



State Attorney
18th Judicial Circuit
Brevard and Seminole County



State Attorney William Scheiner

The Monthly Brief

Volume 13 Issue 9

September 2025

Huge Red Flag: Insisting You Pay With Bitcoin

Criminals are manipulating victims into depositing cash into Bitcoin ATMs or other crypto kiosks, which converts the money to untraceable cryptocurrency and sends it to scammers' digital wallets.

Satellite Beach Police recently published a "Bitcoin Scam Alert" that warns: "No government agency or business will ever demand Bitcoin. Protect yourself and spread the word – Bitcoin ATMs are for scammers, not for solving problems."

Such scams begin with a phone call, text, or online message warning of a made-up crisis to create fear and urgency. Then, the scammer instructs the victim to withdraw a large amount of cash from their bank and use a nearby crypto kiosk to pay off an alleged debt or to "protect" their savings in a special secure account.

The victim deposits the cash into the machine and then sends the cryptocurrency to the scammer's digital wallet, sometimes by scanning a QR code sent by the criminal. Once the cryptocurrency is transferred, the scammer moves it quickly, making the money nearly impossible to trace or recover.

AARP shares the story of a woman who received a pop-up message on her computer screen saying she had been hacked. It gave her a number to contact, supposedly at Microsoft. When she called the number, she was told someone had gotten into her bank account and was about to send three money orders to "child porn sites in China."

To stop that from happening, she was told, she had to quickly deposit money in a "federal safety locker." But it wasn't Microsoft on the other end of the line, and the "federal safety locker" was a Bitcoin teller machine in a nearby liquor store. Soon after the woman inserted \$4,400 in \$100 bills, she knew it was a scam.



X/AI illustration

Don't transfer your money to 'protect' it

More people than ever, especially seniors, are losing big money to scammers who offer to "protect" their savings after sending them phony fraud alerts by text or email.

All victims must do to protect their assets, they're told, is urgently withdraw cash from their accounts and transfer it to the scammers at whatever agency they purport to represent.

Lake Mary Police recently warned residents about one typical come-on: A scammer sends a text asking if you authorized a large wire transfer for a specific sum such as \$15,342. If you reply "no," the scammer immediately calls your phone to urge you to withdraw money from the bank and send it to a new account (theirs) for safekeeping. Your reply lets the scammer know their spam message has reached a "live one."

Biggest lies: The Federal Trade Commission says the most common lie scammers use to persuade you to accept their "help" is that someone is fraudulently using your accounts. Scammers pretend to be bank employees warning you about suspicious account activity. Or claim to be Amazon reps flagging potentially fraudulent purchases.

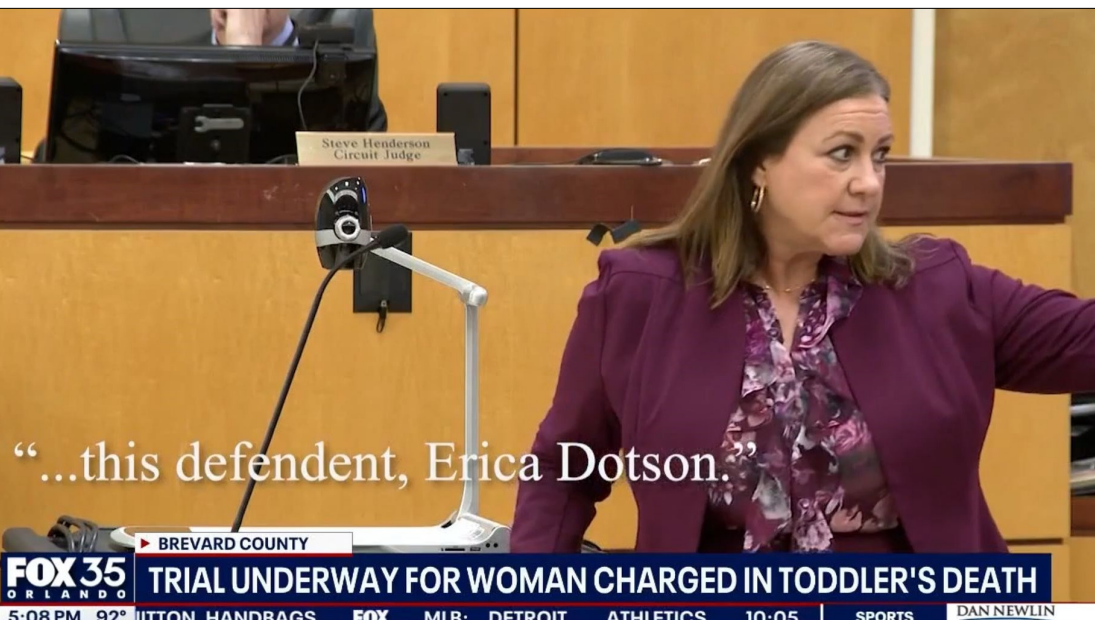
What to do: Don't respond to the message. Contact your bank or Amazon directly to investigate. As the FTC warns: "Someone who says you have to move your money to protect it is a scammer. Period."

