



PENNSYLVANIA STATE POLICE COMMUNITY AWARENESS BULLETIN

CAB 004-17

August 30, 2017

CREEPY CLOWNS

Remember the fall of 2016 when “creepy clown” sightings were reported throughout the United States and the world fueling a clown panic throughout the country?¹ Sightings were reported in: Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Wisconsin. The creepy clown craze in September 2016 resulted in at least a dozen people arrested in Georgia, Alabama, and Virginia for either taking part in the menacing stunt or for making false reports.



Pennywise

With the fall of 2017 upon us, it is anticipated that similar “creepy clown” sightings could be reported starting as soon as September, in part due to the fact that the movie *IT* will be released in theaters on 09/08/2017. The movie, which is adapted from a Stephen King novel by the same name, portrays an evil demon who takes on the shape of a clown named Pennywise, “that stalks kids from within the sewers and killing them when they least expect it.”²

“Creepy clown” sightings are nothing new to this country or throughout the world. In the 1980s, clown sightings were reported in several locations including Boston, Pittsburgh, Kansas City, and Arlington Heights. Upon investigation, police noticed that most, if not all of the clown sightings, were only being witnessed by children between ages five and seven.³

The Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) is providing this bulletin for informational purposes only. The PSP encourages reporting of suspicious activity by calling the toll-free PSP Terrorism Tip Line at (888) 292-1919, or by sending an email to tips@pa.gov. Additionally, PSP launched the “See Something, Send Something” smartphone application (app) to help combat terrorism and other criminal activity. The app allows suspicious activity to be captured as a photograph or written note and sent directly to the Pennsylvania Criminal Intelligence Center (PaCIC). Available at no cost to iPhone and Android users, the app also contains information on what to look for and when to report suspicious activity.⁴

¹ Carlson, A. (2016, September 30). Why you shouldn't panic about this year's 'Clown Panic.' *People*. Retrieved 10/03/2016 from <http://www.people.com/article/creepy-clown-sightings-2016-whats-happening-explainer>.

² Riotta, C. (2017, May 1). Creepy clown sightings 2017: North Dakota children targeted in latest menacing incident. *News Week*. Retrieved 018/14/2017 from <http://www.newsweek.com/clown-sightings-2017-scary-it-movie-remake-videos-crazy-stalking-592616>

³ Carlson, A. (2016, September 30). Why you shouldn't panic about this year's 'Clown Panic.' *People*. Retrieved 10/03/2016 from <http://www.people.com/article/creepy-clown-sightings-2016-whats-happening-explainer>.

⁴ Pennsylvania State Police launch new “see something, send something” app to help fight terrorism. (2013, January 10). *Pennsylvania State Police*. Retrieved 03/30/2015 from http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=512&objID=4451&PageID=457781&mode=2&contentid=http://pubcontent.state.pa.us/publishedcontent/publicsh/cop_public_safety/state_police/news/articles/pennsylvania_state_police_launch_new_see_something_send_something_app_to_help_fight_terrorism.html.