

Darien Resident, 67, Conned Out of \$21,000 in Telephone Scam

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A Darien man, 67, responding to a phone call purporting to be from a federal government employee informing him he was being awarded a grant, lost about \$21,000 to the scammer.

Darien police gave this account of the scam:

On March 28, the Rebel Lane resident received a call on his home telephone from a man identifying himself as "Andrew Lissel," who said he was with the federal government and was informing the resident that he'd been awarded that he was being awarded a joint "US/UK grant" for \$7900.

The man spoke with an Indian accent, and in later phone calls the victim was told he was speaking to a "Mark Cooper."

In order to transfer the money, the scammer said, the Darien man would need to pay fees in order to have the money transferred from the United Kingdom.

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The caller instructed the victim to buy iTunes gift cards and to provide the caller with the serial numbers in

order to have the “fees” covered. Between March 28 and Wednesday, April 5, the victim spent about \$21,000 on the gift cards and passed on the serial numbers over the phone.

And that was the last he saw of the money. By April 5, the man realized that something was wrong and called Darien police. Police have not identified any suspects.

Advice on Avoiding 'Grant' Scams

Darien police released this statement about avoiding scams:

The Darien Police Department again strongly cautions all residents to be extremely wary of any phone solicitation from anyone purporting to be a representative of any U.S. or foreign government, of anyone asking for any payment of “fees” via gift cards or through wire transfer requests of any type. If unsolicited requests or offers of this type are received via phone or via the Internet, they are, without a doubt, a scam operation.

The Federal Trade Commission also has advice about avoiding scams involving someone telling you [there's a government grant](#) just around the corner for you, especially if you own a small business.