

October 29, 2025

Fraud & Finance

Forum

Brad Kunkel

Sheriff

Johnson County Sheriff's Office



The background of the slide is the official seal of the Johnson County Sheriff's Office. It is a circular emblem with a five-pointed star shape around its perimeter. The outer ring of the seal contains the text "JOHNSON COUNTY" at the top and "SHERIFF'S OFFICE" at the bottom. Inside this ring, the words "STATE OF IOWA" are written in a smaller circle. The center of the seal features a scale of justice, a central shield with the word "IOWA" on it, and a five-pointed star. The entire seal is rendered in a dark green color with a slight shadow effect.

Protect Your Money

Sheriff Brad Kunkel

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Today's Menu

Personal and Commercial
Fraud

Investigative Process

Prevention and Vigilance

Case Examples

Common Denominators

- We see fraud regularly and people are still losing a lot of money
- No one is immune, businesses and individuals alike are targeted
- Businesses tend to see ACH/electronic transfer fraud
 - On occasion, we also see good old-fashioned internal theft
 - Watch out for third party involvement like Quickbooks
- Individuals tend to see money transfers through an app or cash for crypto

Investigative Process

- All starts with the initial report to local law enforcement
 - FBI? Probably punt back to local agency unless it's a significant loss
 - We can refer if needed
- Jurisdiction is likely where the victim resides*
 - Exception could involve multiple victims and an out-of-state suspect
- One of the most important questions: Was there any loss?
- If no money was transferred or lost we may not investigate





Investigative Process

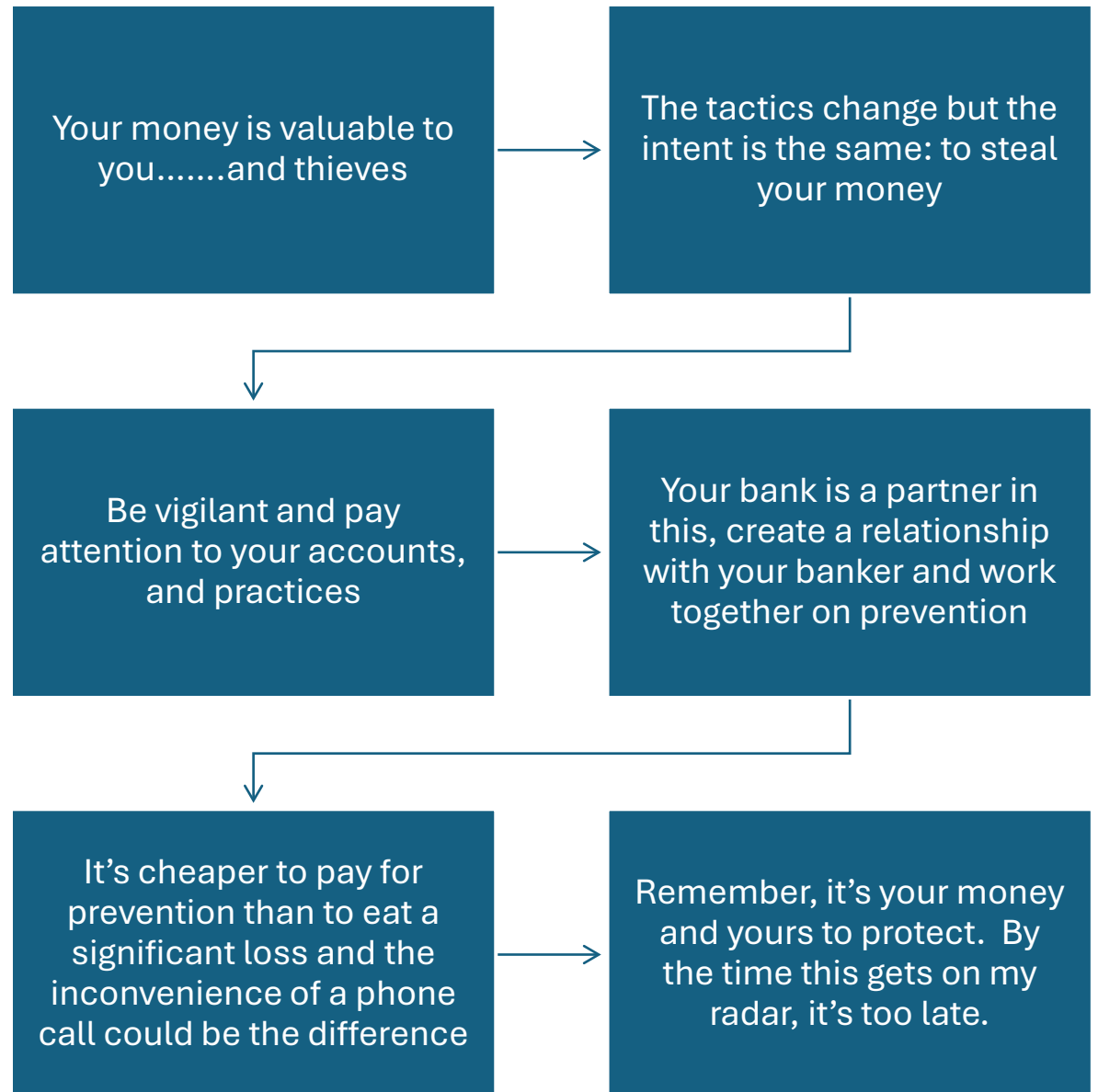
- Initial report or interview with victim or institution
- Documentation collection: Emails, transactions, texts, etc
- Bank Records: Subpoena or Search Warrant
 - This can vary depending on the institution
- We need to know who and where to serve
- If the bank is the victim → Do we need a subpoena for records or video?

