Rental Scams on Craigslist Persist, With a 6th Listing of My Own Targeted

A couple months ago it was my listing at 1235 Pierce Street in Lakewood. This week it was my

listing at 5647 Gilbert Court in the 55+ patio home community known as Parkview Villas.

My first listing to be scammed this way was a home on Robinson Hill Road west of Golden a few years ago.

The scam is typically perpetrated by someone in Nigeria, who

finds a home for sale on the internet and advertises the same home for rent on craigslist at a belowmarket rental intended to generate lots of email inquiries. If this scam

is happening to so many of my listings, it is probably happening to other agents' listings.

The storyline that I hear most is that the owner has given up trying to sell his home and is desperate

to find someone who "will love this home as much as I do." He claims that he has taken a missionary



By JIM SMITH, Realtor®

assignment in Africa and can't show you the home, but if you will iust send a security deposit and the first month's rent, he'll mail to walk around the house and look in the for-sale sign in the yard." To build confidence, the scammer

learns the owner's name from public records and obtains an email address based on that name.

Such scams are only revealed when a suspicious renter calls the

> this case, me to make sure it's not a scam. During that call, I

always ask the caller to flag the listing on craigslist so that it is removed. In addition, I immediately install a sign rider warning visitors about the scam. (See picture.)

I'm not aware of anyone being successfully victimized on one of my own listings, but there must be enough victims to justify the persistence of these scams on craigslist. People who are victimized by such scams tend to keep it to themyou the keys. "Feel free selves, embarrassed to admit that they were fooled by an internet scammer, but that only supports windows, but ignore the continuance of the scam against other would-be renters.

> My advice to renters is that they search only websites like www. rentals.com which charge advertisers. Craigslist is free, and scam mers don't want to spend money.

Craigslist could do much more than it does to warn users of such listing agent — in scams. I'd like to see that website

replace its generic scam warnings with contextbased warnings — for instance, giving examples of rental scams when one replies to rental ads.

This Week's Featured New Listing

Affordable Ranch-Style Home Near Golden

Built in 2000, this home at 1541 Salvia Court has 1766 square feet of living space plus a spacious 2car garage. It sits on a wedge-shaped lot at the end of a quiet cul-de-sac in the Pleasant View area close to the National Re-



newable Energy Laboratory and east of Golden proper. With its 3 bedrooms and 2 baths, it would be a perfect starter home or a fine downsized home. Although it is located near the King Soopers on South Golden Road, it is accessed by car from Quaker Street on 15th Ave., which is just a block from a South Table Mountain Open Space trailhead. Homes in this price range are selling quickly, so visit its website, then call your agent or me for a showing! Open this Sunday, 1-4 p.m.



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