Been Scammed?
Where to call first

Brevard County
Sheriff's Office
321-264-5201

Seminole County
Sheriff's Office
407-665-6650

Law & Order News



“...this defendant, Erica Dotson.”

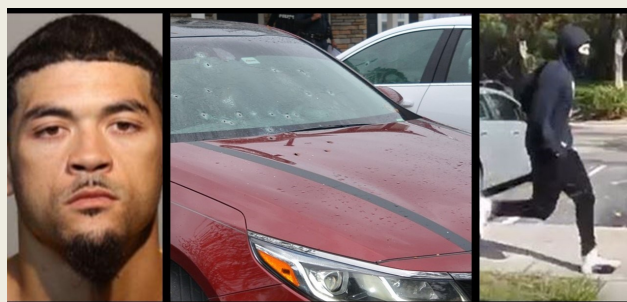
BREVARD COUNTY
FOX 35 ORLANDO
5:08 PM 92° HUTTON HANDBAGS FOX MLB: DETROIT ATHLETICS 10:05 | SPORTS DAN NEWLIN

Death penalty trial: Assistant State Attorney Samantha Barrett made opening arguments in the trial of Erica Dotson, who was charged with murder and aggravated child abuse in the death of her three-year-old son, Jameson, in West Melbourne in 2021. Barrett was joined by ASA Christine Babb in seeking a guilty verdict and the death penalty for Dotson. The trial in Viera was expected to continue into mid-September. (Fox 35 image from media-pool video)

Sanford Man Convicted For Deadly Automatic-Rifle Ambush

A Sanford man has been convicted of murder for gunning down 18-year-old Isaiah Diaz with an automatic rifle while the victim was parked in a car at an apartment complex in 2022. A Seminole County jury also found THALLAS J. INMAN guilty of trying to shoot and kill two other young men who were in the car.

During a six-day trial, prosecutors Stewart Stone, Rich Coln and Donovan Wagner overcame hostile witnesses and made the case that Inman, 23, was guilty of first-degree premeditated murder, two counts of attempted first-degree murder, shooting into a vehicle, and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon



Inman now faces life in prison. Sentencing is scheduled for October 7. Police did not positively identify or arrest Inman's two accomplices in the 2022 shooting.

In another ongoing case, Inman is one of 12 defendants indicted for murder and six counts of attempted murder for a drive-by shooting at members of a rapper's entourage who were riding in a Sprinter van after a concert in Seminole County in January 2023. The shooting killed passenger Princess Tolliver, 31, and injured five other women in the van.

Merritt Island Boat Parade Crash Sends Man to Jail

A Merritt Island man was sentenced to 60 days in jail and ordered to pay restitution for recklessly crashing his speedboat, styled after a Corvette, into another boat during the 2024 Christmas Boat Parade on Sykes Creek.

CAMERON T. MICHAELS, 26, was convicted of reckless operation of a vessel and inflicting injury by culpable negligence, both first-degree misdemeanors.

At his sentencing hearing, prosecutor Jennifer Kalra called for jail time and played a parade spectator's mobile-phone video of the crash. It showed Michaels revving his boat's engine and swerving to show off for the crowd – then crashing through another parade boat and sending its passengers flying.

Needelman's Death Ends Public Corruption Case

Former Brevard County Clerk of Courts Mitch Needelman's passing means he will not stand trial for bribery, bid-tampering, and official misconduct during his time in office, 2012-2014.

Needelman was convicted of those charges in 2017, but a circuit judge ordered a new trial due to juror misconduct. In June, another judge ruled that Needelman was competent to stand trial again.

Said State Attorney William Scheiner: "Loss of life is always sad. Despite his medical conditions, Mr. Needelman knew right from wrong, which is why we continued to prosecute him on corruption charges despite years of setbacks and delays. I'm disappointed we will not be able to secure justice and restitution from Mr. Needelman to the Brevard County Clerk of Courts office like we were able to do with his charged co-defendants."