Investigative Process

- These investigations can be lengthy and often a rabbit hole of accounts and documents
- Prosecution is difficult (if we can identify a suspect) and recovery is rare
- Electronic transfer? Probably won't recover anything
- Restitution possible through a successful prosecution
- May have to seek a civil remedy through a lawsuit
- Be patient and manage your expectations



Commerical Customers: Be Vigilant!



Same advice for anyone else: Be Vigilant!



Phone calls or emails about money or transfer: Assume it's a scam



Treat any mention of cash as suspicious



Any mention of crypto is a red-flag



Scammers rely on creating urgency, take the time to pause and remain calm



For the banks in the room: Tellers are a key player in prevention

Have practice or policy in place to question or sign-off on large cash withdrawals



Recent Business Case

- Local business gets a call from an out of state individual wanting to buy a trailer: suspect provided picture IDs
- Business sent payment request through Quickbooks
- Buyer provided account and routing numbers for ACH transaction
- Payment showed up as “Pending”
- Buyer arranged for third party (or 4th at this point) from Florida to deliver to Minnesota
- Driver arrived to pick up trailer and payment was “hard posted”

Recent Business Case

- The next day Quickbooks notified business via email that payment was being returned
- Drawn on closed account
- Tried to recover the trailer but it was long gone
- Quickbooks took the money back (this is probably covered somewhere in the agreement with Quickbooks)
- This case had links and IDs from multiple states

Common Personal Case

- Resident gets a phone call from “PayPal”
- Convinced to download an app and scammer took control of her computer
- Logged into her bank account and it showed a \$20,000 deposit
- She went to the bank, withdrew the money, and deposited all into crypto machine
- Scammer said they would contact the bank the next day to fix the “error”



A close-up photograph of a hand with fingers pointing towards a smartphone screen. The screen displays a green, wavy pattern, possibly a reflection or a digital interface. The background is dark and out of focus.

Common Personal Case

- Next day the problem wasn't fixed
- Directed her back to the bank and she withdrew another \$20,000
- Bank called her son (Good Job!)
- Family was able to intervene with her at the same crypto machine
- Only deposited \$600
- Money went to Thailand

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