

For Immediate release

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A JURY SCAM HAS RETURNED TO FAYETTE COUNTY.

According to Fayette County Clerk of Courts, Sheila Studdard, callers are reporting being contacted by individuals posing as a Fayette County Deputy Sheriff. The caller states, *“You failed to report for jury duty and a warrant is being issued for your arrest.”* When residents respond that they never received a jury summons or notice to appear in court, the callers tell them that in order to avoid arrest and incarceration a fine can be paid by a credit card or even a type of banking ‘app’ from the resident’s phone or by a “green dot card” purchased from a local drug or grocery store, typically a nationally known chain. “Green Dot cards”, and other similar cards, are prepaid MasterCard and Visa cards available at stores throughout the United States. Studdard explains, “Since COVID, my staff regularly contacts jurors for scheduling purposes but would never conduct a financial transaction with any potential juror. Plus, in Fayette County a warrant is not issued for failure to appear at jury duty. If you receive a call from anyone who says he or she works for my office or Sheriff Barry Babb’s’ office and the caller asks you to pay a fine by a card or by a banking ‘app’, make a note of the caller’s phone number, then hang up the phone and do not talk to them.”

The scam’s bold simplicity may be what makes it so effective. The caller is counting on you be afraid. Facing the unexpected threat of arrest, victims are caught off guard and may be quick to respond to avoid being jailed. “They get you scared first”, says Studdard. “They get people saying ‘Oh my gosh! I’m not a criminal. What’s going on?’”. That’s when the scammer offers you a solution that will clear up the problem—just pay the fine, payable by a green dot card or credit card

or 'app' over the phone. Studdard states the scam has been occurring periodically for the last decade, but recently the scammers have become more sophisticated with their approach. In the latest attempts, the scammers have used the name of those on the command staff in the Sheriff's office and have also used Sheila Studdard's name to try to convince potential victims the scam is authentic. The Clerk of Courts further states, "Under no circumstances should feel intimidated to the point that you purchase prepaid cards and give the card numbers over the phone. Innocent citizens have been scammed of large amounts of money around the state; the latest attempt in Fayette County involved the scammers asking for \$2,500." If you have any concerns regarding jury duty, the Clerk of Courts staff that performs jury management can be reached at 770-716-4310 or by email at jury.fayette@gmail.com. Please share this information to ensure that no one you know falls victim to these impersonators.