



# FRAUD ALERT!

Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office  
Sheriff Larry Ashley



## Rental Scam Catches Homeowners by Surprise

Investigators with the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office say there may be additional victims connected to a scam involving a Destin man who posed as a real estate agent and rented out vacant homes without the owners' knowledge.

40-year old William Richard Slattery III is charged with multiple counts of racketeering and posing as an licensed real estate broker. Deputies say Slattery, working under the name SGI Services, leased out vacant or abandoned homes on Quail Lake Boulevard, Harborwind Court and Cypress Street. In some cases, the homeowners, who knew nothing of the rentals, were filing for bankruptcy and the homes were in foreclosure.

Investigator Jim Hoisington says there may be additional victims in the area. Anyone with information is asked to contact Hoisington at the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office Criminal Investigations Division, 609-2014.

The Sheriff's Office Crime Prevention Unit encourages you to remember the following when renting:

- Always keep your doors and windows locked to your home.
- Beware of a rental deal online that sounds too good to be true.
- Homes that are legitimately for sale/rent are posted on realtor websites with pictures and descriptive information. This information can be copied and pasted to another site; check out the authenticity of the ad either by contacting a local realtor, requesting to speak by phone, or meet the person renting the property at the rental location. (If possible, **never go alone**).
- Do not wire money in exchange for a key or to "hold" the property.
- Be careful about filling out "applications" given to you by strangers; you may be giving personal information to an identity thief.

You can verify the owner of the home by checking with the Okaloosa County Property Appraiser's Office at <http://www.okaloosapa.com/>

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To report a fraud or scam call the  
Okaloosa County Sheriff's Office  
Fraud Hotline at 850-651-7674

