

Murfreesboro Police Department

News Release



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MPD warns public of extortion scams targeting residents of Murfreesboro

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. (July 1, 2022) – Murfreesboro Police Department Criminal Investigations Division (CID) fraud detectives are warning residents about a phone scam from callers claiming to be from Mexican cartels and threatening harm to residents and their families.

The callers representing themselves as members of different Mexican cartels will typically call or send threatening text messages with gruesome photos of dismembered body parts to frighten residents into sending money or be killed. The messages are mostly written in Spanish.

“We have no reason to believe that the callers are actually associated with any known cartel,” said CID Sergeant/Detective Sean Garrison. “However, they are causing fear with their fraud attempts.”

The callers tell the victims to send money via banking apps, gift cards, or other forms of non-traceable transfers.

“This is not a new scam,” Garrison said. “But it is the first time we have seen it locally.”

So far, the scammers have targeted at least four Murfreesboro residents.

In one recent case, a local man was talking with a woman over the internet who began asking for money. When he refused, he received a text message from a male claiming to be with the CJNG cartel. The caller said the man wasted the woman’s time and threatened to kill him and his family if he didn’t send \$3,000. The victim received calls from two additional males also sending threats, one claiming to be with the Sinaloa cartel. Fearing harm to himself and family, the victim sent \$1,000 through a banking app. The caller attempted to convince the victim to wire transfer additional money, but he called police instead.

Three other victims also filed police reports. They did not send money.

As a precaution, police have placed a special watch on the homes of the four victims.

If you receive a phone call from someone claiming to be with a Mexican cartel and demanding money, you should consider the following:

- Don’t panic
- Hang up and block the phone number
- Do not reply to the threatening text messages
- Call police

(MORE)

Anyone with information about these fraud scams is encouraged to contact the CID Fraud Division at 615-893-2717.

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Attachments: Extortion Scam Graphic of cell phone messages