



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
COUNTY OF TULARE

Tim Ward, *District Attorney*

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**PRESS RELEASE**

11/13/17

**CRAIGSLIST RENTAL SCAMMER SENTENCED**

On November 9, 2017, in Department 3 of the Tulare County Superior Court, Visalia Division, Judge Nathan Leedy sentenced Nicholas Vallez, age 29, of Visalia, to one year in jail plus restitution for real estate fraud. On May 1, 2017, Vallez pleaded no contest to one felony count of grand theft, one felony count of forgery, and one misdemeanor count of petty theft.

In August 2016, 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.

Prior to his sentencing, Vallez was required to pay \$5,000 to compensate his victims' financial losses.

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.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Trevor Holly and investigated by Criminal Investigator John Clark of the District Attorney's Real Estate Fraud Unit and the Visalia Police Department.

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