



Oregon TITAN Fusion Center

Bulletin

Oregon Department of Justice, Criminal Justice Division



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(U//LES) SCAMMERS USING POLICE TO PERPETUATE FRAUD AGAINST ELDERLY VICTIMS

17 May 2017

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(U//FOUO) This bulletin addresses the All Crimes topic of the National Intelligence Priorities Framework and addresses Oregon TITAN Fusion Center Standing Information Needs contained in OTFC-AC 2.1

(U) Scope

(U) The Oregon Department of Justice/Criminal Division, Elder Abuse Unit is sharing information with law enforcement about lottery scams that are targeting senior citizens.

(U) Details

(U//LES) During the course of implementing a lottery scam, victims are contacted by telephone and informed that they have won a large amount of money. Many times the victims are warned that people will try and claim their prize; the victims are encouraged to not tell anyone about their winnings. In the two examples included in this bulletin, both suspect callers spoke with a distinct accent.

(U//LES) Law enforcement should be aware that if victims initially do not respond to the suspects' calls, the suspects will contact a local police department in the area, claim to be a concerned relative of a victim, and ask the police to conduct a welfare check. By applying this methodology, suspects are taking advantage of victims' trust in law enforcement.

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(U) Examples of Recent Incidents

(U//LES) On 21 March 2017, the Portland Police Bureau responded to a welfare check at the request of a person claiming to be the victim's son. The suspect wanted the police to assist him in getting the victim on the phone; the 97-year-old victim was reportedly not answering her phone. Further investigation later revealed that the suspect had previously obtained sufficient information to change the victim's phone number and, in the process, effectively isolated the victim from any friends or family who attempted to call.

(U//LES) During the welfare check, the suspect called the victim knowing the officer was present. The suspect claimed he was from the victim's bank and tried to obtain additional bank account information. The presence of a uniformed officer reportedly lulled the victim into a sense of security as she spoke with the caller. However, the officer sensed something was wrong with the call and took the phone from the victim to speak with the suspect. The suspect continued to claim he was from the victim's bank and became verbally aggressive with the officer.

(U//LES) The officer quickly determined that the caller was fraudulent. The suspect later made numerous calls to the local dispatch center and attempted to get the dispatchers to release information regarding the victim. Due to the officer's intervention, the attempted scam was unsuccessful; however, the same 97-year-old victim had previously lost almost \$100,000 in past lottery schemes.

(U//LES) On 3 May 2017, a suspect claiming to be the nephew of an elderly victim asked the Lincoln County Sheriff's Office to do a welfare check. A responding deputy called the "nephew" back for additional information. The suspect insisted that the deputy hand the phone over to the victim when the deputy first made contact. The deputy refused this request. Once the call was terminated, the deputy asked the elderly resident a few questions; the resident/victim had fallen for a previous lottery scam. On May 3rd, the suspect was calling to initiate an additional large payment. Also, due to prior conversations, the suspect had convinced the victim to disconnect his landline and buy \$1800.00 in cell phone minutes so that the suspect had sole telephone access to the victim.

(U) Recommendations from the Elder Abuse Unit

(U//LES) If the welfare check is initiated by a phone call from a concerned relative, it is recommended to verify the caller's identify. It is also suggested to ask numerous questions of the resident when responding to welfare check requests. In speaking with the elderly, questions about lottery winnings, financial windfalls, and trips to banking institutions and/or money transfers are crucial to the possible identification and disruption of a scam.

(U//LES) It is also important not to assume these scams are offshore lottery schemes. In both cases, the victims sent or wired money to banking facilities in the United States.

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(U//LES) The Elder Abuse Unit with the Oregon Department of Justice / Criminal Justice Division is assisting the aforementioned local agencies in their investigations. The same suspects obtained funds from victims in other states; therefore, the DOJ Elder Abuse Unit is establishing working relationships with the prosecutors in those states so that the cases can be prosecuted in the most appropriate forum.

(U//LES) The point-of-contact for this bulletin is Special Agent Megan Hewitt. She can be reached at 503-378-6347 or megan.hewitt@doj.state.or.us.

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