



Rick Staly, Sheriff

FLAGLER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

"An honor to serve, a duty to protect."

NEWS RELEASE

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Sheriff Warns of Internet Scam that Cost Local Resident \$6,000

The Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) was alerted to a scam that is circulating online that aims to take advantage of those in need of income during the COVID-19 pandemic.

On May 15, 2020, a woman answered an advertisement on a neighborhood website where people buy and sell things. The advertisement was posted by a "Gilbert Neil." Gilbert's ad was offering a work from home job with great pay "during a world pandemic." The woman contacted Gilbert and Gilbert gave her the email address of Gilbertneil65@hotmail.com and a phone number of 401-777-7434 to make contact with him.

Gilbert claimed to be a doctor and a business man, who also sells antiques. He offered to pay her \$500.00 a week to run errands for him but he needed her to start immediately. He told her to purchase \$6,000.00 worth of Amazon.com Gift Cards, reveal the gift card numbers and email them to him.



Gift cards purchased by the victim.

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The woman went to the store and purchased over 50 gift cards which totaled \$6,000.00, scratched off coating to reveal the numbers, and emailed photos to Gilbert.

Once the Flagler County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) was alerted to the scam, Deputy Conway called the phone number that Gilbert provided. Gilbert promptly hung up the phone as soon as Deputy Conway identified himself. Gilbert then texted the woman and said "I am not American."

"There were many red flags during this interaction but it is very sad that someone would prey on people during this pandemic," Sheriff Rick Staly said. "We previously warned the community of COVID-19 scams and unfortunately we now have a victim of one. Please protect yourself from becoming a victim by never giving out personal or financial information and never agreeing to pay any sum of money by way of gift cards or pay in advance for employment. Those are clear indications that it is likely not legitimate."

To report suspected internet crimes, visit [IC3.gov](https://www.ic3.gov)

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