



Fraud Awareness Webinar Transcript

Following is the transcript to the Oswego Wealth Advisor client webinar held Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 12:00pm PST.

The live session was held over Zoom and hosted by Wealth Manager Craig Childress. Special guest Ellen Klem, Director of Consumer Outreach and Education at the Oregon Department of Justice, walked through ways to avoid falling victim by identifying and stopping fraud before it starts.

Resources highlighted in this transcript:

- [Six Signs It's A Scam](#)
- [Do Not Click](#)
- [Consumer Hotline](#)
- [Important Tips for Shutting Down Scams](#)
- [Common Scams](#)
- [When Scammers Call](#)

Craig Childress

Let's go ahead and get started. I know we're gonna have people still coming in. Terri's our technician today, so she'll keep us moving. I just want to thank everybody for coming today. I also want to welcome all of Scott's clients today - it's exciting to have you guys joining us. I've been looking forward to that.

For those of you that don't know me, I'm Craig Childress. I'm the owner of Oswego Wealth Advisors. This is part of our ongoing educational efforts to host these webinars throughout the year to give our clients more information to help them feel more financially secure in all the aspects of their lives.

Joining us are some of Scott's clients from his firm today as well. We've got Chris Pawlowski on here - he's one of the advisors in Scott's office. I'm sure those of you who know Scott know him, but I want to introduce Chris to our clients as well. Glad to have everybody on the call.



So, just a quick blurb about that. Abrahamson Wealth Advisors, Wellstone Wealth Management and Oswego Wealth Advisors -- these three firms have recently joined forces to better serve our clients, improve our compliance and our continuity planning. Feel free to ask your advisor about what's going on with that because we're very excited about it. But I'm not going to spend any more time on it today.

In recent months, we've heard from some of our clients that have been getting strange phone calls -- sometimes from a seemingly legitimate source is such a social security in the IRS -- telling them that there's an issue with their credit or somebody's trying to steal their information in an attempt to try to get them to give them personal information. So, we thought it'd be a great time to talk about fraud awareness -- especially with the heightened level of scamming and fraud and going on with Covid. I think that Ellen's going to bring Covid into this conversation quite a bit, too. That's what our topic is about today.

Ellen Klem is the Director of Consumer Outreach and Education for the Office of the Attorney General. Previously, she worked at the American Bar Association Commission on Law in Aging in Washington DC. There she was responsible for Research Policy Development, advocacy, education and training.

Ellen received her Bachelor's degree from James Madison College at Michigan State University and her JD from Case Western Reserve University School of Law.

We're excited to have her, and it's just wonderful that the state's providing this service for us. Thank you, Ellen, we really appreciate that.

We hope this little mini-course on trends and new tools scammers are using that Ellen is going to talk about will give you more confidence in preventing, recognizing and addressing scam attempts.

If you have any questions on the way, be sure to write them down. I'll let Ellen handle the Q&A.

And so, Ellen, we're gonna turn it over to you. Thank you for being here and welcome.

Ellen Klem

Thank you so much for having me. I am so excited to be physically here and virtually here. I'll start with the physical excitement: I am in my office for the first time since... maybe July? I came in in July for some computer issues, and I was telling Terri and Craig as we were getting started that it's just really wonderful to be here and not hear a barking dog in the background or have to worry about a seven-year-old running in the background, nude or whatever, all the other things that have happened to me while I'm on these calls or presentations... So it's just so relaxing. I can't even tell you.



And then virtually excited to be here to share some information with you.

I'll tell you a little bit more about my background. As you've heard, Craig mentioned some things about my experience in DC and the role that I play now for the Attorney General. But my big passion and my love for the state of Oregon has drawn me to this job.

I've really enjoyed it because I've spent most of my eight (almost nine) years in this role traveling all across the state and speaking in-person to mostly older adults and the individuals that care for them about how to stay safe from frauds and scams.

I was reminded of just how much of a personal touch there is when you make those in-person connections, as I come back into my office today and I see things like crochet Afghans that people have knit for me in Pendleton, or just some artwork that people have drawn for me, and it's just... I miss those personal connections, and they're very hard and few and far between today.

Even though we're gathered here virtually, I just wanna say it kind of fills my heart and soul to be with you today and share this information because I really do miss doing it. I can't wait until we're all together in-person and we can discuss in a setting that is not virtual (and I never wanna hear the word Zoom again), but I digress.

That being said, a little bit more about me. I've been in this role for about almost nine years now, and as I mentioned, I travel all across -- did travel all across the state -- talking mostly to older adults about how to stay safe from scams.

