



San Diego City Attorney
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JOINT INVESTIGATION RESULTS IN CRIMINAL CHARGES, CLOSURE OF INFAMOUS KEARNY MESA MASSAGE PARLOR

A San Diego massage parlor whose illicit activities disrupted a Kearny Mesa neighborhood and made international headlines has been shut down and the operators have been charged with Civil and Labor Code violations. District Attorney Summer Stephan, City Attorney Mara W. Elliott, and San Diego Police Chief Scott Wahl today announced the conclusion of civil and criminal cases against Ocean Spa after a successful joint investigation and legal actions.

The case drew global media attention after neighboring businesses complained that the site was the source of foot traffic at odd hours, people were having sex in parked cars, and noises of a sexual nature were loud enough to disrupt a nearby church service.

In close collaboration with the City Attorney's Nuisance Abatement Unit, the San Diego Police Department's (SDPD) Vice Unit conducted a months-long sting operation that uncovered the unlawful sale of sex. Undercover officers were solicited for sexual services multiple times, resulting in arrests and the discovery of more than 1,270 online ads promoting illegal sex services at the location over a five-year period. City Attorney Elliott filed a civil law enforcement action to stop the unlawful activity and possible human trafficking that was occurring at the business.

A final judgment has been entered in the case and the rental property in Kearny Mesa is barred from maintaining any illegal and/or massage-related business in the future. As part of the judgment, the defendants must each pay \$600,000 in civil penalties, of which \$550,000 is suspended contingent upon full compliance with the court's orders. They also have to pay the SDPD's investigative costs. Lastly, the defendants are required to donate \$6,000 to a local non-profit organization dedicated to fighting human trafficking.

“Thanks to the diligent efforts of SDPD, we’ve been able to shut down this illegal operation and restore peace to the neighborhood,” said City Attorney Elliott. **“We will closely monitor this operator to ensure they do not continue these illegal activities at another location. If they do, we will come after them with the full force of the law.”**

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The District Attorney's Workplace Justice Unit also pursued Labor Code violations against the operator of Ocean Spa, 44-year-old Sean Xu. Xu, who pleaded guilty to one felony Labor Code violation and one misdemeanor Labor Code violation, was also fined \$10,000, sentenced to two years' probation, and now has a fourth waiver condition that he cannot own or be associated with any part of a massage business for two years.

"This case is an excellent example of law enforcement responding to a community's well-founded concerns and then working together to achieve a resolution that is leaving a neighborhood safer and holding individuals accountable for their illegal activities, including the likelihood that victims were being trafficked," said DA Stephan. "We will continue collaborating with our law enforcement partners to use every legal avenue available to us to prevent businesses from operating as an obvious front for prostitution and other crimes."

"SDPD's Vice Unit is out there every day, uncovering the underground illegal activities that plague our communities," Police Chief Wahl said. "This massage parlor was a front for prostitution and its activities were a disruptive nuisance to neighbors. The resolution of this case is a result of the diligent work and strong partnership between SDPD, the District Attorney's Office and the City Attorney's Office."

City Attorney Elliott thanked Senior Chief Deputy City Attorney Gabriela "Gaby" Brannan, who heads the Nuisance Abatement Unit, under the leadership of Assistant City Attorney Paige Folkman, Supervising Deputy City Attorney Paul Prather, and Deputy City Attorney Isabel V. Ignacio for their work on this case. The Chief of Police also thanked the entire SDPD Vice Unit for their dedication to duty and tireless efforts in this case. The DA especially acknowledged the hard work of Deputy District Attorney Shanish Aloor and District Attorney Investigator Yvette Gaines.

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