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# Scam takes ultimate toll on victim

## 95-year-old man passes away a few weeks after losing RM18,000

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**PETALING JAYA:** A 95-year-old retired civil servant was so distressed after losing money to scammers that it took a toll on his health.

His troubles were compounded after he unwittingly shared his daughter's contact number with the scammers, causing her to lose over RM20,000.

Just six weeks after losing over RM18,000, SA Nathan fell ill and was hospitalised for a chest infection a day after celebrating a quiet Christmas at his house in Ampang.

On Dec 30, Nathan passed away at a private hospital.

His daughter Getrude Nathan is very upset over the incident.

"My father's health had deteriorated a few months ago due to a fall. Getting scammed aggravated his condition.

"He was also saddened that he had involved me in it.

"It's been a week since he left us and we miss him, especially my mother who had been married to him for 66 years," she said.

The 56-year-old housewife said their troubles began when her father received several text messages on Nov 15 last year alerting him of charges of over RM18,000 made to his credit card which were transferred to a Touch 'n Go (TnG) ewallet.

The nonagenarian then received a phone call from an unknown number, with the caller claiming to be an officer with the bank, telling him that his credit card had been hacked and unauthorised withdrawals were made, Getrude recounted in an interview.

"He was also asked to reveal details of the text messages he received.

"Strangely, prior to receiving the call, my father had reached out to the bank about an hour earlier and enquired about his

credit card statement," she added.

Unsure of what had happened, Nathan referred the caller to Getrude.

More than an hour later, she received several text messages for charges made to her credit card amounting to over RM20,000 that were credited to a TnG ewallet, she added.

"Then a 'bank official' called me and claimed that my credit card, also issued by the same bank as my father's, had been misused in the same way and requested I reveal the contents of the text messages to block and deactivate my card.

"It was a brief oversight as the call appeared to be genuine. I shared the OTP (one-time password) but quickly hung up when I suspected that it could be a scam.

"Minutes later, I called the bank and TnG to alert them of what had happened," Getrude said.

She claimed that TnG staff then

told her not to worry as the funds in the ewallet were "floating" and yet to be withdrawn by the scammers.

She lodged two police reports over the incident and submitted copies of them to TnG and the bank.

However, the scammers still managed to withdraw the "floating" RM20,000 three days later on Nov 18, she said.

"The bank later told my dad and me that it would not bear responsibility for the losses," she said.

While admitting her laxness in revealing her confidential information, Getrude said she had promptly alerted her bank and TnG of the incident.

"I am still puzzled as to how the 'floating' sum was withdrawn even after I had instructed the bank and TnG to freeze and cancel the charges.

"I am now left to bear the charges of almost RM40,000," she said.

TnG's growth marketing and communications head Emilio Sta Maria said Getrude's credit card was used by scammers to reload a TnG mule account.

He said their checks showed that the victim had provided the scammer with her OTP and also the six-digit personal identification number (PIN) to authorise the charges to her credit card.

"Her call to TnG was more than 30 minutes after the incident. The scammer had actually transferred out the funds within 30 seconds after the reload took place.

"We have also shared relevant information with the issuing bank of the credit card for investigations, but this is deemed a transaction conducted by the victim," he said.

Sta Maria added that TnG had informed the victim that they could only freeze her personal TnG account and not the mule account to which the funds were transferred.