

THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
DISTRICT *of* MASSACHUSETTS

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**Department of Justice**

U.S. Attorney's Office

District of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, September 14, 2021

## **Former Owners of Two Illicit Massage Parlors Charged with COVID-Relief Fraud**

### **Defendants applied for pandemic relief for businesses engaged in prostitution**

BOSTON – Two former owners of massage parlors have been charged in connection with filing for and obtaining fraudulent pandemic-related loans under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act for their respective illicit businesses where workers engaged in commercial sex acts with customers.

Chynna Savath, 56, of Woonsocket, R.I., was charged with two counts of wire fraud. Savath is the former owner of Thai Body Work, a massage parlor in Franklin.

According to the charging documents, in June 2020, Savath submitted fraudulent applications to the Small Business Administration (SBA) for COVID-19 relief through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) program under the CARES Act. In the applications, Savath falsely certified that the applicant was not engaged in any illegal activity, despite knowing that her employees at Thai Body Work engaged in prostitution with customers and collected a portion of fees paid by each customer. In total, Savath obtained \$29,646 in fraudulent payments from the EIDL and PPP loan programs.

Aticha Jittaphol, 32, of Brighton, was charged separately with two counts of making false statements in federal loan applications. Jittaphol is the former owner of Mantra Dhevi Spa in Brighton.

According to the charging documents, in March and April of 2020, Jittaphol submitted fraudulent applications for EIDL and PPP loans in which she falsely stated that the applicant was not engaged in any illegal activity. However, her employees at Mantra Dhevi Spa engaged in prostitution from which she collected a portion of fees paid by each customer. Jittaphol also actively promoted the prostitution by recruiting employees and attracting new customers. In total, Jittaphol obtained \$7,066 in fraudulent payments from the EIDL and PPP loan programs.

The charge of wire fraud provides for a sentence of up to 20 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. The charge of making false statements provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to \$250,000. Sentences are

imposed by a federal district court judge based on the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Acting U.S. Attorney Mendell; Matthew B. Millhollin, Special Agent in Charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Boston; Joshua McCallister, Acting Inspector in Charge of the U.S. Postal Inspection Service; and Boston Police Acting Commissioner Gregory Long made the announcement. Special assistance was provided by the Cambridge, Boston, Franklin and Lexington Police Departments. Assistant U.S. Attorney Elysa Wan of Mendell's Criminal Division and Suffolk County Assistant District Attorneys Alyssa Tochka and Luke Goldworm, who were appointed as Special Assistant U.S. Attorneys, are prosecuting the cases.

On May 17, 2021, the Attorney General established the COVID-19 Fraud Enforcement Task Force to marshal the resources of the Department of Justice in partnership with agencies across government to enhance efforts to combat and prevent pandemic-related fraud. The Task Force bolsters efforts to investigate and prosecute the most culpable domestic and international criminal actors and assists agencies tasked with administering relief programs to prevent fraud by, among other methods, augmenting and incorporating existing coordination mechanisms, identifying resources and techniques to uncover fraudulent actors and their schemes, and sharing and harnessing information and insights gained from prior enforcement efforts. For more information on the Department's response to the pandemic, please visit <https://www.justice.gov/coronavirus>.

Anyone with information about allegations of attempted fraud involving COVID-19 can report it by calling the Department of Justice's National Center for Disaster Fraud (NCDF) Hotline at 866-720-5721 or via the NCDF Web Complaint Form at: <https://www.justice.gov/disaster-fraud/ncdf-disaster-complaint-form>.

The details contained in the court documents are allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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**Topic(s):**

Coronavirus

Financial Fraud

**Component(s):**

USAO - Massachusetts

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