

# FRAUD ALERT



the Jefferson / Gilpin Counties'  
District Attorney's Office



## Put an End to Scam Calls!

by Cary Johnson

Perhaps nothing has been more of a pariah to the American public than the proliferation of scam calls. One tries to implement every safety measure possible, when out and about, and then via email or telephone, a scammer enters your living room or study. Many Americans are furious that nothing, seemingly, can be done to stop these attacks.

Are these calls problematic? In October of 2020, 5.1 billion robocalls were placed in the United States. That's just *one month*. In fact, one-third of all calls in the first six months of 2018 were robocalls and scams. Robocalls are the number-one consumer complaint made to the Federal Trade Commission.

A couple of years ago, the Federal Communications Commission began allowing telephone carriers to block robocalls that appear to be fraudulent. These are calls where robocallers manipulate information that shows up on your caller ID, such as using an area code out of your state, or putting the consumer's own name and number in the caller ID, to trick consumers into answering. Most of these calls (95 percent), however, come via small networks and not the large carriers, such as AT&T, T-Mobile, and Verizon. Experts state that the new regulations are great but that they will only block about 10 percent of robocalls. So even though your phone carrier is becoming better at showing a call to be 'spam' or a 'scam', in actuality they are blocking very few calls.

Enter 'robotic call blockers.' Your normal phone server blocks calls on the basis of numbers that haven't been assigned to a phone carrier, are not in use, or are from nonexistent area codes. Robotic call blockers possess technology that is able to recognize when a call coming into your phone has been generated by a computer. Most scammers only use a computer for their dial-ups. They purchase names and phone numbers, from an information broker, slot 1000 numbers into a computer and when someone picks up, they jump on, begin a

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**NEXT  
TRIAD**

**NOVEMBER 22:  
We will welcome  
Jill Lorentz, who will  
speak about Alzheimer's  
disease and new research in  
its prevention.**

**JANUARY 24:  
Our Chili Warm-Up will  
be back!**

**Triad meetings are at 1:30  
in the Training Room.**

**No TRIAD meeting in Dec.**

**For questions or concerns, please call the FRAUD HOTLINE: 303-271-6980**



DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
GILPIN & JEFFERSON COUNTIES



District Attorney  
Alexis King

from page 1...

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conversation, and then return to computer call-ups when that call is finished. Robotic call blockers recognize that a call has been generated by a computer and block the call before it ever rings to your phone. A consumer can check their recent calls, at the end of a day, and see that 10 calls came in, but none of them rang to your phone. Not only do scam calls not get through but the irritating ring of your phone, all day long, ends.

The only adjustment to using a robotic call blocker is that a doctor's office may use a computer to make appointment reminder calls. This was my case so I called my medical provider and asked if they could send a reminder text instead and they happily agreed to do so.

Robotic call blockers are the way to stop scam calls from every ringing to your phone. I would encourage you to do a computer search on robotic call blockers. Here are some ideas I found:

**RoboKiller** blocks all computer generated calls and includes a 'bot' that will answer in the voice of Ice T or Kermit the Frog and try to waste the scammers time in meaningless conversation. Cost is \$4.99 per month with some cheaper payment options. RoboKiller also has an application to block scammers from sending texts to your phone. It is called TextKiller and is free with premium services.

**True Caller** is free but if you want a version with more features, it is \$29.90 per year.

**NoMoRoBo** is free for those with VoIP phone service and \$1.99 per month for smart phones. They have a 'maximum' service which allows the user to add three more lines to the call blocker. This has a cost of \$4.17 per month.

If you have a plug-in-the-wall phone, you can still get all the protection of a robotic call blocker. It involves a box that you plug your phone into and then plug a line into the wall. These blockers can be found on Amazon and range from \$60-145.

Get one of these products and be done with scam calls.

Now is a great time to schedule a crime prevention presentation from the District Attorney's Office. One presentation covers ID theft prevention and a second presents "The Five Red Flags of Scams." To schedule, contact [csjohnso@jeffco.us](mailto:csjohnso@jeffco.us) or call 303-271-6970.

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GILPIN & JEFFERSON COUNTIES



District Attorney  
Alexis King