

# Media Release

## Yavapai County Sheriff's Office

**Scott Mascher – Sheriff**

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928-777-7441



**August 19, 2015**

### *Recent Incidents Overview*

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**Cordes Lakes – Assault with a Deadly Weapon:** On August 15, 2015, 49-year-old Lance Denham was arrested and booked at the Camp Verde Detention on charges including Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon, Endangerment, and Threatening. He remains in-custody on a \$100,000 bond.



Just before 11 PM on August 15<sup>th</sup>, deputies were dispatched to a residence the 16000 block of S Rodeo Drive in Cordes Lakes regarding a male who had been shot with the suspect still on site. As deputies set up outside the home, a female jumped from a window and told deputies her boyfriend had been shot in the leg. Under threat of gunfire, deputies were able to assist the 28-year-old shooting victim through a bedroom window to safety. A few moments later deputies saw the suspect, Lance Denham, standing in a doorway holding a pistol. After several commands, Denham eventually dropped the pistol and was taken into custody. Another female was also found in the home, unharmed.

The victim told deputies he had been shot after confronting Denham about the treatment of his (the victim's) mother. Denham is apparently the boyfriend of the victim's mother. The victim was transported to a north Phoenix Hospital and scheduled for surgery to remove a bullet from his left leg. The injury was not non-life threatening. During an interview with deputies, the suspect stated he chose to shoot the victim in the leg, even though he could have killed him, because he believed the victim was going to attack him during a confrontation. Deputies indicated the suspect was intoxicated.

**Suspect in Fraudulent Schemes Crime Arrested:** On August, 18, 2015, 36-year-old Chino Valley resident Benjamin Dever was arrested and booked at the Camp Verde Detention on a charge of Fraudulent Schemes and remains in-custody. Bond has not been set.



Background – Dever has been working for a property preservation service during the past week and was assigned to take pictures of properties to confirm readiness to sell or rent.

Dever had previously inspected a property in the 2800 block of Meadow Lane in Prescott and was in possession of keys to the residence as a result of this employment.

On August 18, 2015, Dever contacted a woman who had placed a Craigslist ad indicating she was looking for a place to rent in the area. Dever explained he had a home on Meadow Lane that he could show her. He also mentioned he was a 'youth pastor' and in the business of flipping houses. When the prospective tenant met Dever at the Meadow Lane home, he told her he would need a money order in the amount of \$1050 to secure the rental. Dever suggested she hurry because many others were interested in renting the house. The woman eventually left without making any commitment or payment.

A short time later, Dever called the woman and told her he would throw in a washer and dryer if she would rent the place. The woman thought this was suspicious and decided to contact the real estate agent listed on a sign posted in the front yard. The agent told the victim she did not know Dever and indicated the likelihood this was a scam situation. The woman then called YCSO and also told Dever law enforcement had been contacted.

Deputies met with Dever at the Meadow Lane home along with the victim and the involved real estate agent. Dever told deputies there was a misunderstanding and he would have never taken any money from the victim. He did admit to representing himself as the property owner and simply guessing a dollar amount for rent. He offered that any money received would have been turned over to his employer and he hoping his effort would lead to more work as a property photographer.

The victim reiterated to deputies that it was Dever who expected her to turn over any money directly to him. She stated he never mentioned his employer or the real estate company in the discussion.

Dever is currently on parole for fraud and theft. Detectives confirmed he has no youth pastor affiliations. Dever is under investigation for another fraud scheme in the area.

The victim was smart and maintained a buyer beware state of mind while acting on her suspicions without hesitation. This type of scam, also known as 'property hijacking,' has been around for a while and many times associated with Craigslist ads.

***YCSO is requesting that anyone else who had contact with Dever related to similar fraud activity contact Detective Ross Diskin at 928-777-7389.***

*Citizens can contact the Yavapai County Sheriff's Office with information or questions at 928-771-3260 or the YCSO website:*

[www.ycsoaz.gov](http://www.ycsoaz.gov)