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News Release

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KPD warns public of online scam

LĪHU'E – The Kaua'i Police Department is warning the public to be aware of an online Craigslist property scam that attempts to steal and launder money from victims through gift cards or other transactions.

“Renters or prospective home buyers are strongly encouraged to meet homeowners and rental or real estate companies in person when verifying property,” said Investigative Services Bureau Acting Capt. Kennison Nagahisa. “Sight Unseen property transactions are highly discouraged, as verifying the property owner’s identity can be impossible.”

According to recent reports, scammers post pictures of actual properties taken from rental, real estate, or similar websites and claim it as their property to rent. When inquiries are made about the property on Craigslist, the scammers ask for personal information or security deposits before showing the property to prospective tenants. This practice is known as “Sight Unseen” property transactions. The scammers then request money to be sent via wire transfer, Western Union, prepaid credit cards, or gift cards. Once payment is sent, communication between the scammer ceases.

Residents are reminded to use the following scam prevention tips:

- Be wary of suspicious payment methods.
- Use caution when responding to unsolicited calls or e-mails, or unknown individuals on social networking sites.

- Do not answer or return calls from unknown numbers.
- Check your bank, credit card, and phone statements regularly. If you see an unknown or unauthorized charge, immediately notify your bank or service provider.
- Senior citizens are popular targets for scam artists as they tend to be more trusting of unknown individuals. Responsible family members should help to keep them safe.
- If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is.

If you or someone you know has fallen victim to this Craigslist scam or suspicious Craigslist scams or activity, please contact Kaua'i police dispatch immediately at 808-241-1711. Those wishing to remain anonymous can provide information by calling Crime Stoppers Kaua'i at 808-246-8300, submitting a tip at cskauai.org, or through the Crime Stoppers Kaua'i P3 Tips Mobile App, available for download on Android and Apple mobile devices.

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