Ex-agent scams buyers in Craigslist dream home story gone awry

For Coty Houston and David Yost, the four-bedroom home they found on Craigslist was love at first listing sight.

According to an article on Cleveland.com, the house didn't signify a new place to lay their heads but a new life, one that would take them out of their current neighborhood plagued with drug activity and into the Cleveland suburb of Brooklyn Centre. The extra space would also allow more breathing room for their five kids.

The property clearly needed some major repairs, which wasn't a problem for the couple as Yost remodels homes professionally. After making the purchase, Yost got to work right away. But on June 22, a real estate professional came to the door and asked what he was doing there.

That's when the couple first got any hint that something might be off.

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Good agent, bad agent

Former real estate agent Matthew Boros, whose license was revoked after he failed to renew it in April, had listed the property on Craigslist, investigators say. He then climbed through a window of the house and posed as the owner to scam the family out of $5,000.

The couple found Boros to be "a nice, accommodating real estate agent" while "they never suspected anything was amiss," as reported by Cleveland.com.

After making a down payment, Boros told the couple that "they could save money and expedite the sale if they could give him another $4,000," and they obliged.

Matthew Boros allegedly scammed a Cleveland couple by posing as an agent and homeowner.

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That all seemed fine until the actual listing agent called Yost and demanded he leave the house or be reported for breaking and entering. Yost found the locks had been changed the following day. And his equipment? Gone.

After taking the payment records and sales contract to the police, the couple called Boros. He agreed to bring them more paperwork to show that the sale had been legitimate. Shortly thereafter, detectives took Boros into custody.

Lessons

This isn't Boros first trip down fraud lane — he's been convicted of simultaneously renting one property to two tenants.

Now it's a matter of whether and when Boros will be convicted of these charges (theft by deception, a fifth-degree felony) and ordered to pay restitution. He pleaded not guilty. Until then, the couple won't be getting that $5,000 back.

We've all been the starry-eyed buyer, whether our eyes are feasting on the biggest purchase of a lifetime or that fancy pair of shoes. Fortunately, we're usually not in a position to get scammed. However, it's in those times when proceeding with caution is the most difficult but also the most important.

Real estate clients might benefit from showing up to the listing appointment early, to make sure the agent gets in using a lockbox, questioning any early demands for upfront cash and, of course, using a buyer's agent.

#Realestate clients might benefit from showing up to the listing appointment early.

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