



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on November 9, 2023

Feds Bust Prostitution Ring That Catered to Wealthy, Powerful in Mass. and Va.

Federal prosecutors in Massachusetts have charged three Asian men in connection with running a network of brothels in the Bay State and eastern Virginia.

Operating since July 2020, the men used two websites to solicit clients under the guise of offering nude Asian models for professional photography sessions.

The “models” serviced the clients at high-end apartments that, in Boston, rented for almost \$4,000 a month. Price for a turn between the sheets: up to \$600 an hour.

Beyond that though, U.S. Attorney Joshua Levy said, the prostitution ring catered to wealthy, powerful men.



Diy13/iStock/Getty Images Plus

The Ring

The investigating FBI agent’s affidavit in support of his criminal complaint describes a sex operation run by James Lee, 68, of Torrance California; Han Lee, 41, of Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Junmyung Lee, 30, of Dedham, Massachusetts.

Authorities collared the three suspects on Wednesday.

“From at least July 2020, the co-conspirators ... have operated an interstate prostitution network with multiple brothels in greater Boston and eastern Virginia,” the [affidavit says](#):

The targets advertise their prostitution network primarily on two websites.... Both websites advertise appointments with Asian women in either greater Boston ... or eastern Virginia.... Although [the Boston website] claims “it is expressly not a site that in any way solicits, encourages, nor sanctions any sexual activity” and [the Virginia website] claims “[t]his site does not promote prostitution nor is this advertisement or any content therein an offer for prostitution,” both sites do in fact promote and advertise prostitution. Several women have been advertised on more than one of the above-described websites, as they traveled from city to city within the prostitution network.

Prospective johns were required to complete a form on the website. The Boston website required names, email addresses, phone numbers, and employers. That raises the obvious question of who would be stupid enough to provide a pimp with his personal information, including where he works.

The Virginia website noted clients needed “to fill out a verification form as a first-time customer and are instructed to contact one of two phone numbers listed on the website. After their information is verified,



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the clients can book appointments. Further communication about the appointments — e.g., time, duration, location, and other logistics — generally occurs via text message exchanges with telephone numbers provided on or associated with the websites.”

The agent interviewed some 20 johns during his multiyear investigation. They described meeting for sex at a “a specific apartment as directed by text messages from the phone number tied to the website they visited.”

Once at the brothel, the johns received a text message with a menu of women and services available. And those johns were not, the [affidavit alleges](#), down-and-out losers. They were the high and mighty, the rich and powerful, and, in some cases, those with high-level government jobs. So some could have been a major national security risk:

[They paid] \$350 to upwards of \$600 per hour depending on the different services, [which] suggests that customers are paying a premium price compared to standard rates for commercial sex being offered in the area. Throughout the course of our investigation, and as detailed below, agents have identified several customers through surveillance, phone records, customer interviews, and other investigative methods. These customers spanned a wide array of different professional disciplines. Some of these professional disciplines included, but are not limited to, politicians, pharmaceutical executives, doctors, military officers, government contractors that possess security clearances, professors, lawyers, business executives, technology company executives, scientists, accountants, retail employees, and students.

“Pick a profession, they’re probably represented in this case,” [Levy told](#) reporters when he unveiled the charges.

When prosecutors will release the names of those johns is unknown.

The rent for at least one of the apartments was \$3,664 a month. And some of the clients were stupid enough to pay a monthly “membership fee.”

The men are charged with inducing and/or coercing the women to travel for prostitution.

They could land in prison [for 20 years](#) and pay up to \$250,000 in fines.

Though news accounts didn’t discuss the immigration status of the suspects, federal prosecutors typically disclose whether a defendant is an illegal alien or noncitizen.

Second Asian-run Operation

A lengthy prison sentence is unlikely, though.

[In 2020, a number of Korean brothel operators](#) were convicted of the same crime. They too used brothels and websites.

The toughest penalty was 20 months with two years supervised release, while another received a year of home confinement.



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