share on Facebook). At this point, the victim's guard was down and he fell for the scam. He was instructed to go to Best Buy and purchase four- \$1000 gift cards and then call the 'grandson' back and provide the card numbers to him. Done. It was only the next day that our victim realized he had been scammed.

It is easy for all of us to think we would never fall for something like this. But remember, scamming is a scammers' job, and they are good at what they do. They know, that in the fear-filled heat of the moment, even the most savvy will fall for this scam. What self-

respecting grandparent wouldn't do ANYTHING to help their loved one?

Scammers usually request payment by iTunes gift cards, the Best Buy gift card was a new one for our office. Once you tell the scammer the code on the back the card, you are providing them access to the money on the card. The scammer can then use the code or sell it. Once the card is redeemed, the money is gone for good.

Here are some red flags & tips to help you spot and deal with this scam:

🚩 If **FEAR** is your first reaction to a call from out-of-the-blue saying you owe money (think IRS scam, failure to appear to Jury duty, grandparent scam) --it's probably a scam. Stay calm. Emergency scams rely on emotions to override sound thinking. Think: Does this make sense? Am I sure my grandson is out of the country now?

🚩 **Do not wire money.** Do not pay for anything with any type gift card, including iTunes, Amazon gift cards, or re-loadable cards. Scammers may even ask you to use PayPal to send money.

🚩 **Ask a personal question.** Don't use your grandchild's name, make the caller explain who they are. To confirm their identity, ask questions that only the grandchild/child would know. *What school did you go to or what is your middle name?* Your family might consider developing a secret code or password that can be used to verify a true emergency.

🚩 **Report** any and all scams or scam attempts to the [FTC](#) or the Better Business Bureau.

Spring Break Scams & Tips

1. [Vacation Rentals](#)
2. [Travel Tips](#)
3. [Protect yourself](#)
4. [Time Shares, Packages and Resorts](#)
5. [Paying Up Front](#)

There are many more vacation scams. So remember students, as you plan your spring break do your homework about where you are going, research and double check the offer to ensure you are an informed consumer.





THINK YOU'VE BEEN SCAMMED?

If you suspect you've been scammed or exploited, report it to our Fraud Hot Line.

720-913-9179

SCHEDULE A SPEAKER

Interested in learning more about scams happening in Denver? Do you want to know how to protect yourself from identity theft? Maro Casparian is available for speaking engagements to any group or organization. Contact her by email: amc@denverda.org or via phone: 720.913.9036.

