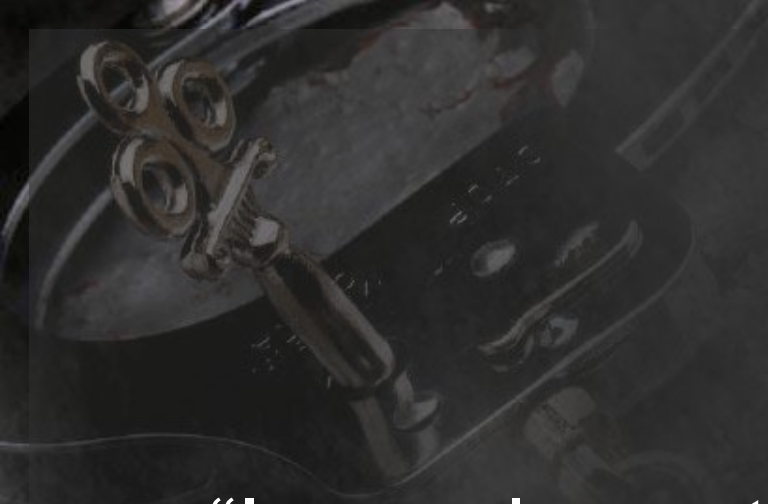




Investigation of Vulnerable Victim Cases
Martin Police Department
Criminal Investigation Division

A pair of scissors and a pen are visible in the top-left corner of the image, resting on a dark, textured surface. The scissors are open, and the pen is positioned vertically next to them. The rest of the image is a dark, textured background.

“I was always taught to respect my elders
and now I’ve reached the age when I don’t
have to respect anyone.”

George Burns

A pair of surgical forceps and a scalpel are visible in the upper left corner of the image, resting on a dark, textured surface. The forceps are metallic and have a curved handle. The scalpel has a sharp blade and a handle. The background is dark and slightly out of focus.

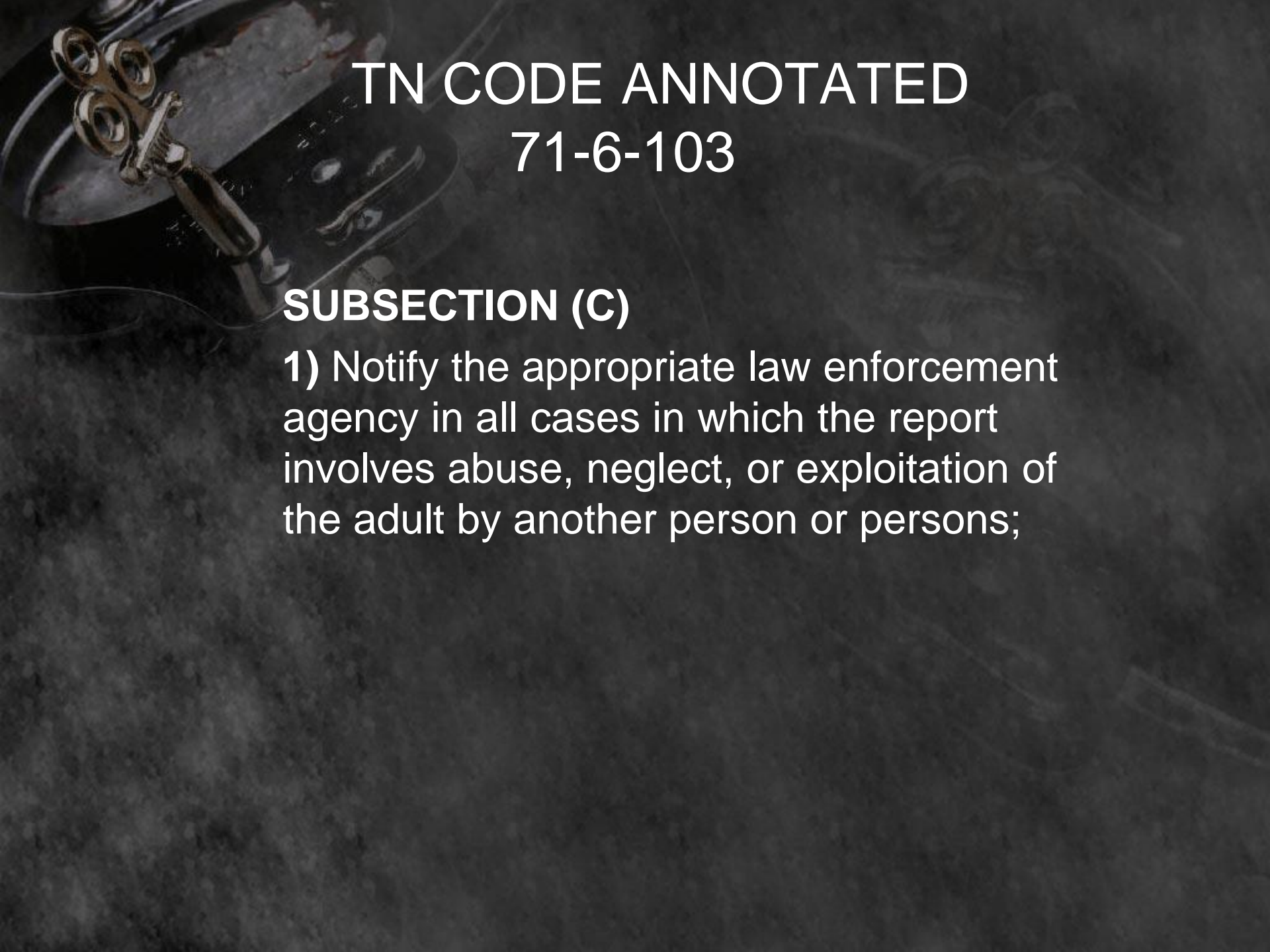
Eventually....

