



PRESS RELEASE

- I. DATE OF PRESS RELEASE: July 25, 2013
- II. TYPE OF SITUATION: Fraud
- III. FACTUAL INFORMATION:

Over the past 4 weeks, the Livermore Police Department has received 16 complaints about a false advertisement on Craigslist involving suspect Donnelley Gopidas, an 18 year old Livermore resident. Gopidas placed an advertisement on Craigslist, listing his condominium for rent, waiting for potential "renters"/victims to contact him inquiring about the condo. Once a victim would contact Gopidas, he would arrange to meet them at the condominium to show it. The condominium is actually owned by Gopidas' family who was allowing Gopidas to live there unaware he was advertising it for rent. When Gopidas met with the potential "renters" he would have them sign a rental contract and collect \$1,300.00 for the security deposit and \$1,300.00 for the first month's rent. In most cases, Gopidas would not give the key to the victim at the time of signing because he said he was making repairs to the condo. He assured them he would provide them the keys before their move in date.

At the time of their move in date and waiting for their keys, victims were unable to contact Gopidas as he had been avoiding their numerous attempts to reach him. Gopidas had previously cashed the checks that he had been paid and the victims were unsuccessful at getting their money returned. As of date, the number of victims totals 16 with a dollar amount loss of approximately \$24,700.00.

On July 17, 2013, members of the Livermore Police Department authored a search warrant for 1087 Murrieta Blvd. and an arrest warrant for Gopidas. Livermore Police Department detectives served the search warrant at the condominium which was unoccupied at the execution of the search warrant.

Within a week of serving the search warrant, a previous victim received an email from Gopidas requesting \$1,300.00 for money "owed" on her move in date scheduled for July 25, 2013. Gopidas agreed to meet with this victim in Pleasanton for the transaction. Livermore Police Department detectives were monitoring this meeting and ultimately took custody of Gopidas.

It is anticipated that there may be additional victims of this fraudulent activity involving Gopidas. If you have fallen victim to this crime, please contact the lead investigator of this case, Detective E. Briggs at (925) 371-4779.

Although some victims took several necessary steps to protect themselves from this type of fraud, the Livermore Police Department recommends for potential renters to check the following when pursuing rental properties: Conduct a check in the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) for legitimacy of the property being rented, if applicable contact the Homeowners Association (HOA) about ownership of the property, obtain a key at the time of the contract signing, but the most importantly, "If the deal sounds too good to be true" it could possibly be a scam. In this particular circumstance, this condominium was being rented for \$500.00 under current value.



Suspect: Donnelley Gopidas

CONTACT PERSON:
PHONE NUMBER:

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