When I started in this role, people would call our office and they would say, "Can you come and talk to us about the latest frauds and scams?" And I would get in my little car and I would drive to Pendleton or Klamath Falls, and I would talk to people for 60-90 minutes about:

- The grandparent scam.
- The Social Security scam.
- The scam where somebody calls claiming to be from Microsoft, telling you your computer is running slow.

I would spend all this time talking about these latest frauds and scams. Then I would get back in my car, and before I hit the road I would check my email to see if I had missed anything. And every single time I would have an email -- maybe two or three emails from somebody on my team -- about a new scam. It was just like Whack-A-Mole. I just could not keep up.

The scammers are always two steps ahead. They're using things like the news to prey on our vulnerabilities and use techniques to scare us and frighten us. I just found it very frustrating because here I had driven all this way, and I talked to these wonderful people about these



frauds and scams, and then 30 minutes later, I learned... there's a new one.

So, what I did is I went back to the Attorney General and I told her, I said, "I'm really frustrated by this because I don't feel like I am leaving people with the tools that they need to identify the latest frauds and scams. I've talked to them about scams that have been happening for quite some time and are very popular, but when the scammers come up with a new idea, I don't feel like the people I have spoken with have the materials or the knowledge to identify those red flags."

And she agreed. And so, we sat down and we came up with a document called [Six Signs It's a Scam](#).

This is the document behind me. You can kind of see it. The gist of the conversation I had with the Attorney General was: We need to be providing a service as the state to help people identify those red flags. So when the scammers come out with the latest thing, Oregonians are able to quickly look at this document.

We're gonna go through each of these scams. I think that is a better use of your time and my time. And I think it will leave you in a much safer position because in the future, when the latest scam, which as of the last 20 minutes now involves scams related to air filters and errand helpers. Most of what we're seeing right now is related to Covid-19 vaccine rollout, quarantine, all contact tracing, all of the things that are, again, making the news and have us kind of anxious and a little bit nervous about what's to come.

Scammers use that to prey on our vulnerabilities, take our personal information and take our financial information.

Let's go through these six signs, we'll talk about some of what I'm hearing and seeing, calls that we're getting to our [Consumer Hotline](#), and then you will have this document to help keep you safe when I'm not around. Next week, or next month, or next year.

This is what we're gonna talk about today. But before we get into that, I do want to ask you, if folks feel comfortable, what are you hearing? Who's calling you? What sort of emails are you getting?

My world has been consumed, as I mentioned, with all things Covid, all things scam related to the vaccine rollout, and I'm curious to know what you are hearing. If folks feel like they want to volunteer, go ahead. I think we can unmute you. Does anybody wanna volunteer?

Hi. What are you hearing?



Audience Member

So, two or three times during the last month I've been getting emails from Amazon saying that I've had Amazon charges, or Amazon will send me a link and say, "Your order's being shipped," and it's usually for something outlandish expensive. And of course, I know I haven't ordered anything. Or I know what I've ordered, so I know it's not mine. I don't respond to it, but Amazon on the computer is... I've been getting several of those.

Ellen Klem

Yeah, we have seen an uptick in scams related to shipping, fake shipping and real shipping scams, because as I mentioned, everybody's at home. You guys know this, it's no surprise that the scammers would use that information or facts to exploit us.

Everybody is ordering everything online, nobody's going to the store, and so it's only natural that you may receive an email about a shipping delay, especially with some of the ice storms. This summer, it was mostly related to the wild fires.

"Your shipment has been delayed because of natural disasters. Click here for an update." Or as you mentioned, large items like big screen TVs, "Thank you for your order. Click here to see an estimated delivery date for your 64" TV." Those are all very popular scams right now, unfortunately.

What else?

Audience Member

Kind of the same thing, I've been getting the Amazon messages, but also PayPal.

Ellen Klem

Okay, what do the PayPal messages say?

Audience Member

Oh, there's something wrong with the payment that I made and they can't do it, and so they want me to click here and give them a bunch of information, so I just double-delete the whole thing. And I also hover my cursor over the email address where it's coming from, and I can see it's not them.

Ellen Klem

Yeah, that's a great tip. We actually also have, in addition to "The Six Signs It's A Scam," we



have another document one pager called [Do Not Click](#), and we have a tip in there about how you can hover your cursor over that hyperlink to see the full URL before you actually click on that URL.

The goal the scammers have is to direct you to a fake website that looks much like PayPal, Amazon or a shipping partner like UPS or DHL, so you will enter some personal or financial information.

