

## Be alert for movie prop \$100 bills

By Terry Ward | Posted: Sun 11:50 PM, May 29, 2016

**WOODSTOCK, Va. (WHSV)** -- If you obtain any large bills, you might want to double check them. If they don't say "FEDERAL RESERVE NOTE," but instead say "FOR MOTION PICTURE USE ONLY," well then they aren't real money; they're movie props.

Prop "\$100" bills have circulated in Richmond, Va., according to a business alert posted on the Woodstock (Va.) Police Department's official Facebook page. While it may not be illegal to possess such bills, trying to "spend" them as if they were real money usually qualifies as attempting to pass counterfeit money.



Photos shared by Cheektowaga Police Dept, composite by WHSV

With the spread of high definition television and movie cameras, prop makers have been making high quality full color paper "money" for studio use. A leading supplier, PropMovieMoney.com, says on its website, "If your scene or photoshoot requires an extreme close up or macro cinematography, our money props are perfect for your production." The company discourages possible illegal uses, saying online, "We cannot remove the 'FOR MOTION PICTURE USE ONLY'... and 'THIS NOTE IS NOT LEGAL TENDER' text on either side of the prop bills." PropMovieMoney.com also says "Any request that can make our prop money appear or pass as real currency in order to deceive an individual in an unlawful manner will be quickly turned down."

A quick look at online marketplace eBay showed various vendors offering \$10,000 stacks of prop new-style \$100 bills for sale for around \$10 per stack (example: <http://www.ebay.com/bhp/prop-money> ).

Prop notes have been appearing in rural New York state. Police charged Rinet Fox, 47, of Amherst with possession of a forged instrument and also notified the U.S. Secret Service after she allegedly tried to buy two jars of mayonnaise "and paid the clerk with the \$100 bill that felt funny to the clerk," according to a May 6 statement from the Cheektowaga (N.Y.) Police Dept.

Police in Cheektowaga also "received a report from a private citizen who unwittingly received three such \$100 bills when he sold some property to an unknown male," according to Asst. Chief Jim Speyer. Speyer warned "businesses, stores, and restaurants... to carefully inspect any large bills coming into their possession."

Speyer added, "This phony money looks very real and is used for props in the movie and entertainment industry.... 'prop' money should have the words 'For Motion Picture Use Only' or something very similar on both sides of the dollar bill."

Prop bills might have been artificially aged to give a more realistic look; bills are sometimes folded repeatedly to give a well-worn circulated appearance. However, the paper will usually not feel like actual currency paper. PropMovieMoney.com says on its website, "our prop money is meant to be used on camera so there is no need for props to 'feel' real."

Also, counterfeit-detection pens should identify prop bills as not being real money. An evidence photo that Cheektowaga police shared of a prop \$100 that someone tried to pass as real money in N.Y. state showed several dark ink lines on the bill. Those marks show where someone used a counterfeit-detection pen.

In late 2015, police in Westfield, Mass., told news media that people were trying to pass prop \$100 bills at businesses in their area. The notes had the same serial number as the N.Y. bills: PR 10008679 P.



