

## I've Won the Lottery!



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"Make 3-5 million dollars a year working from home, using only a telephone!"

Obviously, that's one of those work-from-home scams, right?

No, in this case it is a true statement. That was the average annual income one man scammed out of U.S. elders during the decade he spent bringing them very good news: "You've won the lottery!"

Only the lottery winnings were all his, sent to him by the very elders he had called. He told them that before he could send them their winnings, he needed to receive from them checks or money orders for "taxes," "shipping," "legal fees," or solutions to other problems keeping them away from their rightful winnings. Often he would call again and again to ask for checks, and then would sell the elder's name to others who, in turn, would call the elder with their own scams.

There are thousands of people like him, making calls:

An elderly Texan woman is losing her house due to the \$7,000 she sent an "FBI agent" to process the winning "Australian lottery" ticket she swears she bought.

An 89-year-old Idaho woman sent \$11,537.16 to a Canadian man who had a "misdirected package" of hers containing a check for \$114,000.

At least five Hispanic elders lost "thousands" when they tried to help "illegal aliens" who had "won the California lottery."

A 77-year-old Indiana man refused to believe police when they told him not to send more than the \$2,000 he had already sent trying to claim two Canadian lottery prizes worth \$260,000 and \$480,000.

In Mississippi, a 70-something man also "won" the Canadian lottery twice; he lost \$25,000 in his efforts to claim his winnings.

In Connecticut, two women lost more than \$10,000 in separate foreign lottery scams.

An 85-year-old World War II fighter pilot who lived in California lost nearly \$280,000 trying to cash in on his "winning Canadian lottery" ticket.

One area had a slew of good luck: eight elders in just two neighboring towns won the lottery within just eight weeks! The largest "winner" sent the scammers \$250,000.

Sometimes the "calls" actually come in the mail: A 77-year-old California man lost \$2,300 when he received a lottery check to cash, but was asked to send money back immediately for taxes. The check he wrote cleared. The one he deposited didn't.

Those are just some of the stories that hit the newspapers in the last year.

Don't be fooled. It is not legal for people in the U.S. to participate in other countries' lotteries (it's federal law 18 USC Sec. 1301). And while it is also not legal for people to scam people, there are plenty of professionals out there making a very handsome living at it. Hang up when they call or throw out their letter; despite whatever they may say, the only "lottery winnings" that are at stake are already part of your hard-earned savings.