Are you just deleting those emails? What are you doing with them?

Audience Member

Yeah, and then I go to my trash folder and delete them again.

Ellen Klem

I think that's a great thing to do.

I also recommend, depending on the email provider that you use -- say, Hotmail or Gmail -- they also have some security options available to you under the settings that might allow you to do things like only accept emails from known sources or contacts that are already in your inbox.

That's one feature that I have set up on my Gmail. If you are not in my address book and you try to send me an email, it goes directly into my junk folder. That seems to not only keep the spam down for me, but keep me safe from accidentally, after a long day of corralling a seven-year-old, clicking on a link that I shouldn't.

Audience Member

I'm on Comcast and I do have some things set up like that.

Ellen Klem

Yeah.

Well, Terri, thank you. She just shared that one-pager. That's the "Do Not Click" one-pager I mentioned. That has a lot of really great tips.

I think you'll see as we move through these six signs, and then we look at the "Do Not Click," we also have a "Just Hang Up" poster, which is another great thing that you can get from our website and just put next to your phone. What you'll see from these handouts, is that a lot of the tips are the same as the six signs.



If I could have one more person who maybe has a Covid scam.

Audience Member

This morning, I got a phone call from the IRS telling me that I have some really distressing information and we need you to basically tell us: blah blah. And I just hung up, just like you have in your little poster there.

Then the other one is "from" Xfinity or Comcast saying, "We need to verify who you are." And they actually have the Xfinity logo on the thing. But like you said, you go back to the person that sent it to you, it is Joe Schwartz from Minneapolis or something. So, I never answer anything that asks me by email for information. I can go back -- contact Xfinity and look at my records -- and say, "Do I need to add anything?"

When I call them, it's a lot safer to be answering than when they call me.

Ellen Klem

This is a great segue into the very first tip, which is: **Watch out for contact out of the blue.**

If somebody like Comcast or the IRS contacts you out of the blue -- and using that phrase, I mean, if you haven't been working with Comcast or working with IRS, suddenly you get this phone call or email from them claiming they need something -- that contact out of the blue is almost always the sign that it is a scam.

And I say almost always because there are certain exceptions.

Some of you, depending on where you live in Oregon, right now, you may be contacted by your doctor or your pharmacy to get the Covid vaccine. And so that necessarily may not be a huge red flag by itself.

And that's the thing about all of these Signs It's A Scam -- except for one sign, which we're gonna talk about at great length (and it's number four), all of the other signs by themselves don't necessarily mean it's a scam. But combined with other signs typically means it's a scam.

So, that first sign that it's a scam is that *contact out of the blue*. We don't see this a lot during Covid, but we see this typically every spring.

As we're moving through this very cold dark winter, it's my hope that we're not gonna see people coming up to your door and knocking in trying to scam you that way -- but typically in the spring, we do see a lot of that *contact out of the blue* that happens at the front door. Typically it's related



to unlicensed contractors trying to scam you, saying things like:

- They can pour you a poor new asphalt on your driveway; or
- Fix your roof; or
- Whatever it may be.

But it's that contact out of the blue, you haven't been looking for somebody to repair your roof, you weren't aware that your driveway needed new asphalt and they've just reached out to you just to let you know that they're suddenly available and have all this time.

It's that type of contact that I worry about.

If you do get this type of contact, the best thing to do is just hang up the phone, shut the front door and go find the number for Comcast or find the number for whoever it is that contacted you out of the blue. Call them up and ask them, "Did you request this information from me?"

That's what I always try to remind people.

I know most of you on this call over, remember a thing called the phone book that actually you can hold that used to come to your doorstep. I see some people smiling. Remember those days when the phone book came to your doorstep? And remember those days when that phone book wasn't online? Now they're all online. So, go to the phone book if you have the hard copy or if you can find the number online, make sure it's the legitimate number for the company, call them and ask them.

This is particularly important with banking, and I'm sure that Craig will agree with me on this.

Somebody contacts you out of the blue and says they need some sort of financial information or they want to confirm something related to perhaps a wire transfer: Hang up the phone! Call Craig. Call Chris, who is also on this call. Call your advisor and say, "I just got this call. It seemed like it was a little bit out of the blue. I know this is the right number for you. I'm calling to confirm before I provide any of the information that was requested."

Any questions about that first sign it's a scam?

No questions. I will move on to the second sign of the scam.

