



## Invisible Victims.....Invisible Crimes

### Assisting Older Victims of Transnational Technology Assisted Frauds/Scams

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<https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/stop-elder-fraud/link-us>

An advertisement for the National Elder Fraud Hotline. The left side features a dark blue background with white text. The right side shows a close-up, profile view of an elderly man with glasses talking on a mobile phone. The entire graphic is framed by a yellow border.

If you or someone you know  
60+ has been a victim of  
financial fraud, call the  
**NATIONAL ELDER  
FRAUD HOTLINE**

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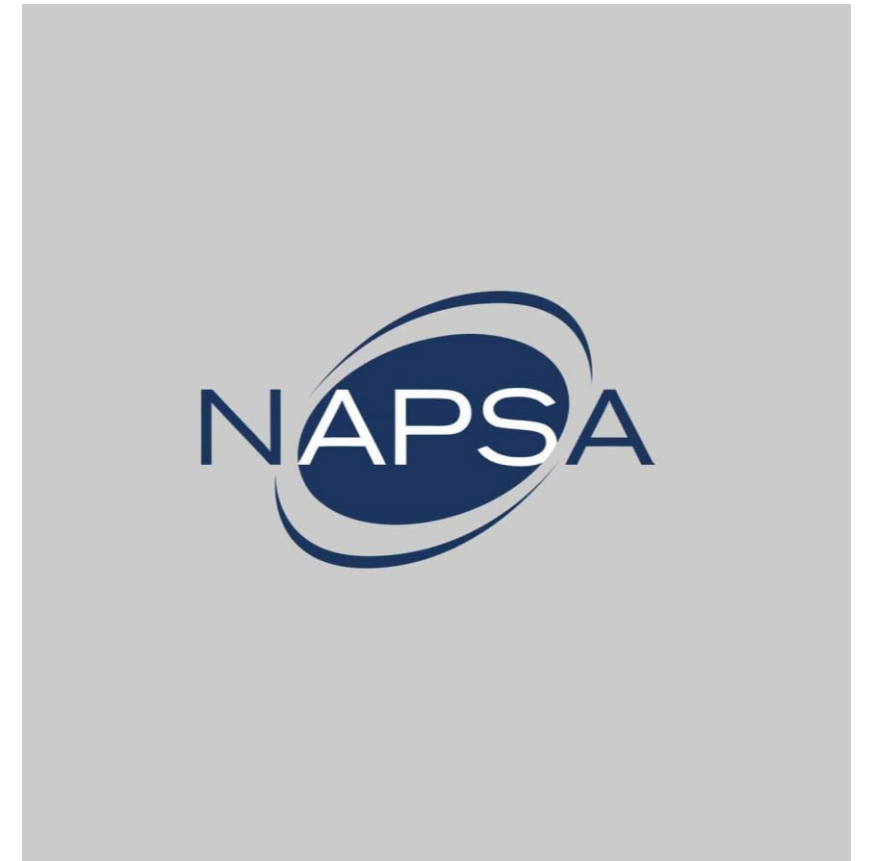
**1-833-FRAUD-11**  
**1-833-372-8311**

# Additional Guidance/Sharing for Professionals- This Month Interview with IC3.gov Analyst

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Join us on the monthly NAPSA Scam Forum, 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of most months for professionals working with older/adults disabilities victims of international technology facilitated frauds/scams.

- Share challenging situations, advice and suggestions from other direct services/supervisors, share successes, new resources, etc.
- To join Scam Advice and receive occasional email updates forward this email to [info@NAPSA-NOW.ORG](mailto:info@NAPSA-NOW.ORG) with a note requesting, "Add me to the Scam Advice Listserv". You don't need to be a NAPSA member.
- Past taped forums and resource lists
  - <https://www.napsa-now.org/blog/>





# We Are All Susceptible to Fraud Manipulations

Fraud criminals will match the “pitch” to manipulate targeted victims’ individual vulnerabilities. These are their ‘weapons of fraud’.

- “Our research dispels the myth that only the vulnerable, elderly or naïve are taken in by scammers. Anyone can be taken in because scams are customized to fit the profile of the people being targeted. There really is a scam for everyone.
- If someone said, “I would not fall prey to that scam”, he or she may be right. That scam may not be tailored in an effective manner for that person. He or she just got lucky this time.”
  - Office Fair Trading study on the Impact of Mass Marketing Scams (2006) UK
- Bernie Madoff victims, charity frauds, certain health care fraud examples.
- Avoid victim blaming/shaming. Promote victim’s self – esteem, resiliency.
  - Victim blaming in words we use- Money taken was not ‘losses’- it was stolen, victims were not conned, didn’t fall for it, not duped- they were manipulated, groomed.
  - It is also a major reason so many victims do not report these crimes to families and police.
- It is the criminal that is at fault.
  - Perps are not con artists, con-men, scammers - are fraud criminals.