If we live long enough we may all end up vulnerable.

What is vulnerable?

Capable of being physically or emotionally wounded.

Open to Attack or Damage

A pair of gold-colored scissors and a pair of glasses are visible in the upper left corner of the image, resting on a dark, textured surface. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

TN CODE ANNOTATED

71-6-103

SUBSECTION (C)

1) Notify the appropriate law enforcement agency in all cases in which the report involves abuse, neglect, or exploitation of the adult by another person or persons;

A pair of silver scissors and a pair of glasses are visible in the upper left corner of the slide, resting on a dark, textured surface. The scissors are open, and the glasses are partially visible behind them.

Elder Abuse in Tennessee

- What is it? An intentional act, or failure to act, by a caregiver which causes harm to an older adult.
- Many times this is due to the victim living with someone that controls their access
- Bruises, behavior signs are often not seen by others on the outside

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Types of Abuse

- Physical Abuse, illness, pain, injury or functional impairment, distress or death as a results of intentional abuse.
- Hitting, kicking, pushing, slapping or burning.
- TCA 71-6-120 defines an elderly person who is age 60 or older. What is Vulnerable

A pair of silver scissors and a black stapler are visible in the upper left corner of the slide, resting on a dark, textured surface. The rest of the slide has a dark, mottled background.

Abuse

- Sexual Abuse involves forced or unwanted sexual interaction of any kind with an older adult. Does not matter if the act was accomplished or not.
- Neglect: The failure to meet an older adults needs. Including water, food, shelter, clothing, hygiene or medical care.
- **Financial Abuse: Unauthorized or improper use of an elders money, benefits,**

A pair of surgical forceps and a scalpel are visible in the upper left corner of the slide, set against a dark, textured background. The forceps are metallic and have a curved, pincer-like shape. The scalpel is partially visible, showing its handle and blade. The overall lighting is dim, creating a somber and clinical atmosphere.