The second sign is that the scammers claim there's some sort of emergency. And right now, I cannot think of a worse emergency than what we have been through. I feel like we've had one emergency after another in our state. We are in the midst of a pandemic. We've had massive wildfires. We've had these ice storms. It just feels like we are never going to claw our way out at times.



And those of you who are on this call have also been in other emergencies, I'm sure. Things like a car accident or the death of a loved one. And when you're in a situation like that, what happens to your body and your brain is you get this very focused tunnel vision. And all you want to do is get out of that emergency.

So if it's a car accident, you just... You want to make sure everybody's safe. You wanna get everybody to the hospital or wherever they need to be. But you want to get out of that emergency as quickly as possible. And that's why you're so focused.

This is why you read these stories or see them on the news about parents whose child has been pinned under a 2000-pound car, and they're able to lift the car up on their own. I mean, it's just crazy what happens to you when you're in the state of an emergency.

The scammers know this. So, most of these scammers are overseas. They're typically in nations that have a very low income and the scammers have lots of time to research things related to our brain, related to how we age, related to how we react to emergencies.

There is a reason that they claim there is an emergency. They want you to have that tunnel vision, so you are so focused that you will do whatever they ask, whatever they say because you want to get out of that emergency.

They are using the emergency, the pandemic that we're in right now, to do exactly that.

They are calling older adults in our state, and they're saying things like, "For \$50, I can get your name on a list. Just give me your social security number. To give me your date of birth, your full address... all of the things. Give your credit card number. \$50. I can help you."

This is very worrisome to me, we've been working day and night on this issue at the Department of Justice, because there's a lot of misinformation, and frankly, in my opinion, miscommunication from the government on the topic of how to get a vaccine. It's not clear, in fact some of you may have already tried to or may hopefully have gotten your vaccine, but if you go to the website to make an appointment, there's no button on there that says, "Click here to make an appointment." You have to know to click the, "Let's get started" button.

Lots of confusion, misinformation, unclear messaging from the state has just opened the door for scammers to do things like call you and pretend to be your local pharmacy and gather this information. This personal financial information from you under the guise of "they're going to get you this very coveted vaccine."

And unfortunately, all they are going to do is take your personal information for your financial well-being, and you're gonna be left without a vaccine.



So, if somebody calls you and claims there is some sort of emergency, that is a very, very, very big red flag in my opinion.

So any questions about that? Again, we've seen this with a lot of very common scans over the years.

The grandparent scam is a great example. I'm sure some of you are familiar with that scam. If you're not, it's the scam where out of the blue you get a phone call from your grandson or your granddaughter (because if you're under the age of 30, you don't really call people on the phone anymore, they just text).

I see some people smiling. It's true, isn't it? Nobody calls anybody anymore. It's crazy.

So, if you get this phone call from your grandson or your granddaughter out of the blue, and they claim there's some sort of emergency:

- They went to Mexico for spring break; or
- they drove over the border to Canada to go skiing and they've been arrested; or
- They were in a car accident.

Some sort of emergency. That triggers things in your brain. Nobody wants to have their grandson or their granddaughter in jail or in the hospital, and you will do everything in your power to help a loved one in a situation like that, and the scammers know it.

That is why when somebody calls you and claims or some sort of emergency or emails or text, you should be very cautious.

Any questions about that? I see a lot of people just nodding.

Okay, so let's move on. Number three. As I mentioned, when I approached the Attorney General about this idea of coming up with sort of buckets or signs or red flags, she loved it. She thought it was a great idea, but we fought bitterly about number three.

I think number three should say, "The scammers ask you for anything other than the color of the pants or the skirt that you are wearing."

She didn't think that was appropriate, but I still firmly believe that that is really the big flag here. The reason I say that is because, as I mentioned earlier, scammers are overseas, mostly in low-income countries, have lots of time on their hands, and are working together in groups.

What we have seen over the years is that one scammer may call you one day and ask you for a very kind of basic piece of information by itself doesn't really mean much. Couldn't possibly get any scammer very far in terms of stealing your personal information or your financial



information.

For example, I'm just noticing here in the background, I have some of my son's artwork here. I also have this... You can see this red print, which is a print of the State I grew up in and has a little heart over the city of Flint. That's where I was born and raised. So, one day I could envision a scammer calling and asking me something as simple as, "Where were you born?" And maybe the scammer is pretending to be somebody associated with a federal or state agency -- they're just maybe updating their records. Just need some really basic information to confirm I am who I am.

"I'm just calling to confirm where you were born."

