



# Paradise Valley Police Department **CRIME PREVENTION BULLETIN**

**December 2019**

*The Paradise Valley Police Department is providing this bulletin to keep residents informed on joint successes collaborating with our community.*

## **OUR MISSION:**

*Provide high-quality police services to our community, reduce crime and the fear of crime, and by working with all citizens, to preserve life, protect property, promote individual responsibility and encourage community involvement.*

## **Questions?**

**Steven McGhee**

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## **In the Cover of Darkness**

Written by Steven McGhee (#194) - Paradise Valley Police Officer

The holiday season is upon us and it should be a joyous time for all. Some will spend it on vacations, others can be found exchanging gifts, and some giving back to their community in their own unique ways.

Chris Smith is an example of such a person. He was on holiday in Paradise Valley. He was renting a property with his family when something unexpected occurred at about 12:30 am. It was more than he bargained for and he learned a valuable lesson that he wanted to make public to help others.

Chris told police his 14-year-old son was preparing to take a shower when the motion sensor on the outdoor light turned on near the rear patio. Moments later, the sound of a



*Masked suspect checking the occupancy of houses.*

doorknob beginning to jiggle, drew his son's attention, and woke other children within the household. Whatever made the light turn on outside was now trying to get inside. The son was about 18-inches from the door, unbeknownst to him, a real danger was waiting just outside in the cover of darkness.

Chris said his children rushed into the bedroom. One son said, "Someone's outside and trying to get

into the house!" Chris' natural instincts kicked-in as adrenaline rushed through his veins. As a protector of his family, friends, and their children staying with him, he immediately went outdoors to explore what was or might be happening.

Chris said for 12-15 minutes he searched through the rear yard of the rental property. Chris found the presence of

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### In the Cover of Darkness

something he had been dreading. A male wearing a light-colored clothed mask to shield his identity was hiding there. Chris said, “He was in our backyard! I got so close to him that he ran!” The male had been hunkered down in the rear yard unnoticed up until the very moment Chris discovered him in the darkness.

The thoughts one experiences can cause any parent to want to fight, run, or freeze in the face of danger. Where would the masked male run? Was he armed? Would he harm myself or the others?

Chief of Police Peter Wingert says, “We were fortunate no one was harmed during the incident which could have taken a sudden turn. I encourage residents to leave our non-emergency number with all

guests visiting and please call 911 if you are in doubt or feel unsafe. Our Officers are always nearby to help.”

Officers did respond that night. Alternative outcomes are a scary thought despite the male running away. Chris said, “Officer Karim was a great guy, super nice, and there in 3 minutes.” Additionally, Chris shared, “I wish I would have just called. We probably would have been able to get the guy. I was in the backyard trying to flush him out to get him away from my family.”

“The temptation of gifts being delivered has also increased the theft of mail this holiday season,” says Community Resource Officer Steven McGhee. “Mailboxes are being opened for gifts and packages are being picked up right off doorsteps by thieves carelessly helping themselves.” However, the use of video surveillance by residents is helping law enforcement iden-

tify some of the thieves and raising greater awareness for neighbors to stay vigilant and on the lookout.

The masked male from Chris’ incident was later found on cameras as he approached the front door of two other households, similar to many package thieves. One camera observed the masked male push on the front door of the resident in an attempt to enter it. Residents did contact police after reviewing video surveillance, but the masked male already made a getaway.

A lesson does not need to be learned through firsthand experience. Chris gives back to the community by sharing his story. Please keep your doors locked, think over how to safely send your gifts, and call the police the moment you have concern. Let’s create a safer community by watching out for one another, every guest, and for all.

## Vacation Watch

Officers and police volunteers help check on properties that are unoccupied during your vacation.

It helps narrow down a timeframe of an incident should something occur while out of Town. Officers have better chances of locating evidence and witnesses to solve crimes if there are regular checks.

Learn about the requirements by visiting our website then submit a Vacation Watch form online to us:

[www.ParadiseValleyPD.com](http://www.ParadiseValleyPD.com)

Click > Police Services

Click > Vacation Watch

## Neighbors by Ring

Residents can text ‘PVPD’ to 555888 from their smartphone to download the Neighbors app for free on iOS and Android and use the app to; join their neighborhood, share crime and safety-related videos, photos and text-based posts; and receive real-time safety alerts from their neighbors, local law enforcement and the Ring team.



### Paradise Valley Police Station

6433 E Lincoln Dr.

Paradise Valley, Arizona 85253

Non-Emergency: (480)948-7410

Emergency Calls: 911



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