

SAMPLE: a made-up example. The people, phone numbers and reference numbers are invented.



Family Security Playbook

Free help after a scam or a hack · familysecurityplaybook.com

What happened: my record

Margaret (sample) · Written Oct 18, 2026, 8:02 PM

Written down soon after it happened. Stress makes anyone's memory less reliable, and details fade or get mixed up within hours. That's why professionals write an after-action report straight away. This is mine.

What happened	I sent money or gift cards
When it started	Oct 14, 2026, 10:12 AM
How they reached me	Phone call
Who they said they were	My grandson Tyler, then "Mr. Daniels, his public defender"
Phone numbers, emails, websites they used	Called from 602-555-0187 and 480-555-0142. The "lawyer" said to call him back at 480-555-0142.
What I gave them	Gift card numbers and PINs

In my own words

A man called crying. He sounded exactly like my grandson Tyler. He said he'd been in a car accident, the police had arrested him, and he needed bail. He begged me not to tell his mom. Then a "lawyer" took the phone and said the court only takes gift cards, that I had to stay on the phone, and that I couldn't tell the store clerk what they were for. I drove to Target with him still on the line and bought Apple and Target gift cards, then read him the numbers off the back. When he called back wanting \$3,000 more for hospital bills, I got scared, hung up and called Tyler on his own number. He was fine, at work. It wasn't him. I've since learned scammers can copy a voice from videos posted online.

Step by step

When	What happened
Oct 14, 2026, 10:12 AM	Call from 602-555-0187. Sounded like Tyler, crying: car accident, arrested, needs bail. "Please don't tell Mom."
Oct 14, 2026, 10:18 AM	"Mr. Daniels, public defender" took the phone. Said bail is \$2,000, the court only accepts gift cards, and I must stay on the line and not tell anyone.
Oct 14, 2026, 10:40 AM	Drove to Target with him still on the phone. He told me to say the cards were birthday gifts if anyone asked.
Oct 14, 2026, 10:55 AM	Bought four \$250 Apple gift cards and four \$250 Target gift cards (\$2,000) on my debit card.
Oct 14, 2026, 11:05 AM	Read the card numbers and PINs to him from the car. He said Tyler would be released by 2 p.m.
Oct 14, 2026, 11:30 AM	He called back from 480-555-0142: Tyler was "hurt" and needed \$3,000 more for hospital bills. I hung up.
Oct 14, 2026, 11:35 AM	Called Tyler on the number in my phone. He's fine, at work, and was never arrested. Realized it was a scam.
Oct 14, 2026, 11:50 AM	Called Apple about the Apple gift cards, then Target Guest Services about the Target cards.
Oct 14, 2026, 12:30 PM	Reported it at ReportFraud.ftc.gov .
Oct 14, 2026, 1:15 PM	Called the police non-emergency line and made a report.
Oct 14, 2026, 2:00 PM	Called the National Elder Fraud Hotline, 833-372-8311. They helped me with what to do next.

Money sent

Date	Amount	How	Sent to	Card or account (last 4)	Notes
2026-10-14	\$1000	Gift cards	Read to the caller over the phone	4417	Four \$250 Apple gift cards, bought at Target. Cards and receipt kept.
2026-10-14	\$1000	Gift cards	Read to the caller over the phone	4417	Four \$250 Target gift cards. Cards and receipt kept.

Who I've contacted

When	Who	Person	Reference number	What they said
Oct 14, 2026, 11:50 AM	Gift card company	Apple support (Dana)	SAMPLE-AP-20417	Reported the four Apple cards as scam. They'll check if any balance is left and email in 5 to 7 days.
Oct 14, 2026, 12:05 PM	Gift card company	Target Guest Services (Luis)	SAMPLE-TG-88213	Froze what was left on the Target cards. Bring the cards and receipt to the store.
Oct 14, 2026, 12:30 PM	FTC (ReportFraud.ftc.gov)		SAMPLE-FTC-1234567	Report filed online.
Oct 14, 2026, 1:15 PM	Police	Officer on the non-emergency line	SAMPLE-PD-26-104455	Report taken. Gave me the report number for the bank.
Oct 14, 2026, 2:00 PM	Elder Fraud Hotline or AARP	Hotline case manager		Talked through next steps and how to spot a follow-up "recovery" call.

When	Who	Person	Reference number	What they said
Oct 14, 2026, 2:30 PM	My bank or credit union	Fraud department	SAMPLE-BK-5521	Told them about the debit card purchases. Card is fine; alerts turned on.

Still to do

Take the gift cards and receipts to Target Guest Services. Watch for calls offering to "get my money back": that's another scam. Agree a family code word with Tyler and the kids for emergencies. Tell my sister, so she knows about this scam too.

Keep the texts, emails, receipts and gift cards themselves, too. Bring this record and those to your bank and the police.

Made with the free record sheet from **Family Security Playbook** at familysecurityplaybook.com/help-now. Free first-hour steps for scams and hacks are there too. Be ready next time: a printed security playbook built around your family, at familysecurityplaybook.com.