



Sept. 30, 2024 Media Release

**Sheriff's Detectives Catch Phone Scam Conspiracist in Act and Arrest for Attempting to Steal \$32,000 From Elderly Woman**

Grass Valley, CA – Qi Lin, 39, of San Francisco, CA, was arrested on Sept. 27 and remains incarcerated today at Wayne Brown Correctional Facility on a requested bail enhancement \$500,000.00, following his part in a phone scam conspiracy. He was arrested on several charges, including attempted grand theft (664PC/487(C)PC); obtaining money by false pretense (664PC/532(A)PC); conspiracy to commit crime 664PC/532(A)PC; and elder theft (664PC/368(D)(1)).

This scam unfolded on Sept. 26 when an unsuspecting elderly woman in Grass Valley received a “Microsoft Windows error” message on her computer with a frozen screen and phone number to call for assistance. She called the number as directed, but it was not Microsoft Windows—it was a scam. The victim granted remote access to her computer to allow the scammer to “fix” her computer; the scammer indicated her computer had been compromised and told her there were signs of criminal activity, associated with her computer and her bank transactions, and that she could be held liable.

Through the course of the conversation with the scammer, the victim was transferred to two other parties for assistance, a fictitious bank security officer and a fictitious federal agent. The scam escalated when the victim was convinced to remove \$32,000 from her bank to prevent further fake criminal activity on her account and to aid the investigation. Thankfully, the victim confided in a family member before handing over the money, and the family member urged her to call authorities.

On the morning of Sept. 27, before the money was scheduled to be handed over, the victim called the Nevada County Sheriff's Office and a detective immediately responded with fellow deputies in route. The detective waited inside the victim's home to intercept the scammer. The victim was on the phone with one of the original phone scammers when Qi Lin arrived to collect the \$32,000. He was arrested by the detective without incident on the aforementioned charges.

“Most people don't think they will fall victim to scams, but many of these scams are highly sophisticated and convincing, and they happen more often than people think,” said Sheriff Shannan Moon. “A similar Microsoft scam was carried out over the summer with

another victim out over \$12,000. It is our hope this latest scam attempt serves as an ongoing reminder of the seriousness of scams and the importance of checking in with your family and loved ones anytime something urgent or time-sensitive comes up involving money, and when in doubt, always call authorities.”

This scam involved several conspiracists to commit crime and remains under investigation. Phone scams and computer scams remain prevalent in Nevada County and nationwide.

The Sheriff’s Office would like to remind the community that government officials will never:

- Threaten someone with arrest or legal action in exchange for immediate payment.
- Promise to increase one’s benefits or resolve an issue in exchange for a fee or transfer of funds to a protected account.
- Ask for payment in the form of gift cards, prepaid debit cards, wire transfer, Internet currency, or by mailing cash.

Those who believe they have been victim to scam should call the Nevada County Regional Dispatch Center at (530) 265-7880 for further assistance.

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