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STATE ATTORNEY



ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charging of Young Money Launderer Exposes Alleged “Grandparents Scam” Links

Miami (April 15, 2021) - Miami-Dade State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle and Aventura Police Chief Bryan Pegues announce the charging of Alvaro Esteban Jaramillo Fajardo who allegedly acted as a Miami-Dade County money laundering agent for individuals perpetrating what is known as “the Grandparents Scam”.

“When a twenty-two-year-old like Alvaro Esteban Jaramillo Fajardo revels in helping to allegedly steal the savings of caring grandparents and the elderly, there is something truly wrong. Sadly, some people seem to believe that it’s always easier and more sophisticated to take someone else’s money rather than work for it oneself,” said State Attorney Katherine Fernandez Rundle. “The grandparent scammers and those ensuring that the scam works all deserve to hear the sound of a jail door closing behind them. Assisting the Aventura Police Department in this operation were the Sunny Isles Police Department, North Miami Police Department, North Miami Beach Police Department, Hollywood Police Department and Ft. Lauderdale Police Department, and all deserve our thanks for their hard work in helping to disrupt the activities of these scammers.”

In the “Grandparents Scam”, a phone call is received (often in the middle of the night) with a scammer posing as a grandchild or a relative. The “supposed grandchild or relative” claims to be out of town and has a dire emergency, usually relating to an arrest. Occasionally, the call comes from someone claiming to represent the “supposed grandchild or relative” (such as a lawyer or bail bondsman). Usually, the “supposed grandchild” or the “relative” explains he/she is in trouble and needs their grandparent to immediately wire them funds that will be used for bail money, lawyer’s fees, hospital bills, or other fictitious expenses. Specific instructions are given as to what bank account and account number the money should be sent to. The “supposed grandchild” then urges the grandparent not to tell anyone, such as a parent, because they do not want them to find out about the trouble the “supposed grandchild” has gotten into. Sometimes, a victim could receive further phone calls for additional funds due to “negative developments” in the “supposed grandchild’s” case.

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The eight (8) victims in the present set of charges, ranging in ages from 71 to 88 years of age, allegedly suffered financial losses of over \$480,000 as a result of this “Grandparents Scam”. In this specific set of cases, Alvaro Esteban Jaramillo Fajardo allegedly operated as the facilitator of the cash withdrawals from his associates’ bank accounts which effectively laundered the stolen money. Jaramillo allegedly paid the account holders approximately \$2,000.00 for each incident involving their participation.

It is alleged that Jaramillo often solicited these individuals through social media, additionally offering a finder’s fee for obtaining new usable bank accounts to receive the illicit funds and bragging that none of the account holders had gotten into any trouble due to these activities.

Alvaro Esteban Jaramillo Fajardo is being charged with:

- 3 counts - Theft from Persons 65 Years of Age or Older - 1st degree felony
- 4 counts - Theft from Persons 65 Years of Age or Older - 2nd degree felony
- 1 count - Theft from Persons 65 Years of Age or Older - 3rd degree felony
- 1 count - Organized Scheme to Defraud - 1st degree felony
- 1 count - Conspiracy to Commit Organized Scheme to Defraud - 2nd degree felony
- 1 count - Money Laundering - 1st degree felony

"I want to thank our Aventura Police Detective Bureau and the Miami Dade State Attorney's Office for their exceptional work," said Aventura Police Chief Bryan Pegues. "It is especially tragic for law enforcement professionals to see seniors in our community victimized out of their life savings by individuals without any conscience. I am so proud of our dedicated investigators who spent almost 6 months dismantling this network of criminals who caused so much anguish to so many victims."

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