



Kidnapping/ Medical Extortion Telephone Scams

Since late 2012 when this telephone scam started it is becoming increasingly more prevalent. Recently this crime has been targeting members of northern Manhattan's Hispanic community.

How does the crime take place?

A male Hispanic will randomly call cell phone numbers until he gets an answer. He will attempt to convince whoever answers the phone that a family member or loved one has become a victim of an accident or has been arrested. On a few occasions the scammer claims a relative of the victim was kidnapped and will be killed unless ransom is paid through a wire transfer through Western Union.

The scammer will attempt to convince the person they are speaking with that they will need to wire money to him in order to cover medical expenses or to bail their relative out of jail. The scammer does not know whom he is speaking to and relies on the victim to supply the necessary information to continue the scam, such as; names of relatives, bank account information and other personal information. The scammer will ask for/demand several hundred to several thousand dollars in ransom money.

Crime Prevention Tip:

Should you receive a call demanding that you wire money for a ransom, bail or medical expenses for a relative involved in a car accident you should:

- Ask the caller their name and who they represent
- Never supply personal information to the caller
- Ask the caller for a number where you can call them back
- Never send money to someone you don't know, especially if they initiated contact with you
- Hang up the phone
- Remove personal phone numbers or information from social-media profile pages
- Call 9-1-1 to report the incident