



Public Information Release

June 8, 2009

Captain James Bauman, Public Information Officer

On May 29th, an elderly Lower Lake woman reported being scammed out of \$30,000 by a man posing to be her grandson on the telephone. This is the third report of scams or attempted scams this year, in which elderly victims have been called by someone posing to be a grandson who alleges to have gotten into trouble in another country and asks for large amounts of money.

72 year old Marie Newsom reported getting a phone call on the morning of May 28th in which the male caller told her he was her grandson, Joshua Hazzard. The caller told Newsom that he and several of his friends had been arrested in Hong Kong, China, for soliciting prostitutes and they needed \$30,000 transferred to a Hong Kong bank to bail out of jail.

Immediately after getting the call, Newsom arranged for the transfer of funds to the Hong Kong bank. The same man called her back later in the day to see if she had transferred the funds and she told him she had. The following day, Newsom became concerned that she had been scammed and called her grandson's other grandmother in Las Vegas where Hazzard apparently resides. She then learned Hazzard was in Las Vegas and had not been to China at all.

An elderly Clearlake Oaks couple fell victim to a similar crime in February of this year when they got a call from a man posing as their grandson who told them he was in jail in Canada and needed \$3,000 to bail out. Another elderly man from Clearlake Oaks got a similar call in January of this year in which the "grandson" asked him to wire \$6,000 to Canada to get him out of trouble. Fortunately in that case, the would-be victim called his daughter and the mother of his grandson in Los Angeles before sending any money and learned his grandson was not in Canada.

The Sheriff's Department again reminds all members of the public that there isn't nearly as much advice on avoiding being the victim of such scams, as there are ways to be defrauded. However, aside from always protecting your personal information, members of the public are encouraged to always verify unsolicited transactions of any kind before acting on them.