



# S.C.R.A.M. GAZETTE

## Tis the Season for Ruse Entry Burglaries

This is the time of year that Criminals target their victims through a Ruse Entry Burglary Scams. The Offer to perform services, that you were not looking for, or say they were contracted by a family member to do work.

The Criminals will pretend to be legitimate worker(s) and approach senior citizen home owners at their residences with a seemingly legitimate ruse. Their **real purpose is to divert the homeowner** while their accomplices search for currency and jewelry.

- Some of the more frequently used ploys by the suspects are: indicating they are from

the local gas/electric company; posing as a water department employee to inspect the water pipes and/or to replace the water meter; a request to use the bathroom; a cable TV company employee; roofing/gutter repair and paving company contractor; city inspector(s), surveyor (s), and tree trimmer(s); or government personnel from a social service agency.

- Many of the impostor burglars now have bogus photo identification cards, legitimate looking work uniforms, and vehicles made to look like government or company vehicles. They may also communicate with hand-held radios or cell phones.

- Women and children may also accompany male suspects and participate in the diversion of the homeowner.

The suspects may offer a partial rebate by giving the victim a \$100 bill and a request for change. This allows the suspect (s) to determine where the victim keeps their money. The victim is distracted either inside the house by turning a light switch on and off, knocking on water pipes, etc.; or showing the victim damage outside of the home, determining property lines, etc. Once the victim is distracted, the unseen suspects enter the home and remove the money and jewelry. In some cases, the suspects have also removed safes from the home.

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MAY  
TOPIC

When: May 21, 2015  
Time: 10 am to 11 am  
Topic: Grand Parent Scam

## Telemarketing Scams which Target Senior Citizens

Perhaps the most common scheme is when scammers use fake telemarketing calls to prey on older people, who as a group make twice as many purchases over the phone than the national average.

While the image of the lonely senior citizen with nobody to talk to may have something to do with this, it is far more likely that older people are more familiar with shopping over the phone, and therefore might not be fully aware of the risk.

With no face-to-face interaction, and no paper trail, these scams are incredibly hard to trace. Also, once a successful deal has been made, the buyer's name is then shared with similar schemers looking for easy targets, sometimes defrauding the same person repeatedly.

### "The Pigeon Drop"

The con artist tells the individual that

he/she has found a large sum of money and is willing to split it if the person will make a "good faith" payment by withdrawing funds from his/her bank account. Often, a second con artist is involved, posing as a lawyer, banker, or some other trustworthy stranger.

### "The Fake Accident Ploy"

The con artist gets the victim to wire or send money on the pretext that the person's child or another relative is in the hospital and needs the money.

### "Charity Scams"

Money is solicited for fake charities. This often occurs after natural disasters.

## Seniors Bullied into Buying Medical Alert Devices (USA Today)

Elderly consumers across the country found themselves bullied and tricked into paying hundreds of dollars for medical alert devices they never ordered, according to federal regulators.

The seniors were in their 70s or older, often lived alone and had limited incomes but were scared into paying good money for something they didn't really want.

If you're a caregiver or a senior, it's a case worth noting because plenty of scams targeting the elderly use similar tactics, including high-pressure phone calls, confusing pitches that make the callers sound like they're connected to credible organizations and scripts designed to convince consumers a son or daughter ordered a product or took on a debt that's now the elderly consumer's responsibility.

Fear is often a huge part of the game plan whether it be scams involving medical alert devices, IRS impostor phone calls, fake debt collectors, magazine scams and others.

Sadly, some older consumers with dementia might not realize the real implications of reading their credit card or bank account information to someone pressuring them on the phone, according to regulators.

Telemarketers in this medical alert case would say things such as "Aren't you scared that you're going to fall and no one's going to be there to help you out?"

The scammers help themselves to hard-

earned money in the bank accounts of the elderly.

"You have to think, 'What would the thief say to actually get them to part with their money?'" said Melanie Duquesnel, president and CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving eastern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

In some cases involving medical alert devices, telemarketers would give the impression the device was already ordered by a relative and somehow "free" to the senior. Later, the demands for money would heat up.

The caller may have asked for only a small amount, so the senior didn't realize the cost was \$20-\$30 every month.

In some cases, Duquesnel said, the caller said the medical alert device was paid for, but the company needed a credit or debit card number for security reasons.

"They're lied to," Duquesnel said.

Many seniors who live alone want to remain independent, she said. They don't want to get into trouble for not paying something they might owe. Or they don't want to tell their children about a scam for fear of losing their independence.

A recent case involved Brooklyn-based Instant Response Systems, which is now prohibited from making threats and using intimidation tactics and must pay \$3.4 million in "unjust gains," according to an order by the

U.S. District Court Eastern District of New York Brooklyn Division.

"Instant Response Systems lied to older people to get them to pay for medical alert systems they didn't order and didn't want," said Jessica Rich, director of the Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Protection.

Consumers reportedly received letters out of the blue that stated, "As you agreed in our conversation, please send a check for \$1,196 in the enclosed stamped envelope."

Some letters demanded more money than that; others less. In general, the FTC said, the range of payments the company demanded was \$817 to \$1,602.

The letter would state that if the consumer paid the money, a \$242 "processing and programming fee" would be waived.

The letter noted that if the payment did not clear the bank, the consumer would be charged a \$75 fee.

The FTC filed a complaint against Instant Response Systems in March 2013. The FTC said the company shipped fake invoices and medical alert pendants to consumers without their consent and later subjected the consumers to verbal abuse.

The U.S. district court order prohibits Jason Abraham and his company, Instant Response Systems, from making false and misleading statements or using threats or calling consumers on the National Do Not Call registry.

## Join the Citizen's Police Academy

The Citizen Police Academy is a ten-week program held once a year and is designed to give the participants a working knowledge of the Niles Police Department. The program consists of a series of classes and discussions once a week, on a designated evening from 6:30 pm until 9:30 pm. Enrolment is limited. The class will provide an in depth view of the various aspects of law enforcement. This is a very educational and informative program that allows the citizens an opportunity to learn more about the issues that affect law enforcement in the Village of Niles. Classes start every fall.

### Who can Attend and Why?

When residents take a personal interest in their community and the protection of their neighborhoods,



they will enjoy a safer and closer relationship with their neighbors. Community Oriented Policing plays an important and vital role in overall reduction of crime in any community. The Niles Police Department has instituted the Citizens Police Academy in order to improve our community. It is our hope that all the graduates will become partners with us in identifying problems and solutions to those crime issues in our village. The Citizens Police Academy is open

to all Niles residents, business owners or those who are employed within the geographical borders of the Village of Niles. That are 21 years of age or older. Class size is limited. There is NO COST to anyone who enrolls in the academy.

Curriculum covered includes

- Department Overview & Tour
- Patrol Procedures & Traffic Stops
- Traffic & DUI Enforcement
- Firearms & Range Master
- Crime Scene Processing
- Volunteers In Policing
- School Resource Program
- Criminal Investigations
- Crime Free Housing and
- Patrol Ride-A-Long Program

Simply submit the application or go online to <http://goo.gl/d7ZCEJ>