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## Cops Give Money To PA Informant For Trips To Massage Parlor And For His Time

An appeals court has ruled Pennsylvania State Police botched a prostitution investigation in which troopers gave an informant money to pay for sex four times at a massage parlor, along with a total of \$180 for the man's trouble.

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HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) -- An appeals court has ruled Pennsylvania State Police botched a prostitution investigation in which troopers gave an informant money to pay for sex four times at a massage parlor, along with a total of \$180 for the man's trouble.

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The Superior Court opinion issued Thursday upheld a Lehigh County judge's ruling that threw out prostitution charges against Sun Cha Chon in suburban Allentown on the grounds that the government had acted outrageously.

The appeals court ruling described how the man first approached state police to say he had been solicited for sex at the Shiatsu Spa. Troopers then supplied the unnamed man with government money and sent him back four times to engage in what the county judge called "a smorgasbord of sexual activity" during June and July 2006.

Lehigh County Judge Robert L. Steinberg said the man's subsequent visits did not advance the police investigation. He was given \$360 total to pay for the services that allegedly involved Chon and another woman, plus the extra \$180 for his time.

"The outrageous nature is it went beyond what was necessary to prove the prostitution charge," said Chon's lawyer, Maureen Coggins.

The Superior Court opinion recounted how police and the informant were recorded laughing about the sexual encounters.

"We expect more from the police, and demand that they conduct their investigations and utilize their resources without resorting to such embarrassing investigative techniques," Steinberg said in a written opinion that the appeals court cited at length.

"No adequate supervisory guidance was provided, no standards existed for this type of investigation, and some of the behavior by the participants was sophomoric," Steinberg wrote.

The lead investigator said the informant contacted police because he had been offended by the offer of sex, according to the Superior Court ruling.

"It is difficult to imagine how this informant could have been so offended, and yet proceed to engage in oral and sexual intercourse with the two women in this case and laugh about it with the investigating troopers after each occasion," wrote Judge John T. Bender for the three-judge Superior Court panel.

Lehigh County District Attorney Jim Martin said officers sent the informant back repeatedly to help them determine the scope of the organization. He said he was concerned about the precedent the ruling might set and plans to seek review by the state Supreme Court.

"Is it outrageous police conduct if it's done in a drug setting or if it's done in an investigation into weapons sales?" Martin said. "That's an important consideration."

He described the extra cash payments to the informant as a necessary evil and common practice.

State police spokeswoman Lt. Myra Taylor said department policy prohibits undercover officers from engaging in any sexual act, but she also said the informant's behavior did not conform with state police standards. She said the troopers' conduct has been addressed internally.

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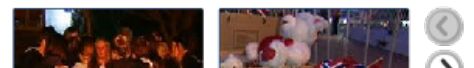
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