



FORT BRAGG POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Fort Bragg, CA 95437-5437

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Chief of Police

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PRESS RELEASE

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|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Releasing Officer: | Officer Thomas N. O'Neal |
| Report Number: | FG1501262 |
| Date / Time Incident: | October 14, 2015 / 11:13a.m. |
| Location of Incident: | Various Locations, Fort Bragg, CA |
| Crime or Incident: | Online Real Estate Scam |
| Victim(s): | Various |
| Suspect(s): | Unknown/International Based |

CIRCUMSTANCES:

Since October 14, 2015, the Fort Bragg Police Department has received several calls regarding a new online scam that is targeting our area. The scam works through online private sales sites such as Craig's List and involves the suspects locating homes for sale online and then fraudulently posting those homes for rent. When a victim contacts the suspect via e-mail to express interest in the rental, the suspect portrays themselves as being out of the area owners. The goal of the scam is to have the victims wire the suspects the initial deposit for the rental. The suspect then either ends communications with the victim, or attempts to obtain further funds for first month's rent, pet deposits, etc. Unfortunately, scams of this nature are difficult to investigate and nearly impossible to prosecute since the suspects operate almost entirely outside of the United States.

The Fort Bragg Police Department would like to once again, caution the community regarding conducting any private online transactions. The suspects in these crimes are growing increasingly sophisticated and are constantly changing their tactics. The public is encouraged to contact the Fort Bragg Police Department at 707-964-0200 for their assistance in investigating any suspicious online private transactions, prior to becoming a victim.

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