And I think to myself, "Well, that by itself is not... That's... What are they gonna do with that? They have my name, my phone number. Where I was born. They don't have my social security number, they don't know where I currently live, where I currently work. That's fine to tell them."

And then six months later, somebody calls claiming to be associated with perhaps a different state or federal agency or county, the local library, it doesn't matter... they impersonate government officials and employees all the time. And perhaps in this call, they ask you for something also kind of equally simple eh, like, "Where you currently live?" or "Your mother's maiden name."

I hope you see where I'm going with this, which is that the scammers work in groups to essentially take these small pieces of the puzzle and build a larger profile of you in order to obtain identifying information about you and ultimately steal maybe your identity or some financial information from you.

I always tell people, somebody calls you out of the blue, claims there's some sort of emergency and asks you anything other than the color of the pants or the skirt that you are wearing, be skeptical.

I don't think it hurts to hang up that phone, go to the phone book, find the legitimate verified number for the local library or the bank or whoever it was that claimed to be calling you.

All that stuff is normally used for your security questions. Yes, you just need to make sure that you are talking with somebody who is legitimate. That is my advice on that one.

Any questions about number three, they ask for your personal or financial information?

Audience Member

I would also bring up the Facebook quizzes that trick you into revealing that same kind of



personal information.

Ellen Klem

Thank you, and that is a great, great tip to bring up with folks.

I could do a whole two, three, four-hour presentation on Facebook alone and what you should or shouldn't be sharing. It can be a big struggle to stay connected right now to folks, our loved ones, and Facebook does provide a useful tool to do that.

But yes, the quizzes can be problematic. Sharing certain information about your hometown, who your family members are, all of those things can be problematic depending on your security settings.

And again, I don't have an issue with Facebook. I think it's a great way for all of us to stay connected. I find it troubling that they are constantly changing the way that you check your privacy settings, I feel like every time I go in, they've moved the button around and it can be very challenging to stay on top of it, and so because of that, I just don't have much information on mine.

If you have questions about Facebook, something specific related to your privacy online, I'm happy to walk through that with anybody on this call any time because it can be a challenge.

And speaking of that, before I forget, on the bottom of all these handouts that Terri has been linking to there is a phone number. That is our [Consumer Hotline](#), and that number is: 1-877-877-9392.

A live person answers it. It's a good friend of mine. His name is Brooks, he lives in Albany. He answers that phone Monday through Friday, 8:30 to 4:30. He and I are a great team. I give the presentations, talk about the general, "Here's how to stay safe," and then when you get something in the mail that you think, "Oh, this has two, three, maybe five of the flags that Ellen club talked about, but I'm still not sure..." give him a call Monday through Friday, 8:30 to 4:30.

If he doesn't answer that call right away, leave a message. He will call you back. That's a great way to run those very specific issues by somebody who has a lot of experience on this topic.

"How do the quizzes on Facebook get you to give out personal information? I've done them occasionally and never been asked anything."

Well, you might be doing the right quizzes, but some of them will say things like what kind of beach house should you have...



Might be a quiz, right? And it might ask you things like:

- Where do you currently live?
- How many hours a week do you work?
- How many children do you have?

All of this information, again, is stored in these small pieces of information about you, again, by themselves, not a big deal, but if you're answering a different quiz once a week, once a month, the scammers who are running these quizzes can compile all of that and make a bigger profile of you.

So again, somebody contacts you out of the blue, some sort of emergency, they want information, and it's not the color of the pants or the skirt you're wearing, be suspicious.

Alright, moving on. Number four, this is perhaps the most important, and I mentioned this earlier, you don't need all six signs for it to be a scam, you'll likely see three, four, maybe five. Sometimes you'll see all six.

If you've seen number four, almost 100% of the time, it is a scam.

Craig, Terri and Chris may want to chime in here about the wiring money aspect, but **if somebody reaches out to you out of the blue, claims there's some sort of emergency and wants you to wire money or buy a prepaid card -- and I'll talk a little bit about what that is in just a minute -- almost 100% of the time, it's a scam.**

Now, the prepaid cards, I used to have a few of them in my wallet, because for Christmas a couple of years ago, my mother-in-law (she's a lovely woman), got me a few prepaid cards to hire a housekeeper. I don't recommend that. It was slightly rude.

So I don't have them anymore. I think I bought wine and candy or I don't know, something else. But when I did have them, I could hold them up and show you what they look like. You can buy them at the end of the aisles at Safeway or Walgreens, and they say Visa or Mastercard on them. You can also purchase Amazon gift cards. All these types of cards that you see at the grocery store, the pharmacy, etc.