# Common Types of Transnational Frauds That Target Older Adults

Lottery, grants and  
Sweepstakes Fraud

Romance Imposter  
Fraud, including  
celebrities

Tech Support/Phantom  
Hacker

Government and Other  
Imposter Fraud

Grandparent/Family  
Emergency Fraud

Crypto Currency Fraud

- Payment method and investment
- Financial Grooming/Crypto Investment or “Pig Butchering”

Use as Money  
Mule/Money Mover

Evolving due to AI/Chat  
GBT Stealing  
more/faster

# How Are Victims of Transnational Frauds Found? Report These Crimes To These Federal Agencies

( in addition to police, APS)

- Many are not aware of these government agencies for additional reporting
- Also consider local Adult Protective Services
  - <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/adult-protective-services>
  - Who are mandated reporters to APS in CA  
[http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes\\_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=WIC&ionNum=15630](http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?lawCode=WIC&ionNum=15630)
- Keep all documentation, correspondence and receipts
  - Download or print a copy- can't retrieve it
- Think of them as a library of complaints that sworn police all over US can access



[www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov)

**Internet Crime Complaint  
Center (FBI)**

[www.Report  
Fraud.ftc.gov](http://www.ReportFraud.ftc.gov)

**Federal Trade  
Commission**



# Red Flag Warnings of Fraud

## Watch For These As You Review Victim Stories---

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- An unexpected contact by a stranger or govt/business
- A request/demand for money or personal information
- Require urgency and secrecy
- A threat or enticing offer, (attention/flattery/grooming)
- Demand for a particular type of immediate payment
- Request or demand for access to bank account





# Payment Methods Used by Fraud Criminals- How They Collect Their Money

Wiring Money



Reloadable debit/gift card



Peer to Peer (P2P)



Cash



Fake Checks/Overpayment



Purchasing/Reshipping equipment



Crypto-ATM's/QR Codes



Money Mules



## Find a Crypto- ATM Near You <https://coinatmradar.com/>

20 machine locations within 4.6 miles of the Court House at 800 South Victoria St., Ventura

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- CA Digital Financial Assets Law (DFAL)

For more information

- <https://dfpi.ca.gov/crypto/>
- <https://www.cooley.com/news/insight/2023/2023-10-19-california-enacts-two-new-virtual-currency-laws>
- Crypto-scam tracker tool- <https://dfpi.ca.gov/crypto-scams/>



# Romance Imposter Predator Tactics

## Targeting and Recruitment-

- Find a lonely person
- Information gathering, mirroring of experiences, dreams
- Perpetrators use chat rooms, social media, dating sites to choose potential victims
- Create Ideal persona to 'present'

Cyber seduction- make them feel wanted

Grooming/In control of the relationship/ 'love bombing'

Isolation from 'real connections, events and people'

May pose as celebrity

Execution of the financial requests, test and follow up requests for money/involvement 3<sup>rd</sup> party for money dealings

Need to sacrifice with financial support so we can be together.  
Repeat- until victim broke and in debt

Engage the victim in crime- as money mule/mover

- Financial Transactions
- Traveling- use as money or drug mule

Coercion/Threats/Sextortion  
Victim may steal from family/work, borrowing money

Once identified – may 'ghost' the victim- but may reappear as new potential suitor or later apologizes to 're-hook' victim, or show real self- in love really



# Phantom Hacker Scam



## Tech Support Imposter

- Pretends to be technical support
- Directs you to install software on your computer to allow them remote access
- Can observe overall finances



## Financial Institution Imposter

- States your computer and financial accounts have been hacked
- Directs you to move your money to a US Government entity such as the Federal Reserve, for “safety”



## US Government Imposter

- Poses as US government employee
- May provide official-looking letterhead appear legitimate

## • FBI Alert- New Trend

- Jan/June 2023 there were 19,000 complaints related to tech support scams were submitted to IC3

- Estimated victim losses of over \$542 million.

- Almost 50% of the victims reported to IC3 were over 60 years-old, comprising 66% of the total losses.

