



SHERIFF

ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
OCTOBER 2, 2024

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SCAM TARGETING CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS SURFACES IN COUNTY

Pittsburgh PA ---- Sheriff Kevin M. Kraus announced today that a scam targeting criminal defendants has surfaced in Allegheny County.

A male victim presented himself at our office Monday evening and told detectives that following a lengthy phone call with an unknown individual identifying himself as Deputy Washington from our office, he was there to surrender to the same deputy. The victim said that he was told he was out of compliance with Megan's Law reporting requirements.

Once our detectives told the victim that there is no Deputy Washington in our office, the victim informed detectives that he had also been texted two documents. The first document was a forged order of court telling the victim that he was going to be arrested for civil contempt for failure to appear. The second document was a forged order asking the victim to self-remand bond money and included a QR Code and the address of a Bitcoin kiosk. Both documents contained official looking seals from our office and the courts.

The victim further explained that he also spoke to a sergeant from our office on the phone with the imposter telling the victim he could avoid arrest by depositing money into a Bitcoin kiosk using the information on the document. The victim subsequently went to the Bitcoin kiosk and deposited \$1,100.00.

The victim was able to provide the phone number that he was speaking to and the kiosk information but a trace of both has yet to turn up any information about the scammers.

The public, including criminal defendants, should be aware that our office will never seek to collect any fine or court payments over the phone or through an electronic funds transfer and will never transmit official documents via text message or discuss warrant information electronically.

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