Scammers know that it is virtually impossible to get money back once you have purchased a card of this nature, loaded it with money, given the scammer the number off of the back. The money's gone. You cannot get it back.

The same is true with wiring money. And again, Terri, Craig, and Chris, if you want to chime in here on scams related to the wiring of money, feel free. These are very, very, very popular forms or ways that scammers are able to get funds from Oregonians.



Chris Pawlowski

The one that I've been getting a lot, and I know that, in fact, a lot of our brokers and custodians are actually confirming wires out now because of fraud related to wires -- the biggest and most popular one, especially during covid, because of rates being so low have to do with refinancing your home.

I've been getting phone calls from California for a home that I sold in December of 2019.

So yeah, so definitely, it's not unseen to... It's definitely out there, especially in the real estate market for sure.

Ellen Klem

So, Chris, if folks on this call get some sort of contact out of the blue about this wiring money, what would you recommend they do? Call you right away?

Chris Pawlowski

Yeah, definitely.

If it's saying if it's coming from any of your accounts that are investment-related or even your bank accounts, it never hurts to call our office or Craig's office. We can certainly help walk you through that.

Now, obviously, if it's from the bank, we won't be able to confirm any money coming from your bank. Only if we're sending money to the bank because we're not the banks themselves.

But at the very least, we are always a good first step. We are constantly going through training -- our continuing education helps us make sure that we stay on top of these things. It's one of the reasons why we feel that this topic is so important to be discussed.

Ellen Klem

Yeah, we've seen some very unfortunate wire scams involving real estate over the years. I like to think that we have some of the best law enforcement investigators in the state, perhaps in the country, that work for the Oregon Department of Justice. And we've had several in the past two to three years where our investigator said, "Man, this one would have got me... It looks so real. It looks so legitimate."

And I think your advice, and I think in general, what you're hearing from all of us on this call is: reach out to a trusted source before you act.



That's what they want from you. Right, they want you to do that quick, "Oh, I need to do this immediately, or something bad will happen," and they don't give you that time to call, say, you or Craig, and it's unfortunate.

Chris Pawlowski

Yeah, actually, if I could backtrack to three for just a moment...

Something as simple as even like that Facebook message feature that you have. I was sharing my mailing address with a friend of mine online, and that was all they needed -- as well as the context of what we were discussing -- and my identity was almost stolen for me. They went and bought two iPhones on my account from my T-Mobile or whatever.

Ellen Klem

It's so crazy right now. It is so crazy. Yeah.

Craig Childress

I'd just like to reinforce all of that and say again -- and it kinda leads us in the number five a little bit -- talk to other people about what's going on. If you have any kind of transaction somebody's trying to get you to do, we're here for that as your financial advisors. Your family is certainly there to help you out.

There's no emergency that cannot be handled in the next hour or two hours, three hours. There's nothing that has to be handled right this second.

I think of the old count to ten advice. Get a phone number, a hang up and say, "We'll call you back."

You can immediately call your advisor or family or a good friend.

Ellen Klem

Yeah, that is such a good segue into number five because we do frequently hear about situations that are just heartbreaking: where they've reached out to somebody, claim there's some sort of emergency, **they're asking them to do something, and then they're saying, "Oh, and by the way, don't tell anybody."**

Because what they're worried about is, if you do count to 10, you do take that breath, you do reach out to a friend or somebody who's familiar with these, maybe perhaps somebody who's attended one of our presentations, the scammers that are worried that their potential victim will



find out that they're in a scam and that it will end.

We've received calls over the years from victims who... in fact, I talked to one woman a couple months ago who had been contacted by an individual claiming to be associated with the US Marshals. This individual told the victim that her car had been found in Mexico with eight kilos of cocaine. And for whatever reason, she was at risk of being arrested for these illegal drugs. He as the US Marshall could quote "stop her arrest, if she went to Walgreens and purchased \$20,000 in gift cards."

And in an effort to keep her from calling anyone or texting anyone or reaching out to anyone, he kept her on the phone for 18 solid hours, he stayed on the call on the phone with her.

He called her a cab -- he didn't want her to drive her own vehicle, so he called her a cab to transport her to Walgreens.

Thankfully, Walgreens did not sell her \$20,000 worth of gift cards. But some of these stories are just maddening to me. And again, what happened was this woman was terrified that she was going to be arrested.

