



For Immediate Release
**HINGHAM POLICE
DEPARTMENT**

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Woman Falls Victim to Arrested Relative Phone Scam

Hingham, MA – A 77 year old Hingham woman fell victim to a common phone scam known as the “Arrested Relative Scam”. She purchased \$5,000 worth of gift cards and gave the card numbers to the scammers.

On July 26, a 77 year old woman came to the police station to report the scam. She said she received a phone call from a man claiming to be from the “Miami Police Department” informing her that her son had been arrested for drunk driving after crashing his car. The caller warned that her “son” may sound different because he broke his nose in the crash. The “son” said he had driven home from a wedding after drinking too much and crashed. Another man then came on the line and claimed to be her “son’s” attorney. He told her in order for her “son” to be released from jail, she would need to provide them with \$5,000 worth of Home Depot gift cards.

The woman went to her bank and withdrew the cash. She then purchased \$5,000 worth of gift cards. The Home Depot cashier asked her if she was being scammed. The cashier explained a common scam where a “grandchild” is arrested and they need gift cards to be bailed. The woman said she was aware of such scams that involve “grandchildren” but continued to purchase the cards.

She brought the gift cards home and called the “Miami Police” back. She relayed all the gift cards numbers over the phone. They told her to now destroy the cards. She then became suspicious and called her son. She learned he was not in Florida and that she had been scammed.

An Officer called the phone number she called and a man answered saying “Miami Police Department”. The Officer asked for the “attorney” by the name he had used. A short time later a man picked up the phone. The Officer identified himself as a police officer from Massachusetts and explained that an elderly woman had been scammed out of a large amount of money. The man admitted the gift cards had already been used and he would not call the woman again. The man claimed he was in Vancouver, British Columbia. He said it was “unfortunate” that she lost her money but this is how he makes a living.

Although the phone number the scammer used does have a British Columbia area code, the scammers can easily alter the caller identification name and phone number to display anything. This scam, which we have been sharing for 15 years, is a variation of the common “Grandparent Scam” in which the scammers claim a “grandchild” was arrested and needs bail money.

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