



MYTHS AND URBAN LEGENDS

Just like the hundreds of email solicitations that have been circulating over the internet for several years so too are videos claiming to defeat crime prevention measures. You have seen them. Someone uses their cell phone to remotely open the door to their vehicle or better yet, uses a tennis ball. There are dozens of these types of videos to say the least. Similar to the emails that have circulated regarding victimization of a gang initiation or assault, they all have one thing in common: to instill fear or concern.

Sometimes it's hard to differentiate what's true and what's not. Many of the emails and videos posted on the web could be classified as urban legends. Although some of the tales may have a bit of truth behind them, the vast majority do not. They circulate very quickly. Some are pranks and others are created to gain attention. Just recently we saw a text message describing how employees of a nationwide retail store would be the target of an assault. The press picked up the story and ran with it without verifying its validity. It was proven to be a hoax. The person who was behind it must have enjoyed their 15 minutes of fame.

To find the truth we must use the very tool by which we received the email or video; the internet. Many of these claims can be verified by visiting sites such as www.snopes.com. By entering a couple of keywords in the search bar there is a good chance that you will find your answers and be able to verify the claim. You can also do a general search using popular search engines like Google or Yahoo. The crime prevention unit uses these same methods and in some cases has actually tested the claims.

Mythbusters, which airs on the Discovery Channel, has even taken on some of these claims. Two of these myths can be viewed here:

Tennis Ball Key:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TQ1jfhaL3Ec&feature=Playlist&p=19D20447B779FFE9&playnext=1&playnext_from=PL&index=10

Cell Phone Key:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oC_YdJeXouE .

Urban legends and email solicitations will always be out there. They will never go away. If you are concerned about what you read or see then take on the role of a detective and get to the bottom of the claim. When you find the truth remember to pass it on.

Need more information? Please contact the Crime Prevention Unit at 772-871-5303.

St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office

"Raising the Standard...Through Community Partnerships"