

Every gotten a call that a “family member is in jail?”

If so, did you stop to think it was true, or an attempt to scam you?

Here is how this fraud scheme works!

You answer the phone and a voice that sounds vaguely familiar says something like this:

“Hi, Grandma. This is Jimmy, your grandson. I know I haven’t been in touch for a while, but I need your help. I’ve got a cold, so I don’t sound like I normally do. I’m in jail, and you are the only one who ever helped me. I need money for bail, and I’m desperate to get out of here. It’s all a mistake, I promise you, it’s all just a big mistake. I don’t have much time to talk, but I need \$3,000 for bail so I can get out of here and back home. I’m going to give the phone to a cop and he’ll answer all your questions.”

Then, another voice comes on says “Hi, I’m Sgt. Johnson. Jimmy got himself in a bit of a problem, but I’m sure it will work itself out okay. He needs \$3,000 for bail money to be released until he goes to court. We need you to go to the Wal-Mart nearest to you and get the prepaid Green Dot Money Pak for PayPal. Jimmy already has an account for PayPal, and the clerk will help you with the transaction. Once you do, you need to call me back at (this number) and give me the numbers the clerk gave you. Then Jimmy can have a friend who is here waiting for him access the account, post the bail money and Jimmy will be able to leave.”

It sounds legit, right?

Only, it isn’t.

And, it is impossible to recover your money for you.

If you get a call like this, please take the following steps before you do anything else:

1. Check with other family members to find out exactly if “Jimmy” is your grandchild
2. Check also to find out if any of your family members are really in jail
3. Know this – the police do not get involved with arranging bail
4. Bail money is NEVER paid over the phone
5. Push for details – ask EXACTLY which city/county police department made the arrest, and the EXACT address and telephone number of the police department, jail, or courthouse where “Jimmy” is being held.
6. And most important, ask “jimmy” a question that ONLY your real grandchild would know!

If in doubt, call the sheriff’s office and ask for a deputy to help you find out if, in fact, your family member is really in jail. It’s better for “Jimmy” to wait a bit longer than it is for you to lose your money.