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## Internet Scammer Hijacks a Golden Listing; Did You Send Him \$800 "Rent"?

I have written in the past about real estate scams, including a rental scam involving one of my own listings that surfaced this past week.

**30829 Robinson Hill Road** is a terrific 4-bedroom home on 2 acres, nestled in the foothills between Golden and Central City. It is listed for sale at \$495,000, but the owner is also offering to lease it for \$2,200 per month.

But the owner isn't the only person offering to rent this home. Getting pictures and information from its listing on [rentals.com](http://rentals.com), a Nigerian scammer posted a craigslist ad offering to rent it for \$800, claiming that he had to move abruptly to West Africa. He claims he will mail you the keys and documents after you wire him \$800 for the first month's rent, plus provide him with lots of identifying financial

information (useful in identity theft). I hope no one has fallen for this scam, but if they have, they can forget about ever getting their money back. Remember — the culprit is in Nigeria.

To build credibility, the scammer obtained the owner's name from the county assessor's website and secured a yahoo.com email address incorporating the real owner's name.

Except for the low rental price and some bad English so typical of email scams, the craigslist posting looked quite authentic, including as it did four pictures from the ad on [rentals.com](http://rentals.com).

Here are some actions which I took to halt this scam as soon as I discovered it. First, I found the ad and emailed its 8-digit craigslist ID to [abuse@craigslist.org](mailto:abuse@craigslist.org). This got the posting removed promptly.

Then I followed the other suggestions which are a click away on craigslist. The following warning, highlighted in yellow, appears whenever you reply to a craigslist posting:

**"Avoid scams and fraud by dealing locally! Beware any arrangement involving Western Union, Moneygram, wire transfer, or a landlord/owner who is out of the country or cannot meet you in person. [More info](#)"**

When you click on "More info", you get lots more useful advice, including that if you only deal with advertisers in person, you will avoid 99% of all craigslist scams.

**NOTE:** Placing your own ad on craigslist is a good defense, because craigslist will not allow a second ad with the same address.

If you are ever in doubt, you can contact Deb Ohno at the Jeffco DA's office by email at [dohno@jeffco.us](mailto:dohno@jeffco.us).

### REAL ESTATE TODAY



By **JIM SMITH, Realtor®**

### This Week's Featured New Listing:

#### Enjoy a \$7.67 Monthly Electric Bill Here!

Xcel Energy charges \$7.67 per month to be connected to their electric grid, plus usage. This home generates more electricity than it uses, thanks to its 5.9-kW photovoltaic system (barely noticeable on the south-facing right side of this home's roof). The \$41,000 system was installed in January 2009. Why buy a home with a big electric bill when you can buy this Golden home and pay next to nothing for electricity? Here are the other details of this Mesa Meadows home — **Main-Floor Master Suite** plus 3 guest bedrooms (2 upstairs and one in the basement); **3,200 Finished Sq. Ft.**; **Mountain Views** front & back; **Pet-Free** and **Smoke-Free**; **Home Theater** and **Gym** in the basement; **10'x22'** loft; on **Cul-de-Sac**; one block to **City Park** with playground, three blocks to an **Open Space Trailhead**.



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