

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Long lost relative scam “Hi there; guess who this is?”

Burnaby, January 8, 2008: The BC Crime Prevention Association wishes to remind the public, especially seniors, that some of the “tried and true” scams are still active because they are easy to use and they work!

Recently, an eighty year old woman living alone in a senior's home in Prince George, B.C. received a phone call from a telemarketer in Miami even though she had an unlisted number. They told her that she had won a lottery jackpot.

“Coincidentally”, the next day she received a call from a man claiming he "was in trouble, and really needed someone to talk to." He said he had "been in an accident, was at his lawyer's office, and needed \$ 3,000" to get him out of trouble.

Over the course of the conversation, the caller managed to manipulate the senior into divulging her grandson's name; then the caller pretended to be the grandson. The senior told the caller to contact other family members, which he refused to do. He said he really needed to talk to her, and he didn't want her to tell any other family members about the "accident."

“Luckily, in this case, the senior decided to contact her grandson and he advised her that he had NOT called her,” points out Valerie MacLean, Executive Director of the BC Crime Prevention Association. “Unfortunately, in many other cases, seniors realize too late that they have been scammed and wind up giving money to someone at the door purporting to be a “friend” of the family member who has sent them to collect the cash.”

This is known as the long-lost relative scam or nephew scam, just another one of the many scams intended to separate the recipients of these calls from their money.

Tips for seniors and their caregivers:

- Remember, NEVER to give personal or financial information over the telephone, in response to a telephone call from someone unknown to you.
- These fraudsters prey on the elderly, especially the hearing impaired and the infirm and they will immediately assume the identity of any family member's name suggested by the victim – DO NOT offer any family names to such callers.

- If you are in the habit of participating in lotteries and contests, answering surveys or subscribing to magazines, you have an increased risk of having your name and phone number added to a “suckers list”.
- Remove yourself from the telephone calling and mailing lists of members of the Canadian Marketing Association by completing the Do Not Call Service registration form at <https://cornerstonewebmedia.com/cma/submit.asp>
- Make a note of any name and/or phone number on Call Display features related to the fraudsters call so that you can relay this information to authorities
- If the caller persists in demanding secrecy, treat this as a red flag – he doesn’t want outsiders to expose the scam before he completes the fraud

The BCCPA encourages younger members of families to educate their elderly parents, especially those living alone, about the potential for this type of telephone scam.

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