



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

PRESS RELEASE

1/5/17

ARREST WARRANT SERVED ON VISALIA MAN FOR RENTAL LEASE FRAUD

On December 22, 2016, investigators from the District Attorney's Office and Tulare County Regional Auto Theft Task Force arrested Nicholas Vallez, age 28, for an arrest warrant on multiple counts of grand theft and forgery related to false advertising and leasing a rental home.

Vallez was taken into custody without incident and booked into the county Pre-Trial Facility. He was charged with four felony counts of grand theft, five felony counts of forgery, one felony count of attempted grand theft, and five misdemeanor counts of theft. His bail was set at \$50,000.00. Vallez was arraigned on the charges on December 23, 2016.

In August 2016, it is alleged that Vallez falsely advertised on Craigslist to rent a home in north Visalia. When inquiries were made, Vallez arranged to meet at the house and conduct a walk through. Without the owner's permission, Vallez completed rental agreements and collected money to rent the home. When the prospective renters attempted to move into the house, they discovered Vallez had fraudulently made rental agreements with numerous others. One family was from another state and had all their possessions in a U-Haul to move into the residence.

The Visalia Police Department and the District Attorney's Real Estate Fraud Unit (REF) worked in partnership to conduct the investigation. Vallez will return to court on January 6, 2017 for a preliminary hearing conference in Department 3 of the Tulare County Superior Court, Visalia Division.

Fraudulent lease agreements can have far reaching effects on unsuspecting families. Not only can families lose their money, but it can leave them homeless. The District Attorney's Office is dedicated to combating fraud and Real Estate related fraudulent crimes. If you know of Real Estate related crimes, contact the Bureau of Investigations at (559) 636-5410.

*Media inquiries can be directed to the Office of the District Attorney, County of Tulare
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