How many of you have gotten a phone call from the IRS or the city or whoever, but the caller threatens arrest? If you've gotten that phone call and you listen to it all the way through... it is terribly frightening. They go to great lengths to talk about how the sheriff or the police are going to come to your front door, they're gonna bang on your front door, they're gonna pull you out on the porch, they're gonna slap the handcuffs on you, they're gonna throw you in the back of the cruiser, they're gonna turn on the lights and the sirens and drive away in front of all your friends and neighbors.

They go into such great detail about what will happen during that period because they want to frighten you.

And if you've gotten the phone call from that grandson or granddaughter at the very end of that call, if you, again, if you've listened long enough after the... Whatever the emergency is. They've been arrested. They've been hurt. They're in the hospital. They say things like, "Don't call my mom or dad. I wasn't supposed to go to Mexico on spring break. My mom will be so disappointed if she knows I was smoking pot."

They want you to keep it a secret, because if you call Mom or Dad, you would find out that grandson or granddaughter is exactly where they should be. They're not in Mexico, they're not in jail, they're not in a hospital, they're probably home in their basement doing virtual school.

They don't want you to make that call because they want to get your money or your personal information.



And Craig and Chris are right, this is very popular in investment scams. We've heard reports over the years of so-called investors targeting mostly older adults in our state, saying things like, "I have this great deal. Limited time offer, only good today. You can't tell anybody, because Craig, if you tell Chris, he's gonna want to get in on it, and then Craig, your money is not going to yield as much return for you. It won't really be worth it. So just don't tell anybody. Just wire me \$20,000. And next week, you'll have \$200,000."

If somebody asks you to keep it a secret, that is a huge, huge red flag.

And Chris and Craig are right. Hang up the phone, call them immediately.

I gave you the [Consumer Hotline](#) number earlier to the Department of Justice. Call us.

But do not be responsive, and do not act immediately. Take that breath. Put the phone down. Count to 10.

So, any questions about that?

I'm gonna move on really quickly, this is like the very end. And then we'll have a few minutes for questions.

Number six, you guys have known this your whole lives: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Somebody contacts you and says they can get you the vaccine, and you just need to give them this information, or pay this amount of money. Be skeptical. Again, there's a lot of misinformation, a lot of confusion and chaos around the vaccine right now, but all these signs hold true.

Especially number six. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

Just remember that it's really easy to get kinda caught up with somebody who contacts you and is talking to you about who knows what. But just take that breath, and remember these signs. Print this out, put it on your refrigerator or put it next to your phone. Put an extra near the front door. Have this handy, so that when the next wave of scams hits -- they typically follow the news -- so when the next wave of whatever it may be.

Right now, like I said earlier, is the air filters and the errand helpers are the big ones.

I was just on a call with the FCC, which is the Federal Communications Commission. They were alerting us that scammers are now calling folks all across the country and saying things like, "I



can upgrade your air filters in your furnace for x amount of dollars. Pay me \$200 now and I will get the shipment started, it'll be \$600 upon delivery, and then you'll be safe in your home.”

That is a scam.

The other one is the errand helpers. We're all sitting stuck at home, maybe you're tired of ordering through Amazon or a meal delivery service, you'd like to maybe hire somebody to run some errands for you: go to Walgreens. We were hearing reports of individuals who are offering to be an errand helper, taking your money and then not returning with the items or performing the errands that you have asked.

I'm not surprised, unfortunately, but those are all things that we're hearing are seen now.

Terri has a question:

“I called DOJ on behalf of a client. DoJ’s office said scammers or after two things, your money, your information to get your money...”

Yep. That was probably Brooks. It's my co-worker that you talked to. He's apparently much better at being succinct than I am.

Other questions?

Audience Member

Dave and I received a phone call back in September and we won \$800,000,000 million and a new Mercedes, and they were gonna deliver it to us tomorrow. All we needed to do was send them our email, so that they could coordinate all of the final details.

Obviously, we didn't go into any of that and we hung up, but I did do a report to the FTC.A written report.

Should we expect any kind of feedback from that kind of reporting, or is it just the report goes out and it just is out there and hopefully somebody's following up on it?

Ellen Klem

Yeah, so unfortunately, as I mentioned earlier, and I realized we haven't talked too much about robocalls, but yes, those reports are helpful in that they help folks like me understand what the scammers are currently doing, what they're saying that you have won the lottery scam is so popular.



We've seen a number of victims that have fallen for that scam, it can be a challenge to go after these scammers because again, they're in countries, they're overseas, they're often in countries that, for lack of a better phrase, don't care that our citizens are being victimized.

