



Ready to Protect,
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NEWS RELEASE

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CONTINUING CRIMINAL ENTERPRISE INVESTIGATION

In December 2011, the Tucson Police Department received an anonymous tip relating to possible prostitution and potentially illegal massage services. The tip was sent to the Liquor Licensing Unit, as the Vice Unit had been eliminated in 2008 due to budget constraints. The Licensing unit was unable to establish sufficient information on which to base an investigation, but continued to gather additional information as time permitted.

Approximately one year later a second tip was received regarding similar activity occurring at a specific address. The Liquor Licensing Unit forwarded the tip to a proactive street crimes unit who were ultimately unable to corroborate the activity. Four months later a similar tip was received, however, neither the names nor the locations were the same. The Liquor Licensing Unit continued to gather information in furtherance of potentially initiating a Continued Criminal Enterprise investigation.

In May of 2013, in an effort to address licensing violations, the Liquor Licensing Unit made contact with one of suspects in the current investigation and advised that she was out of compliance and that all future services be stopped pending coming into compliance with relevant licensure requirements. In an unrelated investigation, investigators noted similar activity occurring with another massage business and began gathering information on those potential suspects. By the middle of June 2013 surveillance was initiated following the receipt of another anonymous tip. Yet another tip in August 2013 helped officers begin connecting the dots between the previously unconnected allegations and connections between the two operations. Officers were able to encourage a meeting with someone with direct knowledge of the methods employed by the massage operations.

In July 2014 the Special Investigations Division began assessing the known information regarding these illegal massage operations. By September 2014 an assessment of the information was completed and a formal investigation was launched by the Special Investigations Division, Organized Crime Unit. Extensive analysis of information, coupled with on-going surveillance revealed information relevant to a prosecution. Reports from a neighbor of one of the massage business locations were assimilated into the investigation. The neighbors were advised not to conduct their own surveillance due to safety concerns. Meanwhile, the Tucson Police Department investigation continued.

Page 1 of 2

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In November, 2014, TPD investigators met with the Pima County Attorney's Office and obtained subpoenas for certain cellular phones.

In January, 2015, the possible involvement of City employees was discovered. As a result, a separate investigation was launched regarding the involvement of public employees. On the Direction of Chief of Police, members of the Organized Crime Unit worked with the Office of Internal Affairs to determine the full breadth of involvement by public safety employees. To address any possible conflict of interest, all internal criminal investigations were turned over to the Arizona Department of Public Safety. That investigation remains active. Members of the Special Investigations Division and the Office of Internal Affairs continued to collaborate on the administrative investigation involving all affected Tucson Police Department personnel.

All prosecutorial information regarding this criminal enterprise and potential customers (johns) was presented to the City Prosecutors Office, as well as the Pima County Attorney's Office. The information is currently being reviewed by both offices for potential prosecution.

The magnitude and complexity of this investigation has necessitated the involvement of multiple law enforcement and prosecution agencies, and has an impact on the time necessary to complete a thorough investigation.

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Page 2 of 2

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