- Faster theft of funds than ‘traditional frauds’

- FBI Guidance: [https://www.ic3.gov/Media/Y2023/PS\\_A230929](https://www.ic3.gov/Media/Y2023/PS_A230929)

# The Newest Trend? ‘Sha Zhu Pan’ Crypto Investment Frauds

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Financial grooming/crypto-investment/relationship frauds or “Pig butchering” occurs when a fraud criminal builds up trust with their victims before eventually pressuring them to deposit more and more of their financial assets into bogus crypto digital wallets/exchanges or websites controlled by the criminal (enterprise), until they have taken all of financial assets/savings.

- US reported incidence in 2023 \$3.5 billion reported to FBI (over 40,000 victims)
- The name **Sha Zhu Pan/Pig Butchering** refers to how the criminals feed their victims with promises of romance and/or riches before cutting them off and taking all their money, leaving them in debt, and stolen life savings.
  - Faster theft of money than ‘traditional investment or romance frauds’
- Originated in China, now centered in SE Asia/ interlinked with labor trafficking
  - **Now in Philippines** <https://www.dailyexpress.com.my/news/230676/hundreds-rescued-from-philippines-scam-centre/>
  - <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2023-08-17/the-grim-reality-of-pig-butchering-phone-scams>
- Discussion over ‘appropriate term’- most moving to financial grooming.
- FBI Guidance on reporting to IC3.gov <https://www.ic3.gov/Media/Y2023/PSA230824>

# “Pig Butchering”

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/videos/2023-08-17/the-grim-reality-of-pig-butchering-phone-scams>



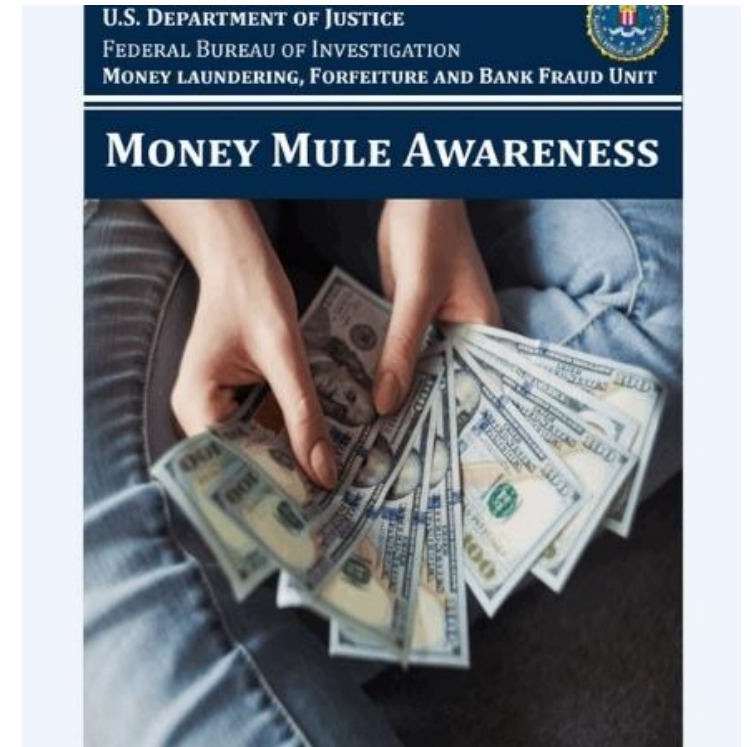
# Guidance in Helping A Crypto Investment Victim Determine If It's Fraud

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- US Secret Service Digital Assets Hub (Urge reporting to Secret Service in addition to [ic3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov))
  - <https://www.secretservice.gov/newsroom/releases/2022/02/us-secret-service-launches-cryptocurrency-awareness-hub>
- FBI Guidance For Crypto Currency Scam Victims
  - <https://www.ic3.gov/Media/Y2023/PSA230824>
- US Commodities, Futures, Trading Commission
  - <https://www.cftc.gov/LearnAndProtect/digitalassetfrauds>
  - <https://www.cftc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-10/DigitalAssetRedFlags.pdf>
- CA Dept Financial Protection and Innovation- file complaint and scam tracker tool. <https://dfpi.ca.gov/crypto-scams/>
- FTC What to Know About Crypto Currency and Scams
  - <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/what-know-about-cryptocurrency-and-scams>
- AARP The Perfect Scam Podcast- with guest Erin West- describing her recovery methods and what victims should do.
  - <https://www.aarp.org/podcasts/the-perfect-scam/info-2023/crypto-prosecutor-erin-west.html>
- Camarillo man arrested in \$722 million crypto-investment fraud scheme (2019)  
<https://www.vcstar.com/story/news/local/communities/camarillo/2019/12/10/camarillo-man-arrested-722-million-cryptocurrency-fraud-scheme/4390506002/>

