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P R E S S R E L E A S E

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Haunted by Previous Lottery Experience, Scratchers® Player Enjoys \$2 Million Worth of Redemption

Plus, a 'Frightening' Win for Another Player Who Also Scored a \$2 Million Top Prize

SACRAMENTO – It's not often a California Lottery player describes a win as leaving them haunted. But that's how Mehret Werrede claims she was left feeling after winning fifty bucks on a Scratchers game about six years ago. It's a day she'll never forget after buying three tickets from a newly opened pack of *Instant Prize Crossword* games.

"The first ticket didn't give me anything, the second one I won \$25, and on the third, I won was \$50," Werrede told the California Lottery. "I didn't buy a fourth." The reason that's such a painful memory, she explained, is because she later learned a player who bought that fourth ticket walked out of the store \$2 million richer!

"The clerk told me. Someone walked in the next day and won the jackpot. It was a horrible feeling. It's actually what's kept me trying," she said.

Six years of persistence finally paid off thanks to a what turned out to be a top-prize winning *Instant Prize Crossword* at Circle Liquor in La Habra (Orange County).

"I couldn't believe it finally happened. I was shocked! I went home to tell my husband what happened. He didn't really believe it until I got my check," Werrede said.

Elsewhere in Southern California, **Christopher Lopez** also won the \$2 million top prize playing an *Instant Prize Crossword*. Lopez told the California Lottery that he'd previously won \$200, then \$2,000, and finally \$2,000,000. All twos!



“I saw one comma then another, and I said, ‘Oh my God!’ The clerk said, ‘what is it?’ and I said, ‘I won,” Lopez shared. “It was great but also frightening at the same time – that much money.”

Lopez bought his winning ticket at a 76 gas station on Ventura Blvd. in Studio City (Los Angeles County). Lopez said he’s extra pleased he helped the California Lottery raise additional money for public schools.

“It’s good to know that the times I didn’t win, I was still helping kids,” he said. “That’s a good thing.”

Both Lottery retail partners earned \$5,000 bonuses for selling those winning Scratchers games.



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The California Lottery’s mission is to provide supplemental funding to California public schools, including kindergarten and grades 1-12, community colleges, the California State University, the University of California, and other California public educational entities. The funds the Lottery transferred to public education totaled more than \$2.07 billion for fiscal year 2021-22, which amounted to a modest percentage of education’s overall budget. However, this funding is largely discretionary, meaning schools can use this for important, yet unfunded instructional programs they would otherwise not afford. During the same period, the Lottery generated more than \$8.85 billion in sales, more than 95% of which went back to the community in the form of prize payments, retailer commissions and bonuses, and contributions to education. If you feel you have a gambling problem or know someone who does, you can get free confidential help by calling the California Problem Gambling Helpline at 1-800-GAMBLER.

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