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CRIME WATCH BULLETIN PLANO POLICE DEPARTMENT

OFFENSE TYPE: Cybercrime

DESCRIPTION: These simple precautions help to make Craigslist safer for everyone!

Protect Yourself from a "Robbery By Appointment"

If you use Craigslist, there's a new cybercrime we want to tell you about: According to MSNBC, a growing number of Craigslist users are being targeted for something known as "robbery by appointment." That's the term for when you agree to meet someone in person – to buy or sell an item advertised online - only to be robbed at gun-point, or worse. Experts say Craigslist robberies have become so common that the city of Oakland, California now averages one per day! In at least one case in Washington, a man was murdered during a Craigslist robbery. Most of the robberies involve high-ticket items – like cars, jewelry, computers, or smart phones, but they can just as easily involve bicycles or other items! That's because thieves may be more interested in grabbing your wallet than the item you're trying to sell. So how can you protect yourself from a Craigslist "robbery by appointment"?

- Insist on a public meeting place like a café
- Do not meet in a secluded place, or invite strangers into your home
- Be especially careful when buying/selling high value items
- Take your cell phone along if you have one
- Consider having a friend accompany you
- Trust your instincts
- Try using the Date Check app. It's not just useful for dating situations – it's useful anytime you're meeting a stranger. Just punch in the name of the person, and in seconds you'll have access to records showing whether they're a convicted criminal.

Also: Be suspicious of anyone who's overly eager to meet in person. In other words: If they spend more time discussing where to meet – instead of negotiating a price – that's a red flag!

Finally: If you do agree to meet face-to-face, police now recommend asking to meet at your local police station! As one Officer put it: "We're open 24 hours a day. So if a buyer won't agree to meet you there, then don't bother with them."

STAY SAFE

Residents are urged to immediately call 911 upon observing any suspicious person, vehicle, or circumstance.

If you have any information regarding suspicious persons or activity in your area, please call the Plano Police Department at (972) 424-5678.

Attention Area Coordinator: It is your responsibility to pass this information to your Block Captains.



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