# Victims Are Often Recruited To Be Money Mules/Movers

- A money mule is recruited and groomed by scam predators to serve as an intermediary to accept and further transfer stolen funds, property or drugs
  - Mules may or may not be aware they are being used
    - Witting or unwitting
  - Their function is to transfer fraudulently gained money to insulate fraudsters, making it difficult to identify the criminal
  - They are prosecuted in US both locally and federally
  - It is money laundering
  - [www.bakerfraudreport.com](http://www.bakerfraudreport.com) for weekly updates





# Free Informational Guides Useful to Customers

## Download or Bulk Order - Consumer Financial Protection Bureau



### \*\*\* [Planning for Diminished Capacity and Illness Guide](https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_planning-for-diminished-capacity-and-illness_consumer-advisory-bulletin.pdf)

[https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb\\_planning-for-diminished-capacity-and-illness\\_consumer-advisory-bulletin.pdf](https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_planning-for-diminished-capacity-and-illness_consumer-advisory-bulletin.pdf)



### [Considering a Financial Caregiver: Know Your Options](https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_considering-a-financial-caregiver-know-your-options_guide_2021-05.pdf)

[https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb\\_considering-a-financial-caregiver-know-your-options\\_guide\\_2021-05.pdf](https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_considering-a-financial-caregiver-know-your-options_guide_2021-05.pdf)



### \*\* [Choosing a Trusted Contact Person Can Help You Protect Your Money](https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb_trusted-contacts-consumers_2021-11.pdf)

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### [Guide to Managing Someone Else's Money:](https://www.consumerfinance.gov/consumer-tools/managing-someone-elses-money/)

[Power of Attorney](#)

[Govt. fiduciary](#)

[Trustee](#)

[Court appointed guardian](#)

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# Trends/Future Technology? Are We Prepared?

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- Money mules/movers
- Sextortion/extortion/ransom
- Phantom Hacking by govt. or bank security impersonators
  - Banks distinguish between a 'scam' and a 'fraud'- victims not reimbursed- since 'authorized' the transaction even if bank or other impersonator
- Use of couriers to pick up money from victims at home
- Financial Grooming - Crypto-investment fraud "pig butchering"
  - CA DFAL Act regulating crypto-currencies (Digital Financial Assets Law) requires CA license by crypto-firms
    - <https://cryptocurrency.law/the-cryptocurrency-legislation-landscape-in-california-in-2024/>
- AI Deep fake images (face swaps) and deep fake voice cloning
  - Celebrity imposters, family emergency/grandparent fraud, romance, lottery
    - Chat GPT future? <https://chat.openai.com/auth/login>
    - <https://www.howtogeek.com/879206/how-to-tell-chatgpt-scams-apart-from-the-real-thing/>
  - Senate Subcommittee on Aging- AI – Emerging Threat re Scams- brochure
    - <https://www.aging.senate.gov/press-releases/casey-holds-hearing-on-role-of-artificial-intelligence-in-frauds-and-scams>

# Conservatorship?

## What Can We Do Until or Instead of It?

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- Most victims may not meet current legal criteria for Guardianship. There isn't a lot of guidance on specifics related to these crimes.
  - Are doctors trained on these frauds to understand the seriousness?
  - How do we help people prepare for future financial vulnerability?
    - Recent study in Australia found those with disabilities approached twice as many times in online romance frauds.
    - [www.bakerfraudreport.com](http://www.bakerfraudreport.com)
- How do we protect these older/dependent adult victims long term from remote fraud criminals?
  - How can we stop them from giving away their money and personal identification information, access to computers?
  - How can we intervene from fraud criminals manipulating and grooming them to participate in a fraud as a money mule/mover?
  - How can we assist caretakers/families during this time?
    - Many need guidance on options involving conservatorship- may not have funds.
    - Families need assistance in using supported decision making, least restrictive (creative options) first.

# Connecting With Others Online SAFELY

Online classes and meeting groups may help & 'friendship' lines or services that 'check in'

- **Cyberseniors:** Connecting Generations <https://cyberseniors.org/>
  - <https://www.youtube.com/user/cyberseniorscorner/videos>
  - (past presentations on learning digital skills)
  - Provides free 1 on 1 appointment to learn how to use 'technology'
- **GetSetUp** <https://www.getsetup.io> Offers over 3,000 free classes
- Deep Cover Learn to spot frauds online
  - <https://www.buffalo.edu/ubnow/stories/2024/01/deepcover.html>
- Covia.org <https://covia.org/services/well-connected/>
- University Without Walls <https://www.dorotusa.org/our-programs/at-home/university-without-walls>
- Foundation For Art and Healing- the Unlonely Project <https://artandhealing.org/aging/>
- Osher Lifelong Learning Institute- through local universities ( CA State, Channel Islands)
- Local programs perhaps through senior centers, community colleges, libraries/local, state warmlines
- **Virtual Memory Cafes for those with dementia to connect with each other-**  
<https://www.dementiamentors.org>
- **Victims with intellectual disabilities?**
  - <https://specialbridge.com> and <https://myspecialmatch.com>