We have gone with all 50 state attorney generals, with our federal partners. We have gone to these nations and said, "You know, it's Craig, he is... He's wearing a blue shirt. This is the car he drives, this is where he lives, go get him."

And again, the country just kinda gives us the middle finger.

I don't think you'll expect any follow-up on that, I will just say in terms of robocalls: The best way to cut down on robocalls is not engage at all.

I know we're coming up on our time, but I wanna tell you one quick story of why no engagement is the best way to deal with these.

How many of you have gotten a phone call from Rachel at cardholder services or something about your car warranty? How many of you've gotten a call from a robot?

Yes, everybody.

If you listen to some of these calls, they say something very interesting right away. Press 1 if you want to be removed from this list.

Guess what... Just by pressing on, the robot knows your home during the day, you answer your phone, you engage, and all of this makes you the perfect potential victim.

So they do exactly what you want them to do, they remove your name from that list. But they sell your name and your number to 2000-3000 other lists, because they know you're a live person who answers the phone and engages.

That's what they want.

So that information alone is very, very valuable to other scammers, they sell it, and just by pressing on your calls to actually go up.

So don't blow a whistle, don't speak German, don't put the phone in front of the TV, Don't do any of the things that my dad used to do, the best thing to do is just hang up the phone, and you'll see your calls go down significantly.

Audience Member



We haven't seen them go down. We would get six to eight calls - a dozen calls a day - but luckily it pops up what state they're calling from. If we don't know somebody in that state, we don't even answer it.

The other part irritates me is that says that if you do even just pick up the phone, you're getting charged for a call from how.

Ellen Klem

So a couple of things on that. One is: earlier, I talked about the phone book. If you are in the phone book, contact your phone book company immediately, and get out of the phone book.

Gone are the days where that phone book just came to your community, and it was just available in print. It's all online now. And the scammers, again, are learning things about how we age, habits that we form and keep with through our age. Individuals under the age of 40 don't have landlines. They're not in the phone book. Older adults have landlines. They are in the phone book. And they control the vast majority of wealth in our country.

The scammers know this.

All they have to do is type in "Lake Oswego Phone Book," and it's a gold mine for them.

To get out of the phone book, the second thing I would say to you is contact your phone provider, so if you have Comcast or CenturyLink or whoever it is, contact them and find out what options are available, if any to you.

I've been surprised at the number of companies that have very creative solutions.

I called one woman during dinner time a couple of weeks ago, and I got an automated message that said, "This caller does not accept phone calls between the hours of 6 and 7pm. Please call me later."

I've also heard messages that say, "This caller does not accept calls from robots. Please identify yourself." And once I said, "Ellen Klem," it allowed the call to go through.

Ask about those things.

"How do you get out of the phone book?"

Find the phone book -- the hard phone book -- and look on the back. There should be some contact information there.



If you need more help doing it, contact our [Consumer Hotline](#) and they can walk you through it.

Audience Member

Yeah, I'd like to just make one comment, if I could. You made the recommendation to reach out to your financial advisor if any questions come up or you don't know about whatever is going on. What I would just like to say is that after 50 years of being in a financial investment business and having many designations of certifications, I retired.

The first thing I did was hire Craig to be my financial advisor, for that very reason.

You could get scammed no matter how much education you have, what your background, or what your experience is. I always say, "It's better to be safe than sorry."

Ellen Klem

I think when I retire, you should take my job, because that is so true.

Some of these scammers are just very good. They're very creative. And I am frequently surprised -- the amount of education, the experience I have in this world -- there are scams that I would fall victim to.

Craig Childress

Well, your check is in the mail! I won't even call you, I'll just mail it to you!

Well now, our time is up. Ellen said that she'll stay on the line for questions, but for those of you who need to go, we'll let you go.

But I want to say thank you so much, Ellen, for taking your time and giving us your insights today. We appreciate the work that you and your team do to educate us.

I'll also say a big thank you to everybody that showed up today. And to all the new people that we met today, thank you for being on the call! We really appreciate that.

A transcript is going to be on our website. It'll be available to you. All you have to do is either go on our website and or ask for it by email, will get it to you. Feel free to share it with others you want to help as well.

We have some additional webinars coming up on social security, taxes, and the current market conditions that we will also let you know about soon. If you have any ideas for us on webinars that you'd like to hear, please let us know and we'd be glad to put those together for you.



So again, thank you so much for joining us today. From all of us here at Oswego Wealth Advisors and Abrahamson Wealth Advisors, thank you and have a great day!