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WICHITA, KAN. – The Consumer Protection Division of the District Attorney’s office received a report that scammers are attempting to manipulate grandparents into giving money based on fear their grandchildren were arrested.

Scammers called a local senior and said that her granddaughter was in a car crash that resulted in a pregnant woman being hospitalized. The senior believed she heard her granddaughter’s voice on the phone and believed it was a legitimate call. The call was taken over by a male who said the granddaughter had been arrested and a judge had imposed a gag order on the case. The scammer told the senior to withdraw \$20,000 from the bank to get her granddaughter out of jail. The scammer also said to tell the bank the money was for home repairs to avoid violating the court order. When the senior went to her bank, the teller suspected it was a scam and would not allow the transaction to go through. After the senior spoke to her family, she realized the granddaughter was not in jail and it was a scam. The senior reported that the scammers called from a number that was traced to an Illinois area code.

Scammers will often use court terms (like ‘gag order’) to give you the impression the call is legitimate. A judge will not issue a gag order on an arrest. The Consumer Protection Division reminds you that scammers will try to put pressure on you to make rash decisions based on fear. Remember to resist the pressure to act quickly because once you wire money, it is very difficult to recover. Call a trusted relative or friend to let them know what is going on and check to see if the call was legitimate. Never wire money or transfer money into cryptocurrency like Bitcoin based only on a telephone call. Remember, the government does not accept cryptocurrency or gift cards as a form of payment. Another red flag that you are experiencing a scam is when the caller tells you that you cannot say anything to anyone or should lie if asked why you are getting large sums of money from the bank. If you believe you are a victim of a scam, do not try to contact your scammer again, but instead report it to law enforcement as soon as possible.

For more information on the “Grandparent Scam” visit
<https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/the-grandparent-scam>

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