# FINRA Rule Regarding Trusted Contact Person (TCP) For Investment Accounts/Advisors- Urge For All Financial Accounts

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- FINRA Rule [4512\(a\)\(1\)\(F\)](#) (Customer Account Information)
  - Rule requires member firms, for each of their non-institutional customer accounts, to make a reasonable effort to obtain the name and contact information for a trusted contact person (TCP) age 18 or older.
    - Doesn't give access to what's in the accounts. (is emergency contact)
- FINRA Rule 4512
  - Describes the circumstances in which member firms and their associated persons are authorized to contact the TCP and disclose information about the customer account.
    - <https://www.finra.org/rules-guidance/guidance/reports/2023-finras-examination-and-risk-monitoring-program/trusted-contact-persons>
    - <https://www.finra.org/investors/investing/investment-accounts/brokerage-accounts#trusted-contacts>
    - <https://www.finra.org/sites/default/files/2021-09/trusted-contact-infographic.pdf>

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### Planning for Diminished Capacity and Illness Guide

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### Considering a Financial Caregiver: Know Your Options

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### \*\*Choosing a Trusted Contact Person Can Help You Protect Your Money

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# Bank Issues and Challenges

- Bill introduced last year in CA Legislature by Senator Dodd, SB 278 and will probably be re-introduced with changes that some believe will allow banks to be sued in more situations.
  - Deals with the 'scam' victim authorized the transaction so bank won't reimburse vs. 'fraud' - will reimburse. Amend Section 15610.30 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to elder abuse.
  - Banks can hold suspicious transactions for up to 15 days under WIC Code 15630.2 (j)(1).
- Recent Consumer Reports article on Banking Apps [https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/press\\_release/consumer-reports-evaluates-banking-apps-and-makes-recommendations-for-how-banks-can-improve-mobile-apps-to-better-serve-consumers/](https://advocacy.consumerreports.org/press_release/consumer-reports-evaluates-banking-apps-and-makes-recommendations-for-how-banks-can-improve-mobile-apps-to-better-serve-consumers/)
- New FTC Series/Great Handouts to Share With Clients 'Anatomy of An Imposter Scam'
  - <https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2024/03/will-your-bank-or-investment-fund-stop-transfer-scammer-probably-not>
- "Banks Never Ask That Campaign", American Banker's Association <https://www.banksneveraskthat.com/>
- \*Where can a transnational fraud victim go to complain about a bank's treatment of them and seek recourse?

# Additional Help And Support For Transnational Fraud Victims

- **National Elder Fraud Hotline at 1-833-372-8311**

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- FINRA's Senior Investment Helpline 1-844-574-3577
  - FINRA Broker Check to verify person/firm is registered to sell securities, offer investment advice or both <https://brokercheck.finra.org/>
- AARP Fraud Watch Network 1-877-908-3360 <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/helpline.html>
  - Fraud support specialists provide information on what to do if defrauded/concern someone is contacting you to defraud you. Has ReST support program for victims and caretakers/family members (free, several times week)
  - Three Ways to Help A Loved One Affected By A Scam
    - <https://www.aarp.org/money/scams-fraud/info-2023/supporting-loved-ones.html>
- Federal Trade Commission- information available in various languages
  - <https://consumer.ftc.gov/consumer-alerts/2024/01/ncpw-speak-against-scams-your-language>
- Identity Theft Resource Center- [www.idtheftcenter.org](http://www.idtheftcenter.org) 1-888-400-5530
  - Identity Theft and the Deceased- guide and other useful tips/phone/text help (freezing credit)
  - Request copy of credit reports (mail or online) <https://www.annualcreditreport.com/manualRequestForm.action>
- Cybercrime Support Network (and for blogs on role of AI)
  - Action plans, romance imposter fraud 10 week support group, cyber safety tips to lock down your technology [www.fightcybercrime.org](http://www.fightcybercrime.org) and <https://fightcybercrime.org/programs/peer-support/>
  - Guide for Adult Children:
    - <https://fightcybercrime.org/blog/a-guide-for-adult-children-protecting-aging-parents-from-elder-financial-fraud/>
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline Call or text 988



# Thank You

Questions?

