



Manhunt is on for rental scam suspect

By Cate Lecuyer

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BEVERLY — Police are on the lookout for Robert Booth, 31, alleging he swindled at least four people out of \$2,000 in an apartment rental scam through Craigslist.

Salem District Court issued warrants for his arrest; the warrants charge him with larceny over \$250 by false pretenses.

Police say that Booth, a former tenant at 40 Bartlett St., posed as the owner and landlord of the four-family apartment building and pretended to rent out a space on the second floor.

After showing people around, he met up with them later to sign a lease and collect combinations of first and last month's rent and security deposits, and then disappeared with the money, according to police.

"His whereabouts are not known at this time," Beverly police spokesman John McCarthy said. Anyone with any information is asked to contact police at 978-922-1212.

Meanwhile, McCarthy stressed the importance of researching the place you want to rent.

"Any prospective renter should always verify that the person with whom they are dealing is authorized to rent the apartment, whether it is a property manager, landlord or property owner," he said.

He recommended calling the Southern Essex County Register of Deeds at 978-542-1704, or doing a search online at www.salemdeeds.com.

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