



## Ocean Shores Police Informational Bulletin

### **Nigerian Real Estate Scam** **02/08/10**

It was brought to my attention today that an Ocean Shores couple nearly fell for a scam perpetrated via Craigslist. The scam works as follows, according to an FBI press release:

**Homeowners list their homes for sale with real estate agents, who will list the homes for sale in the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) and also with public search websites, which allow individuals to query homes for sale via the Internet. Nigerian scammers find homes listed for sale on these public search sites, copy the pictures and listings verbatim, and then post the information onto Craigslist under available housing rentals, without the consent or knowledge of Craigslist, who has been notified.**

**After the posting is listed, unsuspecting individuals contact the poster, who is Nigerian, for more information on the "rental." The Nigerian scammer will state that they had to leave the country very quickly to do missionary or contract work in Africa and were unable to rent their house before leaving, therefore they have to take care of this remotely. The "homeowner" sends the prospective renter an application and tells them to send them first and last month's rent to the Nigerian scammer via Western Union. The prospective renter is further told If they "qualify," they will send them the keys for their house. Once the money is wired to the scammer, they show up at the house, see the home is actually for sale, are unable to access the property, and their money is gone.**

(The full text of the press release can be found at <http://columbia.fbi.gov/pressrel/2009/co072209.htm> )

The Ocean Shores incident was nearly identical to the scenario as described above. Please keep in mind that scammers frequently use websites such as Craigslist to perpetrate their crimes. If you utilize Craigslist, please visit their scam information page at: <http://www.craigslist.org/about/scams> to become familiar with the scams and how to avoid them.

As always, please report internet related crimes to the Internet Crime Complaint Center at <http://www.ic3.gov> and/or your local law enforcement agency.

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