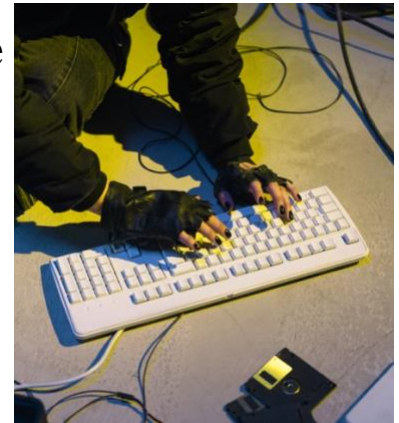


# Scammers are using advanced artificial intelligence to mimic the sound of voices over the phone

*“The first voice I heard was easily identifiable as my daughter . . . I had no question that it was my daughter’s voice, it just wasn’t my daughter”*

By: Lindsey Cook  
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Pexels

Janis Creason received a call from an unknown number, figuring it would have been an appointment reminder for her husband. She heard her daughter’s voice in panic when she answered the phone.

“That was probably the most alarming part,” she says. “I knew it was an unknown number . . . I heard my daughter’s voice on the telephone saying, ‘Mom, I’ve been in an accident. My nose is broken.’”

Janis comforted her daughter over the phone and asked if she could speak with someone to understand the situation better. There were sirens in the background as her daughter passed the phone off to someone else.

“She put a gentleman on the phone who was an officer on the scene . . . he told me she was in an accident, that she was looking at her cell phone and rear-ended a vehicle, and they had taken her to the hospital,” says Janis.

For two hours, Janis had received multiple phone calls from people caring for her daughter. She remembers, “There were a series of individuals who called me posing as a public defender, another person posing as an administration office with a bonding company.” Janis adds it was all “extraordinarily professional.”

When the speakers over the phone asked Janis for money, she realized her daughter might not be in trouble.

“It wasn’t until the very end of the process of several phone calls that they were asking me for money . . . after they said they were going to send a courier, the wheels started turning in my head that this is a scam,” says Janis.

John Sancenito, President of Information Network Associates, says that “scams like this have been going on for a long time, but the use of AI has gotten to the point where they can clone someone’s voice. All they really need is a 20 to 30-second clip of an individual speaking . . . they can have AI analyze that voice and tell [it] what to say, and it will represent that person’s voice.”

Janis herself was sure it was her daughter on the phone. “The first voice I heard was easily identifiable as my daughter. Through that conversation had no doubt I was talking to my daughter. I had no question that it was my daughter’s voice. It just wasn’t my daughter.”

District Attorney Fran Chardo of Dauphin County says that if this ever happens to anyone, their best option is to report it immediately. He says, “I wouldn’t be able to expect us to track down these individuals, but we can try . . . They’re playing on the psychology of someone who is going to act quickly and send money or whatever it is, so they are playing on people’s worst fears.”

“It never occurred to me that this is something I could be captivated by,” says Janis. “The key is awareness and making everyone aware that this is occurring and they’re targeting a wider array of people.”