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NEWS RELEASE
NOVEMBER 10, 2020

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**MALDEN MAN ARRAIGNED ON CHARGES HE SCHEMED TO STEAL FROM
SOUTH SHORE ELDERLY VICTIM**

HINGHAM – A Malden man has pleaded not guilty to charges that he schemed to steal \$8,000 from an elderly woman, Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz has announced.

James P. Charles, 49, of Malden, pleaded not guilty yesterday in Hingham District Court to one count each of Larceny Over \$1,200 by False Pretense and Larceny Over \$250 from a person over 60. Charles was additionally charged with two counts of Money Laundering and Conspiracy. The Commonwealth requested that Charles be held on \$200,000, with the conditions that he surrender his passport, wear a GPS monitoring electronic bracelet and stay away and have no contact with the victim in this case. Hingham District Court Judge John P. Stapleton set bail at \$5,000 cash and Charles was ordered to stay away from the victim.

On April 16, 2020, an elderly victim contacted Hanover Police to report that she had received what appeared to be a fraudulent phone call from a male party claiming to be a family member in need of urgent help. The alleged family member reported that he had been arrested in New Hampshire. The alleged family member then turned the phone over to another male who identified themselves as an “attorney” and told the victim that he needed \$8,000 to post bail for her alleged family member and arranged to send a courier to pick up the cash. The victim followed the instructions given and a courier arrived at her home to pick up the money. The victim requested a call back from the “attorney” and did not receive one. After confirming the whereabouts of her family member, the victim determined that this was a scheme and she had been defrauded of \$8,000 and contacted Hanover Police.

Following an extensive investigation by Hanover Police, along with Massachusetts State Police Detectives assigned to the Plymouth County District Attorney’s Office, it was determined that probable cause existed to charge Charles as the organizer of this scheme. Hanover Police Detective Stephen Moar sought and obtained an

arrest warrant for Charles. Charles turned himself into Hingham District Court yesterday. He is next scheduled to appear in court on January 19, 2021.

DA Cruz has worked to warn residents, especially the elderly, to be cautious and wary of potential scams. Residents should use extreme caution when relinquishing their personal or financial information over the phone or online, and anyone who believes that they may have been scammed or that their information was comprised should contact their local police departments. There is also information contained on our website at PLYMOUTHDA.COM.

“Coronavirus and social distancing are not going to stop those determined to take advantage of unsuspecting victims out to steal a person’s vital personal and financial information,” DA Cruz said. “During this pandemic, we are all working daily to stay healthy and safe, and we need to practice this same vigilance every time we pick up the phone and while operating online.”