

Firefighters Discover a Secret Gambling Room Inside COGIC Church Building

Firefighters responding to reports of a fire at a Houston church instead discovered a secret room containing 100 gambling machines. The first responders found no fire, but rather four people who were trapped by an electronic door lock inside the gaming room at Word of Life Church in Houston, Texas. Several people were escorted by deputies out of the building in handcuffs.

The Harris County Sheriff's Office announced the discovery on Twitter and later clarified that all detained subjects had been released, though one person was arrested for an outstanding warrant.

HCSO deputies and HCFM0 investigators responded to the World OF Life Church at 403 Turney dr. A room containing gambling machines was discovered in the back. At this point deputies are interviewing subjects detained.

– HCSOTexas (@HCSOTexas) November 24, 2018

Word of Life Pastor Anthony Scott says he had no idea the room existed. He told KTRK that for financial reasons he shares the building with another business. He says he doesn't know who the landlord put in charge of the other side of the building or what business that manager runs.

"I just wanted to make sure that everybody knows that what happened here last night is completely separate from the Word of Life Church," Scott told KTRK. "There are two different entities that are in this church, separated by this wall and a wrought-iron fence which is outside. We have no access over

there. But the way that the stories were framed were very concerning and appealing to us because it makes it look like we were the ones that were in fault or running some kind of gaming machines. So I wanted to come on and give clarity, to let Houston and let the world know that that is in fact not us, but it is a completely separate entity that is completely separate from us. We have no information. We don't even know who the manager is, who the owner is. We know absolutely nothing."

Scott also released a full 14-minute response video on the church's official Facebook page.

According to the church's website, Word of Life Church is affiliated with the Church of God in Christ (COGIC). COGIC, which recently celebrated its 111th Convocation in St. Louis, Missouri, has not yet issued a public statement.