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**MALDEN COUPLE INDICTED ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING CHARGES**

**BROCKTON** – A couple from Malden were indicted today on charges they were allegedly running a prostitution operation out of their Norwell day spa, Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz announced today.

A Plymouth County grand jury today returned indictments charging Robert Eckhardt, 68, with one count each of Trafficking of a Person for Sexual Servitude and Deriving Support from Prostitution. His wife, Xiangmei Eckhardt, 63, was indicted on one count of Trafficking of a Person for Sexual Servitude and Deriving Support from Prostitution. The Eckhardts are currently out on bail with the conditions that they wear GPS monitoring bracelets and remain on home confinement and surrender their passports.

The indictments followed a several months-long investigation by Norwell Police into allegations that prostitution was allegedly occurring at the Platinum Body Works Day Spa located at 144 Washington Street in Norwell. The spa is owned and operated by Mrs. Eckhardt and Mr. Eckhardt helps operate it.

Norwell Police sent an undercover officer into the business as part of the investigation and that officer told investigators that while receiving a body massage at the business, the female masseuse grabbed his penis and offered to engage in sexual conduct for a fee. The officer paid with dollar bills that were marked.

As a result, Norwell Police obtained a search warrant and executed that warrant on February 20, 2019, with the assistance of Old Colony Police Anti-Crime Task Force (OCPAC), which includes detectives from Marshfield and Hanover Police Departments. Police seized electronic devices along with \$858 in cash, including the marked dollar bills, an appointment binder, a daily ledger, a video camera system, several bottles of baby oil and latex gloves.

The Eckhardts will be arraigned on the charges in Superior Court at a later date.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Amanda Fowle and was investigated by Norwell Police.