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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

Man Stealing From Seniors via Tech Support Scam



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution, with the assistance of the Port St. Lucie Police Department, arrested a man for stealing thousands of dollars from more than a dozen senior victims in a tech-support scam. Maninder Singh Bawa targeted victims, all above the age of 60, by sending pop-up computer notifications claiming the victims' devices were locked and then provided a number to call to have the devices unlocked. Over the phone, Bawa tricked each victim into sending thousands of dollars in fees as payment for unlocking the devices.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "These victims, all seniors, panicked after finding their computers locked, and reached out to who they thought would provide a helping hand. Instead, they were duped by a con man who squeezed them for ludicrous amounts of money. My Statewide Prosecutors will now make sure this defendant faces justice."

Port St. Lucie Polie Department Chief John Bolduc said, "The Port St. Lucie Police Department is dedicated to the relentless pursuit against all individuals that prey on and take advantage of our elderly senior citizens. We are proud of the hard work of our Economic Crimes Detectives and value our partnership with Attorney General Ashley Moody's Office of Statewide Prosecution to ensure all individuals that participate in the systematic scheme to defraud our elderly residents are held accountable."

According to the investigation, the victims called the number listed in the pop-up notification and reached Computer Solutions LLC, a fraudulent company set up by Bawa. Once making contact, Bawa pretended to help the victims unlock the device and offer protection from future issues. Approximately a month later, Bawa contacted the victims again to extort thousands of dollars to be paid as debt for the computer protection. All victims sent a check that Bawa then cashed,

keeping some of the money and sending a portion overseas.

Bawa is charged with money laundering and organized scheme to defraud, both third-degree felonies.

Assistant Statewide Prosecutor Kaley Auston-Aronson will prosecute this case.