



Ventura County  
**DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE**

**Erik Nasarenko** - District Attorney



Ventura  
**POLICE DEPARTMENT**

**David Dickey** - Police Chief

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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May 12, 2026

### **Defendants Plead Guilty After Ventura Police Disrupt Elder Scam Operation**

VENTURA, Calif. – Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko announced today that Shaohua Sun (DOB 08/20/86), of Monterey Park, CA, and co-defendant Yanwen Gu (DOB 03/20/86) of Rosemead, CA, each pled guilty to felony conspiracy to commit elder abuse. Sun and Gu also admitted to multiple overt acts and special allegations including that the manner in which the crime was committed indicated planning, sophistication, and professionalism, and that the victim was particularly vulnerable. Prior to entering his guilty plea on May 7, 2026, Sun surrendered \$25,000, representing full restitution in this case. Gu pled guilty on May 11, 2026.

“Thanks to the outstanding investigative work and quick coordination by the Ventura Police Department’s Street Crimes Unit, these defendants were stopped before they could further exploit a vulnerable senior citizen,” District Attorney Nasarenko said. “These scams are designed to prey on fear and isolation, and they can happen to anyone. We encourage families, neighbors, and caregivers to regularly check in with the elderly members of our community and remind them to never hand over money.”

On March 18, 2026, a local senior citizen received a text message instructing him to confirm an alleged \$350 Apple Store purchase using his credit card. This text message included a phone number directing the senior to call “immediately.” Once on the phone, an unidentified co-conspirator falsely claimed the elder victim’s local credit union account was linked to supposed child sexual abuse materials (CSAM) content based in Canada. The elder victim was then directed to call a telephone number supposedly belonging to the “Ventura County Credit Union Fraud Department.” The caller, identifying herself as “Jade,” instructed the victim to immediately withdraw \$25,000 in cash and meet a purported undercover police officer in the City of Ventura to surrender the funds as “evidence.” During this phone call, the elder victim was provided a “code phrase” to recite to the alleged undercover officer at the meeting prior to handing over the \$25,000 in cash. Unfortunately,

the victim complied, traveled to the meeting location where he was met by an unidentified co-conspirator who took the \$25,000 after the victim provided the “code phrase.”

Shortly after this exchange on March 18, 2026, the elder victim and his spouse suspected they were defrauded and contacted the Ventura Police Department (VPD) to file a crime report. On March 19, 2026, while VPD Street Crimes Unit detectives were interviewing the elder victim concerning the crime that occurred the day prior, “Jade” contacted the elder victim again, this time requesting \$50,000 in cash.

Ventura Police detectives quickly coordinated an operation and monitored communications with the suspects, who detectives believed were operating as part of a larger fraud network outside the United States. Detectives arranged a second meeting in Ventura, where the suspects expected to receive another package containing \$50,000 in cash from the elder victim.

On March 19, 2026, Gu approached the elder victim, accepted a “code phrase,” then took what she believed was \$50,000 in cash. Ventura Police officers immediately arrested Gu after she attempted to flee on foot. Officers determined Sun acted as a lookout for Gu during the March 19 exchange and he was also arrested after Gu took the package from the elder victim.

“The victim’s decision to give us a call and work with our detectives was critical in helping us stop this scam before additional money was lost,” said Ventura Police Chief David Dickey. “These scams are highly sophisticated and often target older adults. We encourage all community members to have conversations with their loved ones about these tactics and to report suspicious circumstances or activity immediately.”

Senior Deputy District Attorney Dominic Kardum, a member of the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office Fraud and Technology Crimes Unit, is prosecuting the case.

Gu is scheduled to be sentenced on June 9, 2026, at 9:00 am in courtroom 12 of the Ventura County Superior Court. Sun will be sentenced on June 12, 2026, in courtroom 12. Under the terms of their guilty plea Gu and Sun face up to four years in custody followed by a two-year grant of formal probation. Both remain in custody with bail set at \$500,000.

**Case: 2026007482**

**Defendant(s) Information:**

Shaohua Sun (DOB 08/20/86)  
Monterey Park, CA

Yanwen Gu (DOB 03/20/86)  
Rosemead, CA

**Charges pled guilty to:**

- PC 182(a)(1), 368(d) – Conspiracy to commit elder abuse

**Special Allegations:**

- CRC 4.421(a)(3) – Victim particularly vulnerable
- CRC 4.421(a)(8) – Crime indicates planning, sophistication, and professionalism



*Shaohua Sun*



*Yanwen Gu*

The Ventura County District Attorney's Office encourages the community to follow these tips provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation ([Elder Fraud — FBI](#)) to avoid becoming the victim of this type of scam:

- Be wary of unsolicited phone calls, texts, emails, or mailings directing one to act quickly, scan a QR code and or call a phone number listed on the solicitation.
- Recognize scam attempts and immediately end all communication(s) with the perpetrator.
- Resist the pressure to act quickly. Scammers often create a false sense of urgency to produce fear in their victim(s) and lure them into immediate action.
- Immediately call the police if you feel in danger or suspect potential fraud.
- Never give personal identifying information (PIN) over the phone, by text message, or email.
- Utilize current anti-virus software and malware protections on all electronic devices.

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