

# Moak

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if Brad had really been in an accident, his first call would be to his dad, who lives nearby. “Brad would have called his dad before he even got out of the wrecked car,” she noted.

This is a textbook version of the grandparent scam, in which the caller lays out a potentially believable story, then asks for money — throwing in a few details along the way to make the story sound legit. Since obituaries contain a lot of details about the deceased person’s family, locations and interests, they can be a potential treasure trove of information for would-be scammers.

And, if our suspicious senior had not been skeptical about the call she got that day, she might have been taken in. But it’s the details that gave the scammer away: subtle differences in the words he used, departures from normal behavior and facts that just don’t add up. Unfortunately, many people each year fall victim to scammers using these tactics, sending millions via Western Union or Green-Dot, never to be seen again. These crooks know their devious craft and do their homework.

This lady’s story illustrates the fact there is danger from these scams, and how having presence of mind can help you detect when a story is not all it’s being claimed to be. If you get a call like this one, exercising a bit of skepticism can keep you from making a costly mistake if you fall for it.

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