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Release

Nevada State Contractors Board

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NSCB's Investigator's Hard-Nose Investigation Nabs Unlicensed Contractor Facing Sexual Assault Charges

An alleged unlicensed Northern Nevada contractor's nervous behavior and questionable driver's license birth date caught the attention of an alert Nevada State Contractor Board criminal investigator, resulting in the arrest of fugitive **Jose Alberto Ponce, 36**.

Ponce, using the alias Jose Edgardo Estrada, had been advertising his painting services on a local Reno bulletin board and Craig's List. He recently provided a \$1,400 painting bid to an NSCB criminal investigator, who questioned the name and birth date he provided. The investigator took his photo and ran it through the Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles facial recognition data base. Ponce's real name came back, along with felony warrants for alleged sexual assault, harassment and fraud.

The NSCB investigator then arranged a meeting with Ponce at a Stead, NV, gas station to correct the original citation for *contracting without a license*. The NSCB investigator also invited DMV compliance investigators to attend the meeting.

Ponce was arrested by DMV investigators without incident. He told the NSCB investigator he knew he was in trouble when the NSCB took his photo during the painting sting. Ponce was issued three citations for *providing false information to a public officer*, *contracting without a license* and *advertising without a license*.

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The DMV booked Ponce on four felonies and set his bail at \$27,500.

“This sting should serve as a warning that the NSCB is serious about cracking down on unlicensed contractors,” said Margi Grein, Executive Officer for the Board.

“Consumers should not be taken in by promises of cheap work performed by unlicensed contractors. In reality it may cost more, and the consumer is left with little or no protection.

“It is important for consumers to check the license status of any company they wish to hire at our website: www.nscb.state.nv.us,” she added.

In separate stings, **Rodrigo Marquez-Enciso** was issued a criminal citation for *contracting without a license*. He provided an electrical bid for \$200. **Phillip Turner, dba Northwest Granite & Tile**, was issued a criminal citation for *contracting without a license*. He provided a bid of \$5,407 for the installation of a granite countertop.

Contracting without a license in Nevada is a misdemeanor for the first offense, a gross misdemeanor for the second offense and a Class E felony for the third offense. Homeowners who use unlicensed contractors are not eligible for the Residential Recovery Fund, and by law their contracts are null and void.

“Unlicensed contractors can cost consumers thousands of dollars. They carry no insurance, are not bonded and have not met any standards of the trade they may be performing,” Grein said. “Enforcement stings conducted by NSCB are helping to rid our neighborhoods of these unscrupulous people.”

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Consumers can check whether a contractor is licensed by calling: (702) 486-1100 in Southern Nevada, or (775) 688-1141 in Northern Nevada. License checks can also be conducted on the NSCB website at: **www.nscb.state.nv.us**

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