

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. —

A longtime scam continues to target local victims. The Better Business Bureau of Northeast Florida is warning taxpayers of a scam in which criminals are claiming to be representatives of the U.S. Treasury and Internal Revenue Service.

Daniel Purvis of Jacksonville received multiple calls from the scammers.

“I’m calling about an enforcement action taken by the U.S. Treasury,” the message said. “I advise you to cooperate with us, and help us to help you.”

Purvis, a small business owner, was told he owes five years of back taxes to the IRS, and that if he refused to pay, he’d spend even more time behind bars.

“They still called until 8 or 9 p.m. that night,” Purvis told Action News.

“All you can do is ignore it,” said Tom Stephens, president of the BBB. “They hope eventually that someone will call back.”

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Stephens said Purvis was the target of the scam that continues because it is working. Ironically, Stephens received the same calls from the same person, who called himself “Steve Martin.”

Purvis said he knew he wasn’t guilty, so in hopes of saving others time and money, he gave the scammer a taste of his own medicine.

“I called ‘Steve Martin’ in excess of 60 times,” said Purvis. “I thought, ‘Maybe they’ll quit doing it if they get enough of the right people.’”

Hours later, Purvis said the calls did stop, but he and Stephens both recommend just ignoring them.

“If you get a call like that,” advised Stephens, “the best thing you can do is hang up the phone.”

According to Stephens, the IRS will never contact customers over the phone regarding notices of payments owed. He said the agency will first contact debtors through U.S. mail.

The Better Business Bureau also issued the following advice for consumers:

- Do not rely on caller ID alone to authenticate a caller. Criminals can spoof caller ID numbers.
- Hang up on any caller that makes you uncomfortable or tries to pressure you into making a payment without any written proof of a debt owed.
- Place your phone number on the [National DO Not Call Registry](#) and report illegal calls.