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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **Contractor Fraud Investigation**

June 1, 2016 – The Dane County Sheriff's Office is working on a contractor fraud investigation, and detectives believe there may be more victims in our area. John A. French, age 43, and Angela L. Venters, age 39, are currently being held in the Dane County Jail in connection with numerous fraud cases. John is also known to use the alias of John Venters, John Brinkman, or John Hoskins. Angela Venters also uses the name Angela Brinkman.

The Dane County investigation started in April when a couple in the town of Bristol reported they had been cheated out of hundreds of dollars by a tile contractor they hired off of Craigslist. After the contractor came to their house to take measurements and discuss the job, they agreed on a price and signed a contract. The customers gave John and Angela a deposit of fifty percent and they were told the work would be started in the next few weeks. When the time came for the work to begin, the contractors, company website and advertisement on Craigslist were nowhere to be found, but the deposit check had already been cashed.

Once Sheriff's deputies began looking into the case, they learned there were several similar complaints in other jurisdictions including Oregon, Portage, Greenfield, Madison, and even Coral Springs, FL. Victims have reported losing between \$800 and \$3,000. French and Venters have at least eight different business names they've been operating under, including:

- Creative Custom Tile & Granite
- Pro Source Remodeling
- Creative Custom Tiles
- Artisan Custom Tile & Design
- Clear Cut Painting and Remodeling
- Fast Onsite Computer Repair
- Brush Strokes Painting
- Certa Pro Painters

Dane County Sheriff's deputies took the couple into custody on May 20<sup>th</sup> from the Fitchburg hotel where the couple had been living. Deputies seized electronics, business documents, and checks of potential victims from the hotel room. Most of their advertising took place on Craigslist or Thumbtack. The couple was known to travel in a gray Dodge Dakota with Texas plates. Anyone who may have been victimized by the couple is asked to call their local authorities or the Dane County tip line at 608-284-6900.