Abuse Continued

- Emotional or Psychological Abuse refers to verbal or non verbal behaviors which inflict anguish, mental pain, fear or distress.
- Including humiliation, disrespect, harassment or isolation.

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Abuse of Vulnerable Victims

- Older persons who are vulnerable to abuse are characterized as having a measure of dependency
- Loss of autonomy, as well as being in a situation of high risk.
- Individuals at risk are often mentally and/or physically impaired, dementia or disability.
- Other risk factors include poverty, childlessness, living alone, social isolation and displacement.
- Persons who suffer from physical and mental states, or whose mental health is due to misuse of medication or abuse of alcohol or drugs are at high risk.



Similarities Between Child Abuse Elder Abuse

A pair of surgical forceps and a scalpel are visible in the upper left corner of the slide, set against a dark, textured background. The forceps are metallic and have a curved handle. The scalpel has a sharp blade and a handle. The overall scene is dimly lit, with the instruments being the primary light source.

Recognizing the Signs of Abuse

- Physical Abuse
- Burns or bruises that suggest cigarettes or other types of instruments
- Bruises on inner arm, thigh or soft parts of body
- Not reacting to pain
- Withdrawn or emotionless behavior

A pair of surgical forceps is shown on a metal tray in the upper left corner of the slide. The forceps are metallic and have two loops at the top. The tray is reflective and shows some shadows.

Sexual Abuse

- Suffering from sexually transmitted diseases
- Injury to genital area, or UTI
- Difficulty sitting or walking
- Fear of being alone with care provider
- Upset when being bathed, or examined
- Complaints of sexual contact, **DON'T BE IN DENIAL!**

A pair of keys is visible in the upper left corner of the slide, resting on a dark, textured surface. The keys are metallic and have a classic design. The background of the entire slide is a dark, mottled grey with a subtle texture.

TN. Law Concerning Abuse

- Offenses against vulnerable victims are covered by TCA
- Example: Aggravated Sexual Battery 39-13-504
- TCA 39-15-502 Financial Exploitation of Vulnerable Person
- TCA 39-15-506 Placement of Offender on Registry
- TCA 39-15-508 Aggravated Neglect of Vulnerable Adult
- TCA 39-15-509 Report of Neglect or Financial Exploitation/Failure to Report

A pair of surgical forceps and a scalpel are visible in the upper left corner of the slide, resting on a dark, textured surface. The forceps have a metallic sheen and are partially open. The scalpel is positioned below them, with its handle and blade visible. The background is a dark, mottled grey with some faint, lighter-colored patterns.

Neglect or Self Neglect

- Malnutrition
- Dehydration
- Lack of personal hygiene
- Chronic fatigue, unmet physical or dental care
- Unsafe living conditions, hoarding



Investigations

- Collaborative Effort Involving multiple agencies.
- Law Enforcement
- TN. Department of Adult Protective Services
- 27th District Attorney General's Office



Additional Resources

- TN. Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (DIDD)
- Collaborative Response to Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse
- Tennessee Department of Health
- City of Martin Senior Adult Center

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Where The Investigations Occur

- Investigation of all 1215 referrals concerning vulnerable victims
- Residence, care facilities, skilled nursing,
- Determination of which agency to contact for assistance.



Investigations

- APS determines if the allegation meets the criteria for assignment for APS investigator.
- Martin Police create report and file regardless of APS assignment
- For records and determining if any prior complaints for service have been filed or addressed.



Vulnerable Victim Investigations

Speaking with victim:

Can the victim convey the information?

Can they provide a written statement

Could the victim testify

What is the allegation

Is there physical evidence, injuries etc.

- Will the victim cooperate
- Other evidence, records, cell phones, other types of digital evidence.
- Will the victims family members assist, what if the offender is a family member.



Investigative Rules

- “Sometimes the most important thing a person has to say is what they are not saying.” Johnson
- Applies to victim or alleged offender

- “No man ever listened himself out of a job” Coolidge
Stop talking and listen. Drink a cup of shut up.

- “Keep an open mind and go where the evidence leads you” Avoid tunnel vision and foregone conclusions

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Physical Neglect Case Study

- Martin resident moved from care facility, due to concerns of monetary expenses
- Resident was placed back in home and cared for by family
- Resident was tied to bed for days, forced to lay on soiled linens, developed severe bed sores on back.



Financial Exploitation

- Unpaid bills, utility services turned off
- Inability to access accounts for funds
- Asking for money, essential purchases aren't made, food or medication
- Discrepancies in personal bookkeeping
- Caregiver is financially dependant on adult

A pair of gold-handled scissors is shown cutting through a stack of US dollar bills. The scene is set against a dark, textured background, possibly a desk or table. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the metallic sheen of the scissors and the texture of the paper money.

Internet / Phone Scams

- Case study.... Martin resident sent over \$20,000 from personal savings to phone solicitor trying obtain prize money.
- Case study...Martin resident sent \$10,000 in borrowed money from credit cards to obtain cash and BMW
- Case study... Martin resident sent \$6000.00 in cash to Florida in one hundred dollar bills placed inside magazine

A pair of gold-handled scissors is shown cutting through a stack of US dollar bills. The bills are fanned out, and the scissors are positioned diagonally across the top left corner of the image. The background is dark and textured.

Phone / Internet Scams

- Case study...Martin resident cashes worthless check for \$800.00 in order to send partial payment back to person “Imprisoned in South America”. Resident is charged for passing worthless check.
- Case study... Numerous residents receiving worthless lottery/sweepstakes checks by standard mail and email

A pair of keys and a pen are visible in the upper left corner of the slide, resting on a dark, textured surface. The keys are metallic and have a circular head with a small ring. The pen is dark and has a silver-colored clip. The background is a dark, textured surface with some faint, light-colored lines and shapes, possibly representing a map or a technical drawing.

Case Studies

- Employee of Care provider service using victim's personal checks to buy victim's groceries
- Employee also pays for \$750.00 worth of personal items while shopping.
- Son has mother endorse her check from Boeing while she is in care facility.

A pair of gold scissors is shown cutting through a stack of US dollar bills. The scissors are positioned in the upper left corner, with the blades open and cutting through the paper. The background is dark and textured, with the bills appearing as a stack of light-colored paper.

WHERE IS THE MONEY???

- If you give your personal info to the person directly they access your account and take it. Simply by striking a button on a keyboard
- IT CAN HAPPEN TO YOU
- PHONE SCAMS PREY ON IGNORANCE, TRUST, AND GREED



“NEVER PROVIDE ANYONE YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION”

- The social security office, banking institutions do not call people asking them to update their information on the phone or via email.
- If you receive one of these solicitations call the Martin Police Department or the U.S Secret Service.
- Don't become a victim, shred all your discarded mail, credit card applications etc, and do not open suspicious emails!

A pair of keys with a silver ring and a dark handle, resting on a dark, reflective surface. The background is dark and textured.

SCAMS CONTINUED

- If anyone calls you and advises they are coming to your residence to obtain their money, please call the police. Law Enforcement will be glad to meet with them 😊
- They wont show up, they never do!



HOW TO REPORT ABUSE

- If you suspect abuse call
 - 1-888-APS-TENN (277-8366)
 - THE TENNESSEE COMMISSION ON AGING AND DISABILITY
 - The Martin Police Department works with the Tn. Department of Adult Protective Services concerning all allegations of abuse

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Resources

- Tennessee Code Annotated Titles 70 and 39
- National Institute on Aging
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/infographics/spotting-signs-elder-abuse>
- TN. Commission on Aging and Disabilities
<https://www.tn.gov/aging/learn-about/elder-abuse.html>
- Martin Police Department Case File Archives



